



NSW & ACT Prospectors and Fossickers Association Inc.

Incorporation No: INC 1200398

www.napfa.net

PO Box 4529
DUBBO NSW 2830

“Fights for fairer access to land in NSW and represents interests of prospectors and fossickers”

SUBMISSION: PLAN OF MANAGEMENT STURT NATIONAL PARK.

May 20, 2017

Introduction.

Summary

- This submission seeks to allow recreational fossicking in parts of the Sturt National Park – around about 20,000 ha of the 340,000 ha park.
- This change will reinstate the right to practice a traditional activity and allow more citizens to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of a popular outdoor activity that is presently not permitted in this long-standing goldfield.
- Increased visits by fossickers will provide a needed stimulus to regional tourism and business.
- Change can be effected by an amendment to the current Plan of Management.

NAPFA appreciates this opportunity for comment on the Sturt National Park Plan of Management review.

We hope that when the new POM is settled that there will be an opportunity for recreational fossicking in at least a small area of the park, especially given its known history of gold mining and fossicking, and the minimal impact of recreational fossicking on the values of such an area.

NAPFA understands the NPWS requirement to manage and protect aspects vital to maintaining significant areas and potentially endangered sites. However, such management should also be able to co-exist with reasonable use of both National Parks by recreational fossickers.

Sturt NP as you well know has many old workings within its boundaries and is not a pristine area reflecting more than 100 years of past mining and grazing activity.

For many years, NSW fossickers have faced an unrelenting and extreme bias within the NPWS system which has resulted in the automatic exclusion of fossicking, even though it may be permitted by consent, and even though there is no evidence of any durable negative impacts from fossicking.

This Sturt NP POM presents NPWS with a real opportunity to be fair to the fossicking public and support the Tibooburra economy, while still meeting its overall conservation goals.

Fossicking, in this day and age, is a recreational activity. Despite what some elements who oppose recreational fossicking contend, recreational fossickers who use hand tools cannot be compared in any fair way with mining or exploration at any level.

There are also significant [regulations](#) (NSW Fossicking Guidelines) governing the what and how recreational fossickers can go about their hobby. Those regulations place strict limits on fossicking.

The NPWS, as the manager of the Sturt NP, may also determine what type of fossicking activity is allowed, and where it should be allowed. For example, it is possible under the POM to consent to allow fossicking with metal detectors access to a defined area of the NP. It does not have to be “everything or nothing”.

The 1996 Plan of Management for Sturt National Park states: “The park currently has an area of 310 634 ha. In addition, the Service owns approximately 19 250 ha adjoining the park (Whitta Brinnah) which has not been reserved as park because of objections by the Department of Mineral Resources. This area will be managed as though it was part of the park and is included in the discussions below.”

Although Whitta Brinnah has been managed as NP since the initial reservation, it was not reserved until the expiry of mineral and mining interests in 2003. This was done without consultation with fossickers even though they had a material stake in the outcome of that process.

It is time for NPWS to address that previous wrong with restoration of fossicking access.

Background

There has been extensive gold mining activity in this area since the 1880s and fossicking and prospecting activity throughout its European history.

The exclusion of fossicking from the NP area is quite unfair given the relative rarity in NSW of alluvial gold areas and their surrounding reefs suitable to undertake recreational fossicking and the benign impact of the activity. There is also a strong precedent set by 130 years plus of continuous interest in the area’s mineral resources by miners, prospectors and fossickers.

Like many regional areas of NSW, Tibooburra needs to play to its own special points of difference to attract visitors and tourists.

The obvious potential for fossicking-based tourism is perhaps the greatest drawcard to the area that exists. A modest expansion of the available fossicking ground in the area will encourage more visitors to go there. As the area concerned is quite close to Tibooburra township, this would have a significant positive impact on the fortunes of the town.

Over the years many thousands of fossickers have visited the Tibooburra area and many of them would make return visits if there were new areas available for fossicking.

Policy analysis

When the Sturt NP was declared, the right of access by fossickers was not given proper consideration. At the time, there was no peak body to effectively represent fossickers' needs and it is likely they were just ignored or not thought of as relevant.

Reservation of the NP also pre-dated the development of modern metal detectors, so in this sense decisions were made about the area without consideration of the tourist potential, now evident with modern-day tools that have only a minor and passing environmental impact.

The land in the area has been substantially altered by human activity, especially mining and grazing. It is not a pristine wilderness. Rather it is an example of an alluvial gold field that, by its characteristics, is suitable for use by recreational fossickers, among others.

It is NSW Government policy to encourage more use of NSW's parks and reserves. In recent times this has resulted in positive changes to permit horse riding and even shooting in national parks. This is a commendable policy shift and is helping to restore some balance to the way that parks and reserves can be used by the people, who through the state, own them.

However, it has yet to have any positive impact on fossicking which continues to suffer unfair perception issues due it being an allowable activity under the Mining Act. Recreational fossicking is not mining, has never been mining, and never will be mining.

NAPFA has been working with NPWS and the OEH Minister's Office to develop a suitable policy to guide fossicking in national park areas. [Here is a link to that process](#), which is still underway. The draft clearly states that fossicking can be permitted with consent.

Historic Heritage, Economic and Recreational Values.

Provisions to allow fossicking in the Sturt NP would actually advance the historic values of the area in that it would allow people to experience the time-honoured practice of gold prospecting/fossicking as carried out by the early prospectors back in the 1800's.

Too much of that history is being allowed to fade away, and be erased by natural forces, obliterating the very features that are part of the so called 'historical heritage'.

Heritage is not necessarily a static matter and there is certainly scope within the Act to accommodate an activity that encourages public appreciation and use.

As stated in the Auditor-General's performance report into Management of historic heritage in national parks and reserves,

"the broad objectives and principles for the management of historic heritage in the reserve system are established by the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974. The Act establishes that a key purpose of the reserve system is the conservation of objects, places or features of cultural value within the landscape including places of social value and of historic, architectural and scientific significance. The management principles for places and landscapes of cultural value include conservation, public appreciation, visitor use and enjoyment, and the sustainable use of buildings and structures.

The agency (NPWS) describes one of its primary goals in managing historic heritage values is to facilitate conservation outcomes through the sustainable use of heritage places, enabling a vibrant and living approach to heritage conservation and management.”

This indicates that conservation is not a “glass box” activity, whereby all things need to be preserved in a static state.

Enabling fossicking in a limited area of Sturt NP would encourage public appreciation, visitor use and enjoyment in a sustainable way, without undermining the special significance of the area. If there are particular identified sections that need to be excluded these can be mapped and signed.

Increased fossicking visitation to the area will contribute positively to the Tibooburra economy. The importance and value of this cannot be underestimated. Once again, that is in-line with NSW Government policy.

Management purposes and principals.

