

# City of Greater Bendigo: Marong Heritage Study Mining Sites

## BLACK ROCK FLAT MINES AND ALLUVIAL WORKINGS

### Other Names

**Location** Parcel No.P123422, Kamarooka State Forest, east side of Black Rock Road, Black Rock Reef, Whipstick

**Map Reference** Summerfield 1:25,000 - BV570.478

Victorian Heritage Register No

National Estate Register No

Planning Scheme No



**Description** On the west side of a 300 metre-long outcrop of black rock is a line of small mullock paddocks. Also a patch of alluvial sinking.

**History** Period of activity: 1857-1879+  
Line of reef: Austrian/Black Rock  
Maximum recorded annual production: 180ozs obtained from 157 tons  
Total production: 306ozs obtained from 274 tons  
Deepest working level: 100 feet  
Deepest shaft: unknown, but probably above water level

**Thematic Context** Mining

**Comparative Examples** The site is one of a number of representative shallow-level low-production mines in the study area, namely: Christoff (1856-1898), Wallace (1856-1906), Sandfly (1857-1890), Elliott (1858-1889), Barkly (1857-1951), Shamrock (1862-1881), Unfortunate Bolle's (1862-1865) and Apollo Hill (1864-1887). The sites on Black Rock Flat are unusual because they are have remained undisturbed by deeper level mining, sluicing or cyaniding.

**Statement of Significance** The site contains representative examples of shallow alluvial and reef workings of a type found at many other sites within the study area.

**Level of Significance** None

### Recommendation

**Heritage Boundaries** Not relevant

**References** 1. "Mining Intelligence. The Whipstick." The Bendigo Advertiser, Wednesday, 3 June 1857.  
2. "Mining Intelligence. The Whipstick." From our own Correspondent, The Bendigo Advertiser, Saturday, 14 November 1857.  
3. "Bendigo mining intelligence. Whipstick." From our own Correspondent, 7 August 1858; The Bendigo Advertiser, Wednesday, 11 August 1858.  
4. "Mining intelligence. The new rush to the Whipstick." From our own Correspondent, 16 August 1858; The Bendigo Advertiser, Wednesday, 18 August 1858.  
5. "Whipstick." From our own Correspondent, 27 August 1858; The Bendigo Advertiser, Thursday, 26 August 1858.

6. "Mining. New reef. Whipstick Ranges." The Bendigo Advertiser, Monday, 10 November 1862.
7. "Mining intelligence." The Bendigo Advertiser, Wednesday, 20 December 1865, p2, col.5.
8. Reports of the Mining Surveyors and Mining Registrars, Sandhurst mining district, Raywood division.
9. "Elysian Flat." From our own Correspondent, Wednesday, 6 June; The Bendigo Advertiser, Thursday, 7 June 1866.
10. "Elysian Flat." From our own Correspondent, Monday, 18 June; The Bendigo Advertiser, Tuesday, 19 June 1866.
11. "Raywood." From our own Correspondent, Tuesday, 3 July; The Bendigo Advertiser, Wednesday, 4 July 1866.
12. "Mining intelligence." The Bendigo Advertiser, Monday, 22 October 1869, p3, col.3.
13. "Mining intelligence. Austrian Gold Mining Company (registered), Whipstick." The Bendigo Advertiser, Friday, 24 December 1869, p2, col.1.
14. Reports of the Mining Surveyors and Mining Registrars.
15. "Mining meetings. Austrian Mining Company (Registered)." The Bendigo Advertiser, Saturday, 8 January 1870.
16. "Mining meetings. Austrian Company (registered), Whipstick." The Bendigo Advertiser, Friday, 15 July 1870, p5, col6-p6, col.1.
17. "Alluvial gold at the Whipstick." The Bendigo Advertiser, Saturday, 23 August 1879, 2, col.6.
18. W. H. Cundy, "Second report on Elysian Flat gold field." Progress Report No.10, Geological Survey of Victoria, 1899, 27-29, map.

