

23 KELLYS CAVE

Sunday, Return. AWTGS:3, 13 km, 60m+ 60m

Relatively flat. 4WD track. Last kilometre off track. Loose stones, steep descent

The destination of this walk is to the site of the historic hideout used by Ned Kelly and Joe Byrne which overlooked the now ghost gold mining settlement of Sebastopol. The Kelly Caves are perched high above the settlement, offering clear views of the site of Jo Byrne's mother's house. From this vantage point the gang could keep an eye on police movement, and their stolen horses, which were tethered in a clearing to the left of the cave site.

Ned Kelly's mother lived in Sebastopol Flat, once a place of importance. In 1857, on the four-kilometre-long main street there were 83 businesses, 23 restaurants, at least eight hotels and a brewery, as well as tent-makers, jewellers, storekeepers, butcher shops, carpenters and watchmakers.

Getting To The Start (-36.343, 146.589)

Take the Woolshed Valley Road, from either Eldorado or Beechworth, turning south onto Nieoffs Road for 4.6 km (10 mins) to reach the start at the junction of Nieoffs Road and CFA Track.

WALK DESCRIPTION

The first five kilometres are easy walking (relatively flattish) on the well-maintained but quiet 4WD CFA Track, with Chiltern State Forest on one side, and open farmland on the other. After five kilometres (-36.324, 146.621) leave the track, and head into the bush towards the cave (-36.320, 146.618). Cross the exposed rock of Kelly's Lookout where Ned and Joe received signals sent via mirrors. Walking down, and along, Kelly's Lookout, we reach the cave. After a break, return via the same route.