Given the extremely low and transitory impact of recreational fossicking, compared to that of a full-scale exploration and mining operation, the amateur fossicker cannot be said to pose any additional significant damage or risk to the area.

What impact there is, is temporary, and pales in significance to the changes in the landscape that are wrought by the forces of nature, such as floods, fires, landslides, feral animals, and even including native animals – such as wombats that dig massive holes.

The Sturt NP includes the 19,000 ha Whitta Brinnah area that until 2003 was able to be explored and mined, with the appropriate consents. And yet it was not able to be fossicked.

There is ample evidence in NSW and from other states proving that fossicking undertaken under *Fossicking Guidelines* does no lasting harm to the environment in those areas where fossicking is permitted.

Visitors

The visitor economy is vital to the well-being of Tibooburra and fossickers/prospectors are a large part of that visitor economy. Many fossickers from all over Australia visit Tibooburra on a regular basis and can spend weeks and even months in the area, as opposed to the ‘drive-through’ 4WD tourists.

See attachment 1 for a detailed account of a fossicking visitor. The area is frequently featured in Gold Gem and Treasure magazine as well.

This has been identified by NAPFA to the NSW Government in its 2013 GP3 Inquiry into Tourism in Local areas and in the 2015 Review of Crown Lands. Government has stated that it will do things to encourage ‘geo-tourism.’

Fossickers are not making lots of money by visiting the area – only a few would be lucky enough to cover their fuel costs of the fossicking trip. However, they enjoy the challenge of the healthy, outdoor activity and the natural beauty of the area.

Increased visitors to the Sturt NP will also boost the NPWS revenue for visitors to the park. At \$8 per day per vehicle, the local parks office could expect a good boost in its annual revenue, although at that cost, many fossickers might seek lower cost alternatives such as annual single passes.

Geo Tourism (recreational fossicking) has the potential to increase visitation and add to the value of the Sturt NP. It should be supported.



: Geo tourism is alive at Inverell

Fossicking Environmental Impact

A typical 1 gram gold deposit found and removed by a fossicker using a metal detector occupies about the same volume as a single raindrop.

Alluvial gold found and removed by a fossicker with a gold pan typically amounts to a few flecks of about the same order of magnitude as the head of a pin, if he or she is so lucky as to find any.

Gold, being an inert metal, offers no nutritional value to either plants or animals and as such its removal cannot possibly disadvantage any of the ecological targets that this NP is seeking to protect.

The removal without disadvantage of such insignificant gold targets contrasts markedly with the removal by the typical metal detector operator of a wide range of more harmful targets in the areas being explored. Detectorists routinely remove acknowledged harmful objects such as lead bullets, sharp and rusty pieces of iron, lead shot and rubbish left behind by generations of explorers before them.

NAPFA recognises and respects the need to protect sensitive ecosystems. It is also essential that decision makers acknowledge the history that has preceded the present situation. All those ecosystems, have already withstood a far greater impact of human activity (a gold rush and 100 years of grazing) than anything that is likely to occur in the future.

Compared to what the flora and fauna populations have already accommodated, the likely impact of modern day fossickers on Sturt NP is negligible. Fossicking is not the great threat it is painted to be.

The impact of naturally occurring events, such as fires, floods and even animal burrowings, far and away exceeds the foreseeable impact of fossickers. However, those events are considered 'natural' and therefore OK.

The NSW government has promulgated several initiatives to encourage outdoor recreation and fitness activities to combat obesity and other diseases. The healthy, outdoor physical activity encouraged by fossicking serves to reduce the demand for public health services and enhance the quality of life experiences for families and individuals.

Fossickers enhance their own health and also furnish a community benefit by removing poisonous lead leaching into water courses and eventually into drinking water supplies.

Recommendation

- This revised Plan of Management should provide consent for recreational fossicking in the former Whitta Brinnah area as has been previously identified in park management documents.
- Having studied the POM review documents and map, and discussed with fossickers, it appears that the area of the park, south of the Gas Line could be carved out as a section of the NP where fossicking could be permitted with consent and with some park controls.
- This area would take in areas close to Tibooburra but allow sufficient roaming space within the general area to spread out any impact from an increased number of visitors. By our estimation, it would constitute about 20,000 hectares of the NP's total of 340,000ha – less than 7%.
- Consent for Panning and Detecting would be a reasonable outcome for fossickers. Both are low impact activities and easily managed. Panning would generally only be possible in wetter months and would naturally be very limited. The vast majority of interest in the area would be for metal detecting.

Stephen Dangaard

President

New South Wales and ACT Prospectors and Fossickers Association Inc.

Tel: 0427 587 441

Attachment 1



1.TIBOOBURRA
GOLD.pdf

Copyright to Jim Foster and Cheryl Foster – a long time fossickers and frequent visitors to the area.
Text below in case the embedded PDF does not work.

1

TIBOOBURRA GOLD

Our last visit to Tibooburra was in June/July 2015. We stayed 7 weeks and in that time we were able to update our knowledge on the area.

We found that Mt Brown and Mt Pool stations were closed to prospecting. As far as I could ascertain this is due to a gold lease/claim being established on Mt Brown. On our last inquiry both Mt Brown and Mt Poole were still closed to detecting.

TIBOOBURRA COMMON

FLYSPECK HILL ON THE COMMON CAN BE EASILY FOUND NOW

The good news is there is still plenty of good detecting country open to all. To begin with there is the Tibooburra Common. Even after all the years the Common has been thrashed by detectors there is still gold to be found. To be sure most of it is very small and late model detectors with small coils are required to find it but there are still larger bits there to be found. The new Minelab SDC2300 is the best for finding both small and large gold. Other Minelab GP's will find some of the larger bits of the smaller stuff but the 2300 is far and away the best machine for detecting around Tibooburra and finding gold.

Some of the places we found gold on the Common are as follows.

(Please note, these way points are Aus84 Latitude and Longitude)

What we called Salt Bush Gully: 29. 25. 08. S. 142. 01. 55. E.

Around the famous Fly Speck Hill at: 29. 25. 03. S – 142. 01. 55. E.

Keith's Hill, named after a good friend who found gold there way back in the 1990's: 29. 25. 28. S. 142. 02. 01. E.

The slope on the right on the way into Tipperary: 29. 25. 15. S. 142. 02. 00. E.

The main Tipperary Diggings: 29. 25. 15. S. 142. 02. 00. E.

2

The country all around the Tipperary and four mile Diggings, on every slope, flat and hill can produce gold to the diligent prospector while the rest of the Common can also be productive. But be sure to rest now and again and gaze at the country around you it can be unique and spectacular.

There are three camping places in and around Tibooburra. The first is the Aboriginal run camping ground. It has two flush toilets and two hot showers with gas BBQ's next to the camp shelter but no power. It is a very pretty little campsite and at only \$15.00 a night very good value.