#### Notes

**Assessed by** David Bannear in February 1992 and reviewed by Peter Milner in June 1998

**Chronology** 03.□06.1857□I visited yesterday the new rush or what is commonly called Dead Man's Gully. It is situate in the scrub, about eight miles from the Whipstick Diggings, and is reached by going along the new line of road from Moorehead's Reef for about five miles, and then diverging off the road into the bush to the right in an east by north direction, for about three miles. ... The new branch road that strikes off at right angles 3 miles on the main (north and south) road, and running between 2 and 3 miles in an east by south direction, opens up one of the most wild and picturesquely grand scrub countries that could be well conceived. The road passes close to the "black rock", a formation of the most fantastic form and singularly diversified character. It consists of huge colossal masses of a sort of decomposed granite intersected with veins or strata of a vitrified conglomerate of felspar. ...  
[We beg to call the attention of our correspondent to the fact, that the gully designated by him "Dead Man's" has been named by the Resident Warden after its discoverer, Phillip's Gully, in order to distinguish it from another locality in the neighbourhood known as Dead Man's. Editor] [71]

14.□11.1857□Mining operations, generally speaking, at the Whipstick have assumed a somewhat healthier aspect, during the past week than for many months previous, and it would appear as if things were beginning to look up amongst the tub and cradle men. Whether this is to be attributed to the recent supply of water (which, by the bye, is fast disappearing) or to the unusual good luck in nugget finding, it is hard to say; but one thing is certain, gold has been more plentiful, and money consequently more profuse, this week than for some time hitherto.  
Several parties within the last ten days have moved out to some new ground in the vicinity of the Dead Man's Hut, and in close proximity to Mr. Mount's property, where prospecting operations on a limited scale have for some time past been practically carried on, and it would appear with partial success, for it is said on reliable authority that more than one hole is paying and paying well. [101]

11.□08.1858□Elysian Flat. We have received a report of a rush at the Whipstick. Our accounts are of a very favourable character, it being stated that

gold is procurable by trying a dishful of dirt at any part of a locality which has hitherto been terra incognita to any but the fortunate few who had been "doing it on the quiet". These new diggings are about six miles to the north north east of Flagstaff Hill, a large population has already gathered about the locale of the rush. Water is plentiful about the old workings, and all the dams are well filled. Our Whipstick correspondent appears to refer to the locality in his remarks about the prospectors. [172]

18. 08.1858 I made much fruitless inquiry at Elysian Flat concerning this new rush, where comparatively few persons either knew or have heard anything whatever about it (?) - and what is better, they do not care to hear about it, so far as leaving the claims now being worked is concerned. By dint of certain bush tracks, however, I managed to reach what is called the new rush, and found the ground occupied by some 300 men, most of whom have obtained more or less encouraging results, although a pennyweight to the dish is among the heaviest yields coming under personal notice. The prospecting party that caused the rush seems to have been the most fortunate. One of their claims is said to have washed half an ounce to the tub. The sinking is shallow, and not harder than most of the Elysian Flat holes. The bottoms are pipeclay, or rather sandstone with pipeclay pockets, and very much resemble Phillip's Gully, from which place it is only a few miles distant, lying about midway between that gully and Elysian Flat, and in the immediate vicinity of the Black Rock on the original cut road which intersects the main Elysian Flat road at right angles; about a mile from the turn off to Elysian Flat. It will be observed that the locality of this rush is in a totally opposite direction to Elysian Flat, being considerably to the east of that goldfield; and the country so far from being of the level character peculiar to Elysian Flat, is quite the reverse, being undulating and hilly, and abounding in gullies, most of them having water-worn tracks, heavy flood marks and landscarp indentations, and, for the most part, covered with tall ferns and mallee scrub, with intervals of box timbered plains and scrub bound flats. As there is as yet no beaten track to the place, and even several old Whipstickians have been disappointed in finding it, it behoves all new chums and fresh arrivals anxious to visit this new locality to look sharp as to what directions they may receive from persons acquainted with the route. ... [176]

