

Q78 No7

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M. PENNEY + PARTY
Diary (III) - WART HILL TO THE SEA
20.2.1958 - 10.3.1958

Remains of diary

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Wart Hill to the Sea.

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LYELL - E.Z. - EXPLORATIONS

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14th March, 1958.

To: Mr. G.F. Hidspeeth.

M. PENNEY & PARTY

DIARY (II) - WART HILL TO THE SEA

20th February, 1958 to 10th March, 1958

Members of party are

Marshall Penney,
Ronald Hall,
Ray Martin.

Thursday, 20th February, 1958

Very wet and cold in the morning. Unable to dry all clothes and gear wet through on previous day's expedition with Dr. Scott. Helicopter arrived at approximately 1330 hours to make camp shift to Wart Hill area. Camp shift required six flights. The last one arrived at new camp site 1545 hours. Camp was set up about one mile west of Wart Hill in lee of timber belt. Everything was well under control by nightfall. A fine stand of young tallow-woods and tea-tree provide a plentiful supply of first class fire wood. Good water is to be had in small creek 100 yards east of camp site.

Friday, 21st February.

During the morning reconnaissance was made of the Wart Hill area. After dinner work was commenced on cutting traverse westward from Wart Hill to the sea. Proceeded on Bearing 295° M approximately along tongue of low scrub jutting into timber belt. This scrub is heavy tea-tree interlaced with bauera and heath. Heavy rain fell during the afternoon and stopped work.

Saturday, 22nd February

Heavy rain fell during the morning and deciding it would be too wet and miserable in the scrub we proceeded to prospect some of the small creeks and watercourses on the plain east and north of the camp. Most of these showed very fine colours of gold and traces of rutile. After dinner the weather cleared away to the south west and we resumed work on cutting the traverse. At the end of the day we had reached the end of the low scrub. This is approximately 600 yards from the open plains country.

Sunday, 23rd February

After taking 0830 schedule call from base M. Penney and R. Hall proceeded to work on traverse. While T. Burrell was to wait for helicopter to take him to Queenstown. After arrived at the end of traverse work was commenced on a Bearing of 261° M approximately. Extremely heavy horizontal scrub was met with also patches of bauera and cutting grass. The general fall of the land was westerly. At 1600 hours we could see in front of us a steep gorge heavily timbered which we assumed to be the fault zone marked on our aerial photographs. We returned to camp in time to take 1730 hours schedule call from base and were informed that our third member T. Burrell had arrived safely in Queenstown. Supplies of fresh food left by helicopter were very welcome. Since arriving in the Wart Hill area work has been greatly hampered by extremely bad weather conditions. At the present moment sky is very overcast and it looks like more rain at any moment.

Monday, 24th February

Heavy rain and cold winds in the morning made conditions too bad for an early start on our traverse. We carried on with some necessary camp chores till dinner time and by then conditions had improved enough to enable us to go back to work on the traverse. After about one hours work we reached a very nice stream flowing from north to south. This is the area indicated on our photographs as a possible fault zone. The valley through which this stream flows as far as can be seen is remarkably straight. Some very fine myrtles and sassafras were noticed also man fern which is not usual for this area. Proceeding westward a short distance from the stream extra heavy bauera scrub was encountered and progress was at the rate of a few yards an hour. The scrub met with so far on this traverse is the worst we have been since starting this work in this area. At the end of the day we reckon to be very close to the large plains area to be seen on aerial photographs.

Tuesday, 25th February

The weather as usual was very bad early in the morning but gradually improved during the day till it was more or less fine. Work was continued on cutting of traverse. After patches of horizontal scrub had been passed a small creek was crossed running north and south approximately 150 yards from large creek crossed on previous day. The traverse was continued on through very heavy bauera scrub till reaching the edge of what appeared to be a nice plain on the aerial photos. This turned out to be covered by tea-tree scrub so thick as to be almost impassable. Some button grass was noticed in the bottom of the scrub. On reaching a small slightly clearer knoll Wart Hill could be seen back to the eastward. Bearing taken on this feature was 72° E Magnetic. Here work finished for the day.