The second is Dead Horse Gully in the National Park just two or three km north east of town. Here you will find no amenities apart from long drop dunnies and a free BBQ. There is a charge of about \$18.00 for two people and no camp fires can be lit on the campground.

Detecting at Nuggety Gully

The third is the Caravan Park in town. This park is pretty good by outback standards. It cost only \$24.00 a night for two people or \$140.00 for a week when we were there. And unlike the NP you can

utilize the fireplaces in the caravan park. And it is an easy 5 minute walk to the pub and less to the Roadhouse. As the nights were extremely cold we were grateful for our little electric fan heater that we used most nights. But while the nights were cold the days were wonderful – we couldn't have wished for better detecting weather, even the flies were cooperative and stayed away most of the time.

The time we spent on the Common was extremely enjoyable and reasonably productive. We revisited spots where we'd found gold before and always seemed to ping a little bit or two while new spots also produced their share of gold.

3

DETECTORS AND COILS USE

This trip we were sharing a new SDC2300 It was finding gold so small I was having trouble seeing it, and at surprising depths as well. The darned thing can make a tiny No. 8 lead-shot sound like a .22 bullet. This detector has great depth on both small and larger gold.

We hit the ground running this year with our first spot on the Common producing over 30 bits a day over 4 days. Our next spot produced a similar amount as well as the next one, only a hundred metres away.

After finding almost 400 bits on the Common both on new ground and on the old diggings we decided to move out to some of the other, nearby goldfields. First we tried Easter Monday diggings and found even more gold. Some of the gold was from the old dry-blow heaps and some from new ground but amazingly it just kept coming day after day.

MINELAB'S NEW SDC2300

Of all detectors ever built this machine is the one most suited to detecting in the Corner Country. It ignores almost all ground mineralisation and will find a quarter gram bit of gold at greater depth than any other detector other than the new 7000. Even tiny scraps of gold weighing less than one tenth of a gram can be easily found with this machine and even the 7000 will fail to make a murmur over gold this small. Everywhere gold has been found around Tibooburra a good deal more gold will be found with this great little detector and some will be bigger bits as well.

While the 2300 is now the best available for the Tibooburra area you can still find gold with all the Minelab GP models from the Extreme to the latest GP the 5000 and the 7000. Fitting smaller monoloop search coils is the secret to success when searching for smaller gold with a GP. Something like an 8" round mono or the 10x6 elliptical Joey mono will help a great deal on any GP model.

4

Older style and more modern VLF gold detectors such as a Whites Gold Master, Fisher Goldbug or the Minelab VLF Minelab Eureka Gold will all find gold around Tibooburra but not as much and not as easy as the 2300. VLF detectors cost a lot less than PI detectors such as the GP range, mostly around the \$800 to \$1200 range while a new GP5000 costs about \$6,400.00 and a SDC2300 \$3,995.00 with the new 7000 coming in at a whopping \$10,600.

Cheryl using the SDC2300 on the Tibooburra Common

EVANS GULLY

Fourteen km along the Cameron's Corner road from Tibooburra you will find the turnoff to Gumvale Homestead on your left. Take this road and follow it 4.7km or until you see a gate a few hundred metres down the road. The track into Evans Gully can be seen veering off to your right. Follow this track up over the ridge and through a deep creek, this creek will prevent caravans being towed in but camper trailers should make it if care is taken. Climbing up out of the creek you will then come to a long slope leading down into Evans Gully.

29. 27. 41. S – 141. 49. 30. E. is about the middle of Evans Gully. Standing on the top of the rise you can look in any direction and see gold bearing ground. We have found gold as far as you can see and in some cases even further out over the hills to the east.

5

We visited Evans Gully this trip and did very well with gold coming up

everywhere we tried. It's amazing that the SDC2300 will find gold where we couldn't when using GPX5000's. Surprisingly the gold wasn't that small, relatively speaking, or deep. After a while we found ourselves close to where a very nice patch had been found many years ago.

Suddenly we were not just finding a few scattered bits but gold everywhere around the patch and even several from the same hole.

And gold was coming from both sides of the creek below the patch and in the creek itself. I know several people who had detected this spot years ago and also found good gold here but that there was still so much left was astounding.

We visited Evans Gully several times trying many of the old areas and doing well even finding new patches with the 2300.

Evans Gully is far larger than it appears at first glance. Across the main creek that runs down parallel to the track you will find more little gullies and slopes that have produced gold for us in the past. Don't be afraid to get out a bit further than the obvious places where gold has been found by the old timers. Even some of the slopes outside the gully, those that run down onto the flatter country should be explored. All the Tibooburra country is worth exploring and many a good patch, and sometimes larger nuggets in excess of an ounce, have been found in this way.

JEFFRIES FLAT ON GUMVALE STATION

To find Jeffries Flat you must continue past the turn off to Evans Gully and pass through the gate into Gumvale Station. You can see the gum trees lining Gum Vale Creek emerging from the hills directly down the road. As you pass through the gate reset your trip metre. At the 2.2 km mark after the gate and in the gorge, or at 29. 31. 30. S. 141. 46. 53. E. you will see a dry creek leading up and away from the main creek. Take this track and follow it until you emerge at the top end of Jeffries Flat.

What you will see at the top is a fantastic view, especially just before sundown, right down the slope of the flat. On each side rise arms of the incredibly ancient and worn down Warratta Ranges cradling the flat and closing in at the bottom where the creek squeezes out between steep slopes.

In the late afternoon light Jeffries Flat takes on an unusual hue. The ancient much weathered rock changes in colour as the low light picks out different otherwise unnoticed colours. The slope is mostly bare of trees and only the bluey grey of the saltbush can be seen above ground level lending a misty hue to the floor of the slope.

A nice little half grammer from Evans Gully

6

Any photo taken here will look good but I recommend a series of shots as the light changes, that way you are sure to get at least one outstanding photo. And this is true of almost all of the Tibooburra gold fields. Take your photos in the early morning or late afternoon and take plenty of them. This way you will come home with some outstanding shots of a very beautiful part of the country. Most of the flat has produced small nuggets and you will also find a couple of deeper shafts part way down the flat with the main shallow diggings right down near the bottom on the left side of the creek. That is also where the most rubbish can be found. All the slopes around the flat can produce gold with some good size bits turning up in 2015. It's pretty much pot luck on the flat but you have to be in it to win it.

OTHER PLACES ON GUMVALE

Should the above gully into Jeffries Flat be impassable, as it sometimes can be, simply continue along the main track. After you climb up out of the Gorge you will soon come to a fork in the road

with Gum Vale Homestead over to your right. Take the left hand fork and follow it until you are about 8km from the gate, or at: 29. 31. 30. S. 141. 46. 53. E. At about that point you should see a well-used track to your left. Follow this track and after the first creek you will see good detecting country all around you. Again, it is pot luck as there are no real indications of where you should detect. But there have been numerous patches found all along this side of the range. If you follow this track all the way it will take you over the western arm of the range and down into Jeffries Flat. There are many good looking spots around Gum Vale and some will most certainly produce gold, you just have to get out there and explore. We met one fellow who had detected out there for a week and found only a few small bits but we also met others who had found quite a bit of gold, including a few good patches. Nearby German Gully has produced gold but we have not yet been there.