26. 08.1858 The new rush between this and Elysian Flat still continues to go ahead, and diggers from far and near may be seen running to and fro ready for a "go in" at this newly discovered locality, where there cannot be fewer than 400 men now at work, and all apparently getting gold more or less remuneratively; one or two branch stores from Elysian Flat have been observed in transit and course of erection with the last few days, and merry ring of the blacksmith's anvil floats on the ambient air, and the rush, although of only a few days growth, is rapidly advancing in development (so far as the opening of the ground is concerned), and assuming an old established appearance. It is said that gold is being got in remunerative proportions, and "rare strokes" are said to be doing in more than one or two golden holes in this rush, yet as no ocular proof has been obtained in confirmation of these current rumours, it would, of course, be imprudent to quote them as bona fide results. I can state, however, from eye-witness and reliable information that 12, 15 and in one instance 24dwt to the tub, have been washed out of several claims here, and some of the piled up washdirt is at present running from one to 3 or 4ozs to the load; while, on the other hand, there is the usual quota of duffers and shicers, and some of them vexaciously hard ones too! The want of water is a sad drawback here, none being available nearer than Elysian Flat and its suburbs. The ground here offers natural facilities for conserving water on a large scale that will, no doubt, be embraced and made available in course of some time. ... [177]

10. 11.1862 We learn that a very fine-looking reef has been prospected in the ranges, about 3 miles to the eastward of Neilborough, Elysian Flat, which promises to be good. The prospectors, Messrs Roberts, have, we believe, secured a prospectors' claim, Mr Hart, mining surveyor, having been out and set out their claim. They have got out a large sackful of specimens. The reef was struck at about 6 feet from the surface, the stone being of a brown ferruginous character, and the gold dispersed upon it in a thin layer, as it were, smeared on

the outside of the stone. There is little doubt of it turning out a good ref. Mr Hart informs us that in going through the bush to make the above survey, he observed numerous outcrops which would, no doubt, if prospected, be found of an auriferous character, if sufficient enterprise could be encouraged to take a few prospectors into these comparatively untried ranges. ... [485]

20.12.1865 □ A new reef, writes our Raywood correspondent, was opened about 3 weeks ago in the Whipstick, at a place called the Black Rock, from which 4 tons of stone were crushed at the Caledonian engine, Epsom, on Friday last, and yielded the handsome return of 14ozs 4dwt, or 3ozs 11dwt per ton. The reef is 2 miles due east from the Shamrock Hotel, Elysian Flat. The lucky prospectors have named it the Austrian Reef, one of them being a native of that country. I paid a visit to the reef this morning, and saw gold very plainly in a great number of the stones lying about the claim; and although most of the stone crushed was got from the surface, the prospectors have sunk a shaft 20 feet in depth, from which they have obtained richer looking stone than that already crushed. [531]

□ 12.1865 □ Austrian Reef Company, Elysian Flat: 14ozs 7dwt obtained from 4 tons of stone. [16.53-54]

□ 12.1865 □ Four prospecting ... claims have been registered:- ... namely, the Lance Reef Prospecting Claim, Black Rock Prospecting Claim, Masonic Prospecting Claim and Austrian Prospecting Claim. [16.53-54]

□ 03.1866 □ Austrian Reef, No.3 North, Whipstick: 16ozs 18dwt obtained from 13 tons of stone. [16.51-52]

Austrian Prospecting Company, Whipstick: 14ozs 4dwt obtained from 4 tons of stone. [16.51-52]

Austrian Reef, No.2 North, Whipstick: 12ozs 2dwt obtained from 22 tons of stone. [16.51-52]

07.06.1866 □ ... the Austrian, the Hope and Manly's reefs (are) all raising great quantities of stone. [316]

19. □ 06.1866 □ A prospecting quartz claim, situated in the Whipstick, about midway between the Austrian and the Hope reefs, was granted on the 15th instant to a party named Child, Wing and Harding, who stated they had found gold on the surface, and in the stone, for a length of 60 feet. This is the fourth reef, all within a mile of each other, that has been discovered since the beginning of last summer, or since the bush fires destroyed the scrub, namely, the Austrian, the Black Rock, the Hope, and the one above mentioned, which the discoverers have named the Welney Reef. A fine crushing of 7 tons of stone from the Black Rock Reef, yielded 1ozs 7dwts per ton. [318]

□ 06.1866 □ Austrian Reef, Whipstick: 66ozs 5dwt obtained from 55 tons of stone at 25 feet, 9ozs 18dwt obtained from 22 tons of stone at 25 feet, and 5ozs 4dwt obtained from 13 tons of stone at 30 feet. [16.48-50]

□ 06.1866 □ Black Rock Reef Company, Whipstick: 56ozs obtained from 28 tons of stone at 60 feet. [16.48-50]