Wednesday, 26th February

It was decided to day to take rock samples on the section of traverse already cut. The morning was clear and bright but with a strong N.W. wind indicating likely bad weather later in the day. The first

sample 1462 was taken from a small creek crossing the traverse at right angles. This is right at the edge of the open plains country. Strike was 295° Magnetic, dip vertical.

1463 approximately 150 yards along the traverse from first sample on the right hand side of tongue of scrub which juts into the timber belt in a W.N.W. direction for a distance of about six hundred yards. It was not possible here to observe the dip and strike of formation.

1464 170 yards along traverse from previous sample on the left hand side of tongue of scrub. Unable to observe dip and strike.

1465 One hundred yards back from the end of the scrub. Strike north.

1466 On a low ridge 50 yards west of the end of the scrub patch and 150 yards along the traverse from where previous sample was taken. Strike was north, dip west.

1467 In old creek bed 40 yards from last sample. Unable to observe strike or dip.

1468 On a low ridge 30 yards from last sample. Strike 300° N.N.W., dip S.W.

1469 In a gully 100 yards from previous sample.

1470 On a ridge 100 yards along from last sample approximately, and about 200 yards east of the large creek which flows down the centre of the possible fault zone marked on aerial photographs. This formation appeared to be in a mass.

1471 From a semi dry creek bed 50 yards along traverse from last sample. This is just back from the steep fall into the large creek mentioned previously. One dish of gravel was panned from here but showed no trace of mineral. All samples up to this point were dug from the bottom of prospect holes. Average depth of holes 18 inches. The next five samples were taken from rock outcrops on either side of the gorge.

1472 from top of cliff 75 yards above the creek.

1473 On the east bank of stream 20 yards above crossing log. The formation on this side of the stream is clearly seen and appears to be more or less a mass as we were unsure of the bedding planes. However, it is a cliff running north and south on the eastern bank of the stream.

1474 After crossing the stream this sample was taken 10 yards above the creek. Strike N dipping W.

1475 Ten yards further up the slope. Strike North, dipping westerly.

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1476 Taken from just below top of the brow. Strike North, dipping west. From here on the samples were again taken from the bottom of the prospect holes. One dish of wash was panned from the bottom of a hole sunk three feet deep on west side of stream. This showed no trace of mineral.

1477 Taken on the western side of a slight ridge 100 yards west from top of the valley.

1478 From the bank of a small creek 50 yards along the traverse from last sample. Strike north, dipping west.

1479 At the start of the large flat 100 yards from last sample. Unable to observe strike.

1480 100 yards along track. Strike north, dip west. This was about 200 yards from where the traverse has been cut so far. All strikes and dips also distance is only approximate. Bearings given are magnetic. Heavy rain which had been threatening for some hours commenced to fall making conditions most unpleasant. It was decided to return to camp. Time 1600 hours. On arriving at base saturated through was greeted by Ray Martin who had arrived per helicopter from the Lewis River. Ray expects to be here for 4 or 5 days to help us out.

Thursday, 27th February

The weather as usual was rough and squally with intermittent rain showers all day. Decided to continue cutting traverse. R. Martin and R. Hall went on with the work while M. Penney stayed at base as the scrub itch he has had for some time is still not too good. Most of the days work was spent crossing the large tea-tree plains which are in the centre of this area. The scrub here is very dense. The ground is swampy black and very wet. Fine white quartz was noticed all through the mud. At the end of the days work we had crossed this area and were in bigger timber of the western side. The undergrowth here is very heavy bauera scrub. Arrived back at base about 1800 hours. The helicopter had arrived during the morning bringing supplies of fresh food which was most welcome.