ALBERT AND GOOD FRIDAY DIGGINGS

While Mount Pool remains closed to prospectors at this stage it may be that it will be open again by the 2016 season. Two main goldfields can be found on Mt Pool, the Good Friday diggings and the lesser known old Albert town site and diggings. There are also another even lesser known diggings down that way. I don't have a name for it but few people have ever found it.

There is more than one way to get to the Good Friday diggings but none are more pleasant, or more fun than via the Warratta Creek. Take the main track down through the middle of Jeffries Flat: At this point you are driving through the watershed of Warratta Creek with the tree lined creek on your left. As you get to with a few hundred metres of the Warratta battery you should see some old ruins down toward the creek and a strange looking bit of machinery closer to the creek. Swing down off the track to the ruin and you can then see the Warratta Creek stamp battery a little further on. The strange looking machine that looks like a big cast iron bowl is a Chilean mill, also known as a Bawl Mill.

7

Lumps of gold bearing quartz would be placed in the bowl where several large steel balls would roll around in the tilted bowl as it was turned. This was a slow but efficient way to crush quartz to allow the gold to be retrieved. Some larger mines might employ dozens of such mills at once.

Coming onto the old stamp battery you will see a windmill now stands over the original shaft, keep well clear of this shaft as it does not look all that safe. All around are scattered bits of the battery. Large fly wheels and even a steam engine and boiler are still in place but much of it has been dismantled and taken away.

8

It beggars belief that something this large and heavy could have been brought into such a rugged and remote area in the days before motor vehicles. The size and weight of the fly wheels alone must have caused a lot of headaches without the boiler and engine.

If you walk up the ridge above the battery you will see where the old timers sunk shafts here and there along a reef. It could be a good move to detect along this ridge on either side the reef line. The reef runs quite a way so there should be a lot of promising ground to cover. The reef will have shed gold in places and if you can find where it shed gold that wasn't discovered by the old timers you could do well. You will also see where a mining company has had holes drilled so if they thought they were on to something then that makes it doubly promising.

SECRET GOLDFIELD

After inspecting the battery return upstream a hundred metres or so and take the track back to your right across the creek. The track here climbs up on an angle away from the creek to a bush gate. Go through the gate leaving it as you found it and turn down toward the creek, enter the creek and follow it for about four Klm to where another creek comes in from the west at: **29.34.37.66. S. 141. 51. 34. 99. E.** This creek can be hard to spot where it joins the main creek as it comes in at an angle and has trees growing across the mouth.

Follow this creek upstream for several hundred metres then climb the left bank and have a look around. There should be a low rise close to the creek with a few dry blows visible and a couple of very old scrapes. We visited this spot only once way back in 1991 and did well with our VLF

machines. But don't restrict yourself to searching these old diggings, get further out and look for new patches as this place has had very few people ever detect it. Even over along the foot of the ranges there could well be new patches to be found, especially if you can spot a reef up on the higher ground. Looking at the ranges on Google earth you can see the reefs running north and south and even where the old timers dropped a shaft or two alongside a promising reef.

If you have Google Earth take a look at the country to the west of this point, especially on the lower slopes of the ranges. There are some very promising looking spots there that could be very rewarding. I would suggest that if you wish to explore this country make sure you have at least one other vehicle along. And having a couple more people will make it easier to find gold, especially be sure to agree to share the patches. To ensure the best mobility take a light outfit, sleeping in swags or the back of a Ute, plenty of water and tucker. Even a small camper trailer would be OK but don't try taking a van into that country. If you look at the Google Earth photo follow the creek toward the hills and you will see it is driveable for several km.

While the area seems to be very remote it isn't really remote from other people. Take a look at Google Earth or your map and you will see you are not far off the Silver City Highway. And you can get mobile phone coverage if you climb a good rise.

All this country is worth spending some time on as the rewards could be very worthwhile and even if you spend a day or two for nothing the odds are lot better than buying a lotto ticket or even a scratchy.

9

ALBERT DIGGINGS

One point five km further down the main Warratta Creek or at: [29. 35. 29. S. 141. 51. 27. E](#) you will find a large side creek enters the main creek on your right (west). Follow this creek for about 1.7km or to [29. 35. 35. S. 141. 50. 27. E](#) to where a small creek enters from your left. You will find a faint track going up the slope, follow this for a hundred metres and you will see the old stone chimneys that mark the site of Albert Town. The old gold diggings are a few hundred metres further on and gold can still be found there with metal detectors. When we last visited in 1992 we found some very nice specimens on a flat just before the main diggings.

Albert was an ephemeral town. It was occupied when water was available and abandoned when it wasn't. There were never more than a couple of hundred people living there at a time. It was one of the most isolated and lonely towns in Australia and only the advent of the 4x4 made it easy to get to. Albert can also be found by driving up the Warratta Creek about 4.9km from the highway and following the above waypoints and directions, or: you can also find it by reversing the following directions to the Good Friday Diggings.

10

The old ghost town of Albert is full of goldfield relics.

Returning to the creek bed make a left turn and continue on up the creek. Where the creek bed becomes too narrow to drive you will see a track leaving the creek to your left. If you have time have a look around these slopes. Walk out and look at any spot that looks different such as a quartz blow or even an iron blow. Pay particular attention to the gullies, even tiny gullies can gather gold as it washes down into the lower points. Be a prospector, not just a detectorist. Search out those places where gold is likely to be and while doing so you will learn a lot about the country.

Spend enough time at it and you will find patches, hopefully patches that no one else has yet found and these are the best ones to find as you get to pick the eyes out of it before anyone else does.

To continue on to Good Friday follow this track over the western arm of the Warratta Ranges and across a creek or two until you see old dry blowing mounds beside the track. At this point you are entering the Good Friday gold diggings named for the day it was found. With the creek on your left you will come to a large mound of dirt where the creek has been dammed.

11

A trommel and riffle box recovery system on the lease at the Good Friday Diggings, Mt Pool Station

It is here we found the Lease where someone has been using a small tractor to load was dirt through

a trommel (classifier) and then wash the fines through a riffle box. I don't know how successful this operation has been but it should have been very good pickings knowing how rich the ground here has been over the years.

From this point you can carry on to have a look at Mount Pool and arrive at Depot Glen, then Milparinka then either Mount Brown, if it is open, or simply return the 40km to Tibooburra via the Silver City Highway.