□ 06.1866 □ The Austrian is about four miles nearer the township of Neilborough, commonly called Elysian Flat; there are only two claims at present at work, the prospectors' and another. I obtained a small specimen; the shaft is only 30 feet deep, and the yield about an average of 1oz to the ton; the other, 12dwt. The Black Rock is about a quarter of a mile to the east; the first crushing from this reef has only just taken place, and yielded 2ozs to the ton; the shaft is 60 feet deep; the gold is from the surface, but the vein is thin. [16.48-50]

□ 07.1866 □ A first crushing of 28 tons of stone from the Black Rock Reef gave 2ozs per ton. ... 22 tons from the Austrian Reef yielded 9ozs 18dwt. [321]

□ 12.1866 □ Barkly, Manly, Hope and Austrian Reefs, Elysian Flat: 148ozs 10dwt obtained from 170 tons of stone at between 60 and 100 feet. [16.45-46]

□ 09.1869 □ Austrian Company, Whipstick: 30ozs obtained from 25 tons of stone at 20 feet. [16.34-35]

□ 09.1869 □ The reefs in the neighbourhood of Elysian Flat and Whipstick show signs of improvement, the Austrian Company on the Whipstick getting a return of 30ozs to 25 tons of stone. [16.34-35]

22.11.1869 □ The Austrian Company in the Whipstick are looking very well at present. The stone they are working in the Whipstick, which they thought a flat

spur, has turned down, from whence they infer it is the leg of the reef; it shows gold splendidly. The eastern stone goes down like a wall and shows fairly. This company has a lease of 23 acres in 20,000 shares. [581]

24.12.1869 □ Austrian Gold Mining Company (registered) - the manager (Mr C. J. Brown) reports that 45 tons of stone has been crushed for 36ozs 17dwt of gold. The stone has been taken from the — foot level and winze. The drive south on the eastern stone has been extended 26 feet from shaft. The western stone is running nearly flat in rising on it; both look very promising under foot. [582]

□ 12.1869 □ Austrian Company, Elysian Flat: 69ozs obtained from 71 tons of stone on the surface. [11]

□ 01.1870 □ Austrian Mining Company (Registered). The ordinary half-yearly meeting of shareholders was held yesterday ...

Directors' Report - Up to July of the present year the workings were confined to the northern end of our ground where the stone had formerly been worked to a depth of 100 feet; but the stone was not found to be payable, although yielding between 6 and 7dwts to the ton, owing to the heavy charges for carrying and crushing. We then commenced prospecting the southern end of the ground with far better results, a first crushing obtained from stone within 20 feet of the surface averaged 1ozs 5dwt to the ton. We have since sunk a shaft 50 feet and driven in upon the stone with most encouraging prospects, besides striking a spur, in sinking, which also will yield well. We have driven along the stone 30 feet south and 15 feet north, and from 45 tons obtained the yield of 36ozs 17dwt. The stone is about 3 feet thick, and has a well-defined back and looks fully as well underfoot. We have instructed the mining manager to sink the shaft another 50 feet for the purpose of testing the reef at a greater depth, and if the stone should prove as remunerative as above it would be a question whether it would not be for the interests of the company to erect crushing machinery on the ground, and fido away with the present heavy expense of carting and crushing. ... [398]

15.07.1870 □ Austrian Company (registered) - The half yearly meeting of this company was held ... on Tuesday. ...

Mining manager's report - I beg to report that during the past half-year a great amount of permanent work has been done. The main shaft has been sunk 56 feet, a plat cut out and timbered at the 50 foot level, a main drive has been driven 28 feet to the west and 8 feet to the east. At the 130 foot level a winze shaft has been sunk 52 feet on the western stone, 12 feet from the main shaft, at the 50 foot level, and holed through into the main drive at the bottom level. From the sinking of this shaft, and short stopes north and south. I have about 90 tons of stone, and have commenced to cart this stone, and if the weather continues fine I expect to finish crushing about the 20th of this month. A winze shaft has been sunk 22 feet to the end of some old workings to the north of the present workings, where we got a lot of poor stone all the way down. A drive north has been driven on the western stone 34 feet at the 75 foot level for about half the distance. Some very nice stone has been seen, but at the end the stone ran off very fine and poor. I had commenced to stope from the backs of the western stone, when I received instructions from your directors to stop breaking stone, and continue the north drive at the 75 foot level, which has been done, and I have also commenced a crosscut to the east from that drive 6 feet from the end. I expect to get the eastern stone in about 20 or 25 feet. A whip has been erected over the main shaft. On account of so much permanent work, and bad roads of late, I have only been able to crush 42 tons during the past half year, which yielded 43ozs of gold. This stone was taken from the south backs on the eastern stone. ... [585]