Friday, 28th February

Work was continued today on cutting of traverse. Weather was most awful with heavy rain squalls and gale force winds. The scrub if possible was worse than before. Mostly heavy bauera scrub full of down logs. Distance covered today is estimated at about 600 yards. The country is still flat and boggy. Work finished at 1700 hours and arrived back at camp at 1845 hours to find Marshall had a very nice tea prepared. Strong winds and rain continue.

Saturday, 1st March

Work was continued today on cutting of traverse. Scrub is still very thick but appears to be changing slightly as we approach the coast. Most of the ground covered is very flat and boggy. Work was carried on till 5.30 as the weather today has been much better after the heavy rain last

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night. At the end of the day we had just reached a nice little creek running in a S.W. direction. The wash noticed in the bed of this creek looked very promising. A lot of heavy quartz very black with iron stain. Some nice green schist was noticed in the bank. Time taken to walk back out to the plains was one hour fifteen minutes. Arrived back at camp at seven fifteen very tired after the long day scrub cutting. We estimate our traverse to be within about half a mile of the sea coast.

Sunday, 2nd March

Work was continued today on cutting as we fully expected to reach the coast. Very heavy rain fell all day several inches we reckon. On returning to base tonight all streams were in full flood. The day spent in the bush was the worst yet we were drenched through wet and miserable cutting through the heavy scrub. Towards the end of the day we crossed another small stream running S.W. After crossing the stream we entered into a fine belt of myrtle timber with light undergrowth which was most welcome after the type of scrub we have been through. Tomorrow if the weather is fine we should reach the coast.

Monday, 3rd March

The weather today is still very unsettled with heavy rain showers and high winds, sky very overcast. We left camp early to make an all out attempt to finish cutting the track. After starting work in the myrtle timber we had entered the previous day we continued on about four hundred yards and crossed a small stream flowing S.W. This creek was full of horizontal scrub. The wash noticed looked very good. Quartz stained black. The myrtle timber continued on for well over half a mile which made this a lot easier for us. This belt of timber which is approximately one mile wide is a lot different type of country to the heavy scrub to the east. After leaving the timber we entered a stand of paper-bark tea-tree, pear wood, etc. The country here is flat and swampy. On cutting through this we came to a small button grass plain. It was evident we were almost on the sea coast. We reckoned this to be near enough with the track cutting as further rock samples could be got over the remaining short distance by pushing through the coastal scrub. After a brief discussion we decided to return to base by walking south down the sea coast crossing the inlet at the mouth of Sassafras Creek and then walk up the plains to our camp under Wart Hill. We believed from information we had and aerial photos that this would be as easy as walking back through the track although longer. Also it would further our knowledge of the country and enable us to see some new country from a prospecting point of view. Much to our disgust we were a little out in our calculations as to it being the easiest way back to base. The time taken to push right through to the rocks on the sea coast was one hour. We travelled in a S.W. direction and found ourselves in a small creek. The scrub was very heavy, stunted peppermint gums, pear woods, prickly wattles and bracken-fern. This creek we were in appeared to be very mineralised. It appeared in one place to run through a formation of quartz and black slate. We also noticed lumps of gossan on the banks. Unfortunately it was much

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too late to do any prospecting. When we finally arrived on the rocks at the sea coast the time was 1910 hours. Pushing south as fast as possible darkness overtook us and we were forced to proceed a little more cautiously. The weather continued to worsen with gale force winds and heavy rain. Most of the route down the coast was over the coastal rocks but in some places there were some nice little beaches. At approximately 2030 hours we arrived at the mouth of Sassafras Creek. After all the heavy rain the creek was a river in flood and with a full tide it was much too dangerous to attempt to cross in the dark. Neither Ray Martin or myself had been in this area before. We found a small sheltered coverlit a fire and went to sleep on the sand. We were both very anxious to get back to camp as we knew Marshall would be very worried but under the circumstances it was the right thing to do.