If you elect to continue on have a look around at the old dry blowing heaps and artefacts (but don't touch the artefacts) then follow the track that cuts across the **Mining Lease on Good Friday Diggings** creek below the dam bank.

12

Follow this track several km over hills and creeks until you come to a gate. Go through the gate and if you wish to visit Mt Pool and view the cairn simply follow the signs. It's not far and the view from the top gives an incredible 360 degree view to a very distant horizon. Most days you will see further from this spot than almost anywhere else in Australia.

Return to the gate and take the track toward Mt Pool homestead then left through another gate and follow the track across Salvation Creek then follow the signs to Pool's grave.

This is one of the most historically significant places in Australia and is on a par with the Dig Tree on Cooper Creek.

On 10 August 1844 Sturt left Adelaide with 15 men, 6 drays, a boat and 200 sheep in search of the inland sea. In eight days the party reached Moorundie and then followed the Murray River to its junction with the Darling, and up the Darling to the vicinity of Lake Cawndilla.

This was an arduous journey over tough and inhospitable country. Having trekked through dry, unexplored country Sturt and his men, with great relief made camp on a permanent water hole they found that Sturt aptly named Depot Glen and the creek Preservation Creek.

Had they not found this waterhole the entire party would have perished as by that time summer heat had dried up all other water within reach. From 27 January 1845 to 16 July they were literally trapped in inhospitable country; men, animals and equipment suffered terribly from the heat and tragically Sturt's second-in-command, James Poole, died of scurvy.

Early in the winter, while they waited for rain Sturt had his men walk to what he named Mt Pool in honour of James Pool. Here they climbed the mount and erected a large rock cairn that can still be seen today.

James Pool was buried beneath the spreading limbs of a Grevillia tree (bloodwood) next to Preservation Creek. To stand beneath the ancient Grevillia tree where Pool is buried and to run your fingers over the still legible letters, JP 1845, carved into the trunk is to make a connection with

history that can give you goose bumps.

Pool's Grave and the tree with JP carved into it

13

From Pool's grave take the track toward Milparinka and out the gate but turn right toward the creek then veer off to your left to visit the actual Depot Glen pool. This shady pool set deep between tall banks was all that sustained Sturt and his men for six long, hot months when their very lives depended on it not running dry.

The waterhole at Depot Glen that sustained Sturt and his men for 6 months

From here you then follow the road to Milparinka and have a look around what was once the centre of the Albert Gold Fields. There are some interesting ruins but some of the better buildings have been renovated and stand as a tribute to what was once a bustling town with its own stone courthouse and police barracks. Mt Brown diggings were to the south with Albert, Good Friday and Warratta diggings to the north. Tibooburra is about forty km to the north along the Silver City Highway.

14

One of the beautifully built old buildings at Milparinka

To obtain permission to drive the Warratta Creek you must first ring TJ's Roadhouse and Post office in Tibooburra 08 8091 3471. They will then give you the phone numbers for the two stations, Gum Vale and Mt Pool that you will need to phone. You can also inquire about the state of the road and book your campsite at the Caravan Park with them while you are on the phone. You can also find the phone numbers further down this document.

NUGGETY GULLY EASTER MONDAY AND TUNNEL HILL

Mount Stuart Station covers all these places as well as Evans Gully. There are no hard and fast directions to give about this area. It stretches from the edge of town along the north side of the Cameron's Corner Road all the way out to Tunnel Hill, about 12km.

You can access good gold ground from any of the tracks leading off the road. All the country along the north of the road as far north as the National Park boundary can carry gold. We found gold well back over the tops of the hills out of sight of the road on ground that looked no different to any other. There have also been some good patches found well back in this country with nuggets in excess of an ounce being found in widely separate patches.

15

But while the north side of the road is where most patches have been found do not neglect the south side. You will find station tracks leading south off the Cameron's Corner Road that lead to dams and water tanks but they may also lead you to very good detecting ground. Years ago we heard about someone who found a large patch beside the Silver City Highway and we think these coordinates

will lead you to it. It is easily found on Google Earth and the old scrapes stand out very well. It is only about 4km south of town and if this is that patch it must have been very rich.

Back on the north side of Cameron's Corner Road you can drive the road and access different parts of the goldfields right out to where your access to Tunnel Hill turns in at: 29°26'33.79"S.

141°55'26.15"E right next to some large plastic water tanks. This track takes you down past Dynamite Dam then up the slopes of Tunnel Hill.

THE COST OF DETECTING

Don't be put off by the cost of detecting around Tibooburra. There is a huge area to detect on the common and most of it produces gold. You could keep yourself busy on the common for many weeks finding gold every day. We both found gold every day we were detecting on the common. Some of it was tiny but it is wonderful how even a tiny bit can make your day. Our biggest bit was the .6 of a gram bit that Cheryl found on the Tipperary Diggings. On the other side of the coin we found numerous bits that were too small to weigh. *There is no charge to detect on the Common.*

16

To detect on Mt Stuart Station you will need to visit the Corner Store in the main street. They will ask

you your name and car registration and issue you with a receipt that is proof that you paid should you be asked by a property owner. The cost is \$15.00 per detector operator per day. To camp costs an extra \$5.00 a day.

To enter Gumvale Station you must go to the Tibooburra Hotel, the two story pub, and pay \$10 a day per detector operator.

While there is a cost it is definitely worthwhile. You are more likely to find a patch of nuggets out on the Mt Stuart station country anywhere north of the Cameron Corner road or on Gumvale station than on the Common, and the scenery is incredible. Be sure to take your camera.

MT BROWN GOLDFIELD

At the time of writing Mount Brown goldfield is still closed but there has been some hope raised that this iconic goldfield and Mt Pool will once again be opened to prospectors in the 2016 season.

Therefore I have included what information I have about Mt Brown. Let's hope the owners do find it in themselves to allow this spot to be once again the place prospectors love to visit.

GOOD CAMPING ADVICE

Do not camp down near any creek or gully anywhere on the corner country goldfields, not even on the creek flats beside them. One year we camped down beside Mt Brown Creek and got away with it. The next year we camped up on a knoll about twenty feet above the creek flat.

One night there were thunderstorms all around us. Lightning flashed continuously and the distant rumble of thunder could be heard but no storms came our way. Just after midnight we were woken by a sound something like an express train approaching.

Suddenly we realised what must be coming. We flew out of bed and managed to get about half dressed when the wind hit at about 200 kilometres an hour. Our Jayco Finch camper heeled steeply from the sudden gale while the canvas side bulged in like a ship's sail in a force ten gale.

We threw ourselves up to the windward side of the camper and held on as if our lives depended on it. By this time we had the light on and the look of concern and shock on each other's face was hilarious and we both burst out laughing. Meanwhile the wind continued to try and roll our camper up hill and it bounced around as if it was fitted with big coil springs. Then an ear shattering crash came as lightning hit the ground very close by this was followed by rain falling out of the sky as if a huge bucket had been up-ended. The lightning became constant and out the windows we could see cricket ball size raindrops hitting the ground and shattering into a million smaller drops.