23.08.1879 □ A miner, named F. D. Stephens, called at the Mining Registrar's Office, yesterday, and registered a prospecting claim, which is situated on the Black Rock Flat, 3 miles from Elysian Flat. The ground is alluvial, with 12 feet of sinking and 4 feet of washdirt, which has averaged 1dwt to the load. The extent of ground applied for is 150 by 250 feet. The discovery is of some importance, but the prospect so far obtained is not sufficient to warrant a rush taking place. [728]

□ 1899 □ Austrian Reef. A considerable amount of work has been done on this reef both by open cutting and shaft sinking, the main shaft being about 60 feet deep and in a good condition for working. Very little information can be gained respecting this reef, but it is stated to have been very rich in the surface cutting. An underlay shaft was sunk on what appears to be a branch of the reef, and averaged ½ozs to 3dwt per load to a depth of 40 feet. This reef is now abandoned, though it is said that a large reef is to be seen at the bottom of the main shaft, which would average 3dwt per ton. Dark-blue slate and yellowish sandstone is seen on the mullock heaps. Graptolites are to be found in the slates, also what appear to be other fossil remains.

Black Rock Reef. This reef is situated in Black Rock Flat, and has had considerable work done upon it by the sinking of shafts and cuttings. I could not gain any information respecting it, but no doubt gold was found in payable quantities, seeing that so much work has been done. There is also the remains of a small crushing battery to be seen. ... A small area of alluvial workings is seen in the gully to the west of the Black Rock Reef. Graptolites in dark blue slate are to be seen here.

Italian Reef. This reef is situated higher on the same slope as the Tasman Reef, and several shafts have been sunk on it, also an extensive open cutting. No reliable information can be obtained respecting it, only that the original holders got very payable returns from the reef near the surface.

Tasman Reef. This reef was originally worked by open cutting, and taken out for a width of about 3 feet. The surface stone was very rich in places, and averaged as much as 12ozs per load. An underlay shaft was sunk to a depth of 108 feet on the west side of the reef mentioned, in cutting, the reef continuing down to this depth, and at times averaged 2ozs to the load. At 108 feet, what appears to have like a fault came in from the west and formed a junction with the reef, but the stone getting poor at this point no further work was done. The fault itself carried some stone, and this was profitably worked. Another shaft was sunk to a depth of 1200 feet, and a cross cut east intersected the reef previously worked in the cutting, and though the reef is from one foot 6 inches to 2 feet wide, it is not payable under present conditions. There seem to be an excellent prospect in this mine, and it appears strange that the work was not continued to ascertain what remained below the junction of the reef and fault mentioned above.

Stephen's claim. Some 200 yards north east of the Tasman Reef and still further down the slope of the hill, Stephen and party have been working on a very strong body of stone. Two shafts about 30 feet deep each and an open cut were put down on the reef, from which a crushing was taken, and averaged over 3dwt, but a subsequent crushing only averaged 1½dwt. This reef, I think, is the continuation north of the Trevillick Reef.

Trevillick Reef. This reef is situated about 25 chains south east of Tasman Reef, and was opened about 1876 by a Mr Nancarrow. It was worked along its course by open cutting for a distance of 260 feet, and averaged about 8dwt per load. A shaft was sunk slightly to the east of the reef, which was cut at 50 feet, but averaging only 3dwts, it could not be profitably worked. A shaft is being at present sunk on the southern continuation of the reef, and a crushing is being taken out, the stone showing a fair prospect. The Tasman, Trevillick, Austrian and Italian reefs are within a radius of 20 chains, and the crowns and slopes of the hills on which they are situated are intersected by many reef outcrops which invariably carry gold. The surface soil also carries gold, and with water convenient the whole of the surface in this locality might be sluiced with profit.

[41]