Tuesday, 4th March

At first light the next morning we went up the inlet found a place to cross went around the end of the timber and proceeded N.E. back towards Wart Hill. We arrived back at base just in time to catch the 0830 hours schedule call from Queenstown. Marshall had been very worried and had been in touch with base about us. It had taken us two and a half hours to reach base from where we slept last night. The route back this way is not as good as we thought by any means. It was noticed along the coast that there was an abundance of wallaby and kangaroo also wild duck. Good camp sites could be made in some places. The weather at this time had come in very bad. There had been no flying done for several days and our food supplies were getting low. We were out of tea and sugar also tinned meats. Ray Martin and myself went to bed for the rest of the day as we were pretty tired after our expedition and the weather was just too bad for us to do anything else. Marshall prepared the meals.

Wednesday, 5th March

Although there was some rain early the weather began to improve and at 1115 hours the helicopter arrived with food supplies and took Ray Martin to his new camp on the Wanderer River. We were both sorry to see Ray go as he has been such a great help to us here and did a mighty job under adverse conditions in the cutting of the track. The helicopter arrived later in the day with another load of food and we spent the remainder of the day on camp jobs. We had 2 weeks without a fine day and have been unable to dry clothes etc.

Thursday, 6th March

The weather today has been the best day we have had since Christmas. Left camp 0730 hours for a day of collecting rock samples.

1481 Was taken from a small knoll on the track. Wart Hill is visible from here. This is about quarter way across the large tea tree scrub plain and 250 yards from last sample. Unable to tell strike.

1482 About 250 yards along traverse from last sample two holes put down previous to this proved same rock as first sample taken. Another hole was dug 100 yards westward on traverse and rock there was also identical to 1481.

1483 Two hundred and fifty yards along from last sample and close to gum ridge at the edge of tea-tree plain. Strike was north and south with a slight dip to the west.

1484 Was right at the foot of gum ridge mentioned previously. Strike was north and south.

1485 On the centre of gum ridge and 100 yds, from last sample.

1486 One hundred yards along from last sample in a low swampy flat. Unable to observe strike.

1487 One hundred and fifty yards from last sample. This was a clay pug sample as it was not possible to reach rock bottom.

1488 One hundred yards from last sample. It was noticed here that there was some nice looking gossan about the surface of the ground. A specimen of this was included with the rock sample also a sample of the clay which covers the schist. All under the one number in the bag. Strike of schist N and S, dip vertical.

1489 One hundred and fifty yards along the track from the last sample. One dish of dirt washed here showed no trace of mineral.

1490 About 120 yards along. A sample of pug.

1491 One hundred yards from last sample in a flat swampy area. Strike N and S, dip vertical.

1492 About seventy yards along the track near some large gum timber. Strike N and S, dipping to the west.

1493 One hundred yards along from last sample. Unable to observe strike.

1494 On a gum ridge about 100 yards from last sample.

1495 This sample was taken in the only real creek so far on the track. The two specimens of schist are about fifteen yards apart east, west. The gossan is outcropping between the two. All are included under the one number.

1496 A dish sample taken from the same area. This concluded the days work. Arrived back at base in the dark 1945 hours. Very tired.

Friday, 7th March

Left camp at 0800 hours for another day of rock sampling. Continued along traverse from where work finished yesterday.

1497 Was a sample of pug twenty yards on the western side of creek reached last night.

1498 170 yards along traverse from last sample, the area between there is flat and swampy.

1499 In the bed of a very small creek just on the eastern side of myrtle timber belt.

1500 At the edge of myrtle timber 110 yards west of the small creek.

1501 150 yards along traverse from last sample.

1502 150 yards along traverse from last sample.

1503 40 yards along traverse from last sample. This is a most peculiar formation. Numerous small boulders protruding out of the moss in a low mound and bound together by a yellow clay almost like a gossan formation. At a depth of two feet or a little over the formation appeared to be solid. It looks very interesting as there is a lot of jet black material in the rock.