In seconds the hillside was streaming with water. The noise of the wind, rain and thunder was deafening and just when we thought our time had come it all suddenly ceased as if a switch had been turned off.

We sat on the floor and looked at each other in wonder, we had survived! Going outside we found all our loose gear had disappeared up the hill into the night. Several inches of water continued to stream down the hill and then we heard a growing sound from the dark. Taking the torch to where the knoll overlooked the creek we saw dirty brown water roaring down the creek and even as we watched it broke its banks and flooded across the flat to a depth of about a metre. Had we been camped on the flat we could have been washed away and lost everything.

17

As it was we could breathe a huge sigh of relief and watch as our thunderstorm banged and thumped its way across the hills to the east.

The rest of the night was spent dozing briefly and awakening to the slightest sound. To say we were nervous would have been a great understatement. But no more storms hit us and we eventually got a couple of hours sleep. By morning the creek had receded back between its banks and within a day or two it was virtually dry again. This was the first time we had experienced anything like that storm and, needless to say, it is something we'll never forget. But at the same time we are glad we experienced it few people ever have the chance to go through such a storm and emerge unscathed. We put it down to one more of the thousands of wondrous experiences we have had since we began detecting for gold.

GOOD FRIDAY DIGGINGS- MT POOL

About 8.5 Klm north east of Mt Pool Station Homestead is the Good Friday Diggings at Approximately: 29. 35. 25. S. 141. 49. 03. E so called as they were found on Good Friday. These old dry blow diggings have yielded hundreds of ounces to prospectors over the last 30 years, but there is still gold there.

Again, only small gold will be found on the diggings but out around the original field there are many promising slopes and gullies running down from the Warratta Ranges. Here you will find no water except for a possible pool in the creek so again all your water must be carried. And the nearest fuel is at Milparinka.

Other small workings are at the Albert Diggings and New Bendigo Diggings. 29. 39. 12. S. 141. 54. 32. E. Also known as the White Elephant Diggings. Permission must be gained from Mt Poole Station to enter these sites.

BELOW ARE A SELECTION OF GOOGLE EARTH IMAGES

SOME AREAS ARE NOT HIGH ENOUGH RESOLUTION TO BE OF ANY HELP BUT I HAVE INCLUDED THOSE I THINK ARE WORTHWHILE.

You will find more helpful text after the first batch of photos

18

19

Google Earth is a fantastic tool for researching good detecting spots. Sometimes the resolution isn't high enough to be of any value but when it is high it can be extremely helpful. We have researched many areas throughout Victoria, WA, Qld and Tibooburra and each time it has been helpful in the finding of gold, sometimes helpful to the point of finding good patches where hundreds of nuggets have been found.

20

Cheryl finding yet another little nugget on Flyspeck Hill on the Tibooburra Common using the 2300

21

Detecting amongst the Granites at Tibooburra using a GPX5000.

The Caravan Park at Tibooburra

22

DETECTING GEAR AND TIPS

Fly nets are a definite must for any of the Corner Country gold fields as both early and late in the season the flies will drive you nuts if you don't have one. And even in the middle of winter a few warmer days will bring the little sods out to annoy you. It is very difficult to maintain concentration with flies trying to crawl up your nose, in your eyes and behind your glasses.

Kneepads are another good thing to take along, especially when working a patch of little stuff where you must get down on your knees for any length of time.

As Tibooburra can supply almost all your needs there is no need to pack a complete supply of food and fuel. You can buy frozen meat and bread, fresh bread when it comes in, plus all other food requirements. There is a hospital and the Flying Doctor from Broken Hill also services the town.

There is at least one mechanical workshop where repairs can be affected, punctures repaired and new tires fitted. If any parts you require are not in stock they can quickly be sent up from Broken Hill. And both hotels serve good meals and great beer so a night out is easy, especially Friday nights when there is a happy hour and meat raffles at both hotels.

The Corner Store can supply meals, fruit, vege's and groceries along with a great coffee. We bought one of the best T bone steaks we have ever tasted at the Corner Store and if you need something to fill in the evenings they also supply a great range of books.

Best time to visit the Corner Country Goldfields is between May and September with June, July and August being the most comfortable.

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

The Corner Store (for access to Mt Stuart Station) 08 80913333. Mobile 0418820423

Mt Stuart Homestead: 08 8091 3542

Mt Brown Homestead: 08 8091 3588

Mt Poole Homestead: 08 8091 3545

Gum Vale Homestead: 08 8091 3555.

Tibooburra TJ's Roadhouse and P.O. (08) 8091 3477 (for caravan park bookings)

There is no fossicking license required to look for gold around Tibooburra. However, only maximum of 50 grams of gold can be recovered over a 48 hour time range, excepting nuggets of ten grams or larger. ☺ See site below for further information. There is also a very informative book available through the Department called the Fossicker Guide go to the site below for more information

http://www.minerals.nsw.gov.au/prodServices/minfacts/minifact_5

All the properties around the goldfields use UHF radio for station and inter-station communication. They use both powerful base stations and mobile radios as well. Each property has its own call frequency so if you are equipped with UHF radio you can, in emergency, call on the nearest station for help, or to relay a help message. The country is so open that even a little half-watt hand held UHF radio has considerable range, especially from any handy high point.

23

The entire Corner Country is a photographers dream. The colours combined with the harsh landscape allow anyone with a camera to take home great shots of this incredible wilderness. With cheap and simple to use and very effective digital cameras there is little excuse for even the most amateur photographer. And time of day is important. Early morning and late afternoon are the best as the low, slanting light creates dramatic shadows and contrasts. I prefer late afternoon myself but extremely good shots can also be had during a full moon.

If you time it right you can get the sun rising behind the camera and lighting distant hills as you shoot the large, lowering full moon. This is possible only because the sun rises and the moon sets at the same time during a full moon.

Another little trick is to try and focus your camera on infinity while lowering your lens as far as possible toward the ground without losing focus. This will give you a long foreground that leads into a distant horizon. Early or late in the day any rocks, sticks or bushes will throw very effective shadows that give life to the photo, try using a tree, gully or line of hills to lead the eye into the centre or object of the photo.

WHAT VEHICLE IS BEST

While a 4x4 is undeniably handy in the corner country it isn't absolutely necessary. We had many great trips where we travelled in our Nissan camper van and then later towing our flip-over camper behind our Toyota Camry. The trip up from Broken Hill is no trouble for the average 2x4 while many of the areas mentioned are no problem. But it is handy to have other folk travelling with you, especially if they are driving a 4x4. Places like Jeffries Flat, Albert, Good Friday Diggings and the Warratta Creek drive are accessible only by 4x4.

The Granites, Nuggetty Hill, Easter Monday and Tunnel Hill are OK if you drive carefully while Mt brown is never a problem to two wheel drives unless wet. Any area is inaccessible when the roads are wet, no matter if you are driving a Hummer.

Never forget you are camping and detecting on private property. It is up to you, the individual, to ensure you do everything you can to ensure the continued good will of the landowner toward prospectors.

1. Always leave gates as you find them.
2. Don't drive on wet roads, even station roads.
3. Never camp near a water point as this will prevent stock or wildlife from using it.
4. Report to the landowner anything you may see wrong. This could include a dry trough with stock standing around, a good sign they are used to watering there.
5. Report injured stock or stock stuck in dam mud or fallen in shafts.
6. Report broken windmills, fences, or fences with trees or limbs fallen on them.
7. Always drive slowly on station tracks.
8. Never leave your detecting holes open.

9. Always take your rubbish away with you.
10. Always ensure you carry your own drinking water, do not rely on locals supplying you with water, they are always short of water themselves.
11. Never carry a firearm onto private land without the owner's consent.

Whatever gold you may find around Tibooburra and Mt Brown it will fade into insignificance compared to the dramatic beauty of this desert wilderness, for gold is the thing of least value to be found in the desert.

24

WARNING

Your experience in the Corner Country will stay with you always and the urge to return will strengthen with every year that follows.

DISCLAIMER

While I have made every effort to bring you up to date information things can change overnight. It is up to you to obtain permission and check on prevailing conditions such as if the place you are heading for is still open to prospecting. They might be shearing and no camping or detecting allowed while shearing or mustering is in progress. If you are refused entry take it in good heart, as there are plenty of other good spots around that you can work.

We take no responsibility for changed conditions. Nowhere in this work do we suggest or imply access to any of the properties included in the work.

Copyright: Jim & Cheryl Foster 20015

The information on this CD is copyright and the work cannot be copied or transmitted electronically without the permission of the copyright owner.

Sunset from Tibooburra Caravan Park

25

THE RUINS OF THE OLD WARRATTA STAMP BATTERY ON WARRATTA CREEK

26

Excellent meals are available at both hotels 7 days a week, also at the Corner Country Store and the road house. Takeaway meals are also available from all these venues. Prices are very good for all venues considering Tibooburra is so far from anywhere.

Fuel is also reasonably priced with diesel at \$1.50 a litre and ULP at \$1.53 a litre at both the road house and the Corner Country Store while we visited.

Groceries are available at both the Corner Country Store and the road house and again the prices are much more reasonable than we expected. Mail is delivered to the PO on Tuesdays and Thursdays with fresh supplies of bread and other food on Thursday evening or Friday morning.

Mobile phone reception is available at Tibooburra and even out on the common and Easter Monday diggings with reception available even further out if you are on a hill. There is no TV reception other than satellite at Tibooburra so bring along plenty of movies etc if you require evening entertainment. Tibooburra is serviced by the Flying Doctor with clinics every Tuesday.

27

Below is a copy of an article we did for the G&T magazine in August 2015. It is the story of our last and most amazing trip we have yet had to Tibooburra.

NUGLETS BY THE THOUSAND

Our first day of a seven week stay in Tibooburra we headed out on the common and tried a nice looking hill while still in sight of town. It took a couple of hours but soon we were on a patch of tiny bits of gold scattered all over that hill. We spent four days cleaning it up averaging about 30 bits a day. But what do you do when you have cleaned out a spot? You look for a new spot. Actually we tried a spot where we had done reasonably well last year, a waterway that meandered between the

saltbush. The main reason we went back was because we reckoned we now had an advantage on last year when we had been using the standard issue headphones that had come with our new SDC2300. Using an adapter we could now use our old Koss TD80 headphones. These are still the best headphones we have ever found for detecting, a pity they are not made any more in the same OHMs (resistance). The Koss UF 30 that come with the machine are only around 100 OHMs making them much less sharp.

We found gold in the first few minutes on that patch and continued to do so all over the ground we thought we'd cleaned out last year. But then the gold finally did run out and we had to find more ground. It was then a fellow prospector, Ray using a 5000 and a six inch mono coil said he had finished detecting a nearby hill but after seeing what we'd got with the 2300 he reckoned we would find more that he had missed, and he was right. Even though Ray had found dozens of nuggets all over that hill the previous winter and again this winter we found well over 100 little nuggets. It was when we finished that slope we decided a return to Easter Monday diggings would be worthwhile. At first the gold was slow but soon it began turning up about a half dozen bits an hour. Last season Cheryl and I had decided that we would do an hour each throughout the day. Because we have got a bit lazy in our old age this means a 9am start. This means three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon, a total of three hours each a day. While the other was detecting one of us would sit in the car in the warm sunshine and read a book or listen to the radio. In the afternoons we would get out and explore looking for more ground or take photos. Three hours a day might not seem like much but after seven weeks we had both become quite fit and lost 5 kilos each while having a heckova lot of fun.

Our tally was rising much faster than last year but could we keep on finding ground like we had? It seemed we could but only because we were using a 2300. We had good days and better days, like the day Cheryl found 10 bits in one hole then next day finding a glory hole that had 12 bits of free gold and about twenty bits in conglomerate, we still haven't crushed all our dozen or so species. Our next spot was Evans Gully. We bypassed both Nuggety Gully and Tunnel hill as we'd never found much on either but always done well at Evans Gully. Evans Gully can be found by driving out the Cameron Corner road for 14km to the Hewart Downs turnoff. (S. 29.26.304. E. 141.52.990) Follow this road until you come to the Gumvale Gate and take the track which angles off to your right just before the gate. Follow this track towards the hills and take the left hand track at the fork. This track takes you up and over the range and down into Evans Gully.

28

At the lower point of the track two creeks come together (S. 29.27.679. E. 141.49.742) you will find the remains of two old fire places where the old timers camped beside what remains of the puddler dam. You are now standing next to Evans Gully.

At first we worked old patches that we'd found good gold on 20 odd years ago and did reasonably well but then one patch in particular really turned up trumps. This was a patch we hadn't found but a couple we knew had. It was amazing! We found gold on the raked part of the patch, on the slope down to the creek and all along both banks for nearly 100m as well as in the creek bed itself. This was despite finding quite a few detector holes dug only a few days before.

We spent three days cleaning up this patch and I reckon we didn't leave much but when the gold ran out Cheryl went for a walk. Up on the saddle not 100m from that old patch Cheryl found a new patch where the track went over the hill.

Some people reckon the SDC2300 won't find deep target but we proved them wrong. Following a run of gold down a slope the surface ran into deeper ground as it neared the bottom of the slope. Well out into the deeper ground I dug a .22 lead nearly a foot deep. Then a faint signal heralded a .4 of a gram nugget at about 9 inches. This .4 was actually the biggest bit I got at Evans Gully.