1504 40 yards along traverse from last sample. Strike north and south slight dip to the west.

N.B. There is about 3 to 4 feet of top soil and clay overlaying the formations in this myrtle timber and some of the samples are a little decomposed this makes trouble in trying to observe strikes.

1505 100 yards along traverse from last sample. On the edge of a slight fall into a gully. A trench 4 feet long was dug here across the rock strike which appeared to be north south. Several samples were taken from this and are all included together. This was a most interesting formation.

1506 10 yards from last sample. Strike north south.

1507 150 yards along traverse from last sample. Strike north and south.

1508 40 yards from last sample. This was a sample of pug. A shallow scrub covered gully here runs through the heavy timber in a general north south direction.

1509 50 yards from last sample in the bed of a very small creek. This concluded the samples for the day.

Marshall waited at base for Dr. Scott to call in on his way back from Port Davey. We were told he would be visiting us again on Monday.

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Saturday, 8th March

Marshall and I decided to make a two day fly trip along the track to complete the rock samples. Left camp 0900 hours and it took us three and a quarter hours carrying 40 lb. packs to reach the centre of the myrtle timber. It would take the best part of four hours to walk the track right on to the coast.

1510 The first sample was taken about 30 yards west of the small creek mentioned above. This formation was a mass of loose boulders in yellow clay. I would say at depth it would be solid. Black material mentioned elsewhere in this report was evident in these rocks.

1511 One hundred yards along track from previous sample.

1512 Thirty yards along track from last sample. This appeared at first to be a heap of blood red, hand sized rocks in the yellow clay. A hole dug to a depth of about two feet showed a formation of similar type of rock. This is soft and just ordinary weight.

1513 Thirty yards along track from last sample. Strike north, slight westerly dip.

1514 One hundred yards along track from last sample.

1515 One hundred yards along track from last sample. Depth of clay and top-soil here made it very difficult to obtain decent specimens. One hundred yards along track hole was sunk over 4 feet but could not get a sample.

1516 Eighty yards along from the above hole.

1517 one hundred yards along from last sample. This is at western edge of myrtle timber belt. This concluded work for the day. Our camp was made on the western side of the creek mentioned previously.

Sunday, 9th March

The day was fine and clear. Work was resumed early. The first sample

1518 One hundred yards along traverse from last sample. Approaching a belt of tea trees and paper barks. The country here changes completely from rich red soil and myrtle timber, etc. to a low swampy tea tree flat.

1519 One hundred yards along traverse from last sample in the centre of a tea-tree flat.

1520 One hundred and eighty yards from last sample approaching the edge of a button grass plain. One hole put down in the centre of this plain two hundred yards wide failed to reach bottom. Rock under button grass was a mass of quartz boulders.

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1521 The traverse here headed slightly south of west 255° M down a small creek heading to the sea. Sample was taken from the creek bottom 100 yards down this stream from the button grass plain.

1522 Forty yards down the creek from last sample.

1523 A dish sample was washed here. Showed plenty of pyrites and one unidentified black mineral. One piece of gossan from a loose boulder of same was included with this sample. Much quartz appeared in the creek. Time prevented any more sampling to be done. The work is within a few hundred yards of the sea coast here. We consider this to be sufficient until the work is seen by Dr. Scott who is due to arrive tomorrow to give us his opinion on the matter. We arrived back at base 1800 hours. We were informed on the 1900 hours schedule call that Dr. Scott would not arrive till Tuesday.

Monday, 10th March

The weather was fine and clear. The morning was spent washing clothes and doing general camp jobs. After an early dinner we walked North up the plain to a small creek running west from the slopes of Wart Hill. The afternoon was spent prospecting this with the dish. The results of this (as usual) were disappointing. We were informed tonight Dr. Scott would arrive 0745 hours in the morning. Unless otherwise informed this concludes (after Dr. Scott's visit tomorrow) our activities in this Wart Hill area.

M.J. Penney

R.E. Hall