Looking at Evans gully with new eyes we decided that it hardly mattered where we went we'd find gold anyway with the 2300, and we were right again. In places where we'd detected before with other detectors and found nothing we found enough each day to keep our tally ticking over very nicely at what turned out to be an average of 22 bits a day and that included the days we never

detected.

Toward the end of our seven weeks we returned to the Common simply to find a spot to get out of the wind. It was so cold and windy we decided that as we had been asked many times for the location of the very famous Fly Speck Hill we would mark it. Carrying quartz rocks warmed us up a bit and slowly the sign, picked out with white quartz rocks on the brown schist hill took shape in letter over a metre high. Now anyone driving into the common via the popular two mile track can't fail to see where Fly Speck Hill is located.

As the east side of the hill was sheltered from the strong westerly Cheryl decided to give it a go, not expecting to find much. Over two hours we turned up 17 bits on what we expected to have been totally worked out over the last 23 years since we first found it. And this was only on a very small area on the east face, the only place out of the wind.

During the entire seven weeks we only detected three places, the Common, Easter Monday and Evans Gully. We did do a couple of hours at Tunnel Hill one day but only between photos when we were putting together a 4X4 run for another magazine and we did find a few bits each.

Detecting the common costs nothing and it still produces gold, albeit mostly very small. But having said that we did hear of some multiple grammers being picked up on the common while we were there.

Detecting on Mt Stuart, which takes in Easter Monday, Nuggety Gully, Tunnel Hill and Evans Gully will cost you \$15.00 a day per detector operator payable at the Corner Country Store. If you wish to camp on any of the Mt Stuart diggings it costs an extra \$5.00 a day.

29

Gumvale Station which takes in Jefferies Flat, German Gully and the western side of the Warratta range costs \$10 per day per detector operator payable at the Tibooburra Hotel.

Both Mt Brown and Mt Pool stations are still closed and unfortunately likely to remain that way.

If you haven't yet been there you can find part of Easter Monday Diggings by turning right almost opposite the Tibooburra dump. Only about a hundred metres off the road you can park and detect the old workings and surrounds up the slope on your right. To get into the main Easter Monday diggings you will find the main track only a couple of hundred metres further along the Camerons Corner road on your right. The turnoff is marked by a steel sign pole that lacked a sign when we were there. Simply follow the main track about a kilometre and you will come to the main workings all around you.

To find Nuggety Gully Follow the Cameron Corner road for 4km from the turn off from the Silver City Highway or S. 29.26.371 E 141.57.659 and take the track that angles off the road to your right. If not used much early in the season prior to your visit this turn off may be faint at the beginning but is marked by two steel fence posts, one leaning on the other. This is a rough track but it takes you through some of the best prospecting country around Tibooburra and many patches have been found through here.

At about S. 29.25.7772 E 141.56.2293 you will come to an old puddler dam on your right. Nuggety Gully is only a few hundred metres further on. From this point you can also continue on to Tunnel Hill.

For a quicker and easier run out to Tunnel hill follow the Camerons Corner road out until you come to two large plastic water tanks on the right, about, or north side of the road at S. 29.26.558 E. 141.55.414 or about ten km. Turn right here and follow the main track down the long slope and into the Tunnel Hill diggings. Most of the gold found around hill has been found out on new ground so don't spend too much time on the old workings.

Something we have found in our years of detecting the corner country is that the smallest gold is usually found on the Common and close to Tibooburra. But the gold gets a little larger and heavier out at Evans Gully and a bit more so on the Gumvale ground. The biggest gold we heard of this year were up to 19 grams from Gumvale. The largest gold and seemingly the heaviest has always come from Mt Brown on the most southern field. These are simply our observations over a 25 year period

of detecting the area and others may well disagree.

Our total finds for our seven weeks at Tibooburra were 1,108 tiny nuggets with a total weight of 2.5 ounces. We reckon we found an average of five birdshot for every bit of gold so that means we had to dig and search for over 6000 targets no wonder we got fit and lost weight. Another couple, Ron and Beryl also spent quite a few weeks at Tibooburra and did just as well. They were using a GPX5000 and a SDC2300, Ron mostly used the 2300. Their total came to 1610 nuggets with the SDC2300 finding 1175 bits for 57 grams.

30

Their total gold weight came to 109 grams. This incredible total is mostly due to Ron, unlike us lazy blighters, being a very dedicated prospector who often began his day before sun up and worked until dark coupled with his use of the 2300. Beryl said that Ron doesn't have hobbies, he has obsessions. His best day was 65 bits but that also included some work moonlighting.

Our Tibooburra visit was at the end of a five month trip from Mt Gambier up the east coast to Cape York then back down through the centre of Qld to Tibooburra. The gold we found, if sold, would have paid for all our fuel costs and caravan park fees for the entire trip. Or to put it another way coupled with last year's three weeks of detecting, it would well and truly paid for the SDC2300.

Will we be back next year? You can bet on it.

Typical country around Tunnel Hill

31

32

You will see plenty of these around Tibooburra

One thousand one hundred and eight tiny bits of Tibooburra gold found with the SDC2300 on our 2015 trip.

33

MORE BOOKS THAT YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN

NUGGET JEWELLERY MADE EASY

This book is an easy to follow guide to turning your own gold nuggets into personalized, eye catching jewellery. You will learn just how easy it is to solder a gold bail onto a nugget or ear posts to make wonderful ear rings, where to source supplies and much more.

GOLD PROSPECTING MADE EASY

This book will make you a successful gold prospector in one easy lesson. It also covers where to find gold and where and how to buy the RIGHT gold detector for you. Prospecting for gold is one of very few hobbies where you can actually make money.

COIN HUNTING MADE EASY

If you have ever wanted to search an old house site and find coins and jewellery or find jewellery on the beach this book is for you. Once you have read it you will know how to ascertain which detector to buy, where to buy it and where and how to search.

TIBOOBURRA GOLD

This CD covers everything you need to make a successful gold prospecting expedition into one of Australia's most iconic gold fields. Recently updated and fresh information combined with the knowledge gained from this E-book, or printed book will ensure success even on your first visit.

ARARAT GOLD

Ararat on the western edge of Victoria's Golden Triangle is a goldfield that covers hundreds of square kilometres and produces gold nuggets over its full length. This book includes a great deal of information, maps, GPS waypoints and Google Earth images.

PROSPECTING WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WA is a huge state with gold fields from one end to the other. This book details many of the fields with a mine of information including GPS waypoints, maps and Google Earth images to make it easy for you to find gold in the Golden West.

SANDSTONE GOLD

Sandstone is one of the most iconic WA goldfields This book details many of the fields with a mine of information including GPS waypoints, maps and Google Earth images to make it easy for you to find gold around Sandstone.

For more information please Email me at: jfoster1944@bigpond.com