

City of Greater Bendigo: Marong Heritage Study Mining Sites

SPLITTER'S GULLY ALLUVIAL WORKINGS

Other Names

Location Parcel No. P127148, State Forest, east side of Splitter's Gully Track, north of Apollo Hill, Splitter's Gully, Whipstick

Map Reference Epsom 1:25,000 - BV576.362

Victorian Heritage Register No

National Estate Register No

Planning Scheme No



Description On the eastern end of an 80 metre long earthen embankment are the outlines of two puddling machines. Both puddling machines have a diameter of 22 feet. One of the puddling machines is in a good state of preservation - inner mound prominent and the puddling trench has sheer sides. No wooden pivot post visible, outlet channel visible. Only saplings growing in the site. The other puddling machine, located 5 metres away, survives only as a faint outline, but its inner mound does retain fragments of the wooden pivot post. There is a large mound of washed gravel associated with the two puddling machines. In a side gully to the north of this site there are traces of shallow alluvial workings.

History Period of activity: unknown

Thematic Context Mining

Comparative Examples This site is one of a number of shallow alluvial workings identified within the study area. Some of the other equally significant early sites are: Myers Flat (1852), Fiddlers Green (1852), Peter the Great (right hand branch)(1856), Phillips Gully (1857) and Shallow Diggings (1858). The rush to Myers Creek was more extensive and involved more miners.

Within the study area at least sixteen puddling machine sites have been identified. These are: Peter the Great Gully (right hand branch)(by 1856?), Iron's Dam (2)(1858), Fiddlers Green (by 1879), Marong Deep Lead (1905), Jib Horse Gully (22 feet)(after 1930?), Old Tom Reef (20 feet)(after 1930), Phillips Gully (2)(after 1930?), Peter the Great Gully (left hand branch)(4)(after 1930?), Splitter's Gully (2)(22 feet)(after 1930?) and White Jacket Gully. Nineteenth century puddling machines are extremely rare and their provenance cannot usually be confirmed from such documentary evidence as has normally survived about mining in Victoria. The only site within the study area where this has been possible is at Iron's Dam, but then only by a process of elimination. That is, from documentary evidence, it is known that there were two puddling machines in the vicinity of the dam in 1858. The remains of two, and only two, puddling machines were identified at the site in 1992, so these must be the original ones. Whilst there are puddling machines at other sites (for example, Peter the Great (by 1856), Old Tom Reef (by 1857) and Splitter's Gully (by 1865) these are either associated with later phases of mining (reef workings or hydraulic sluicing) and/or do not exhibit extensive weathering and therefore, on these grounds, they cannot be regarded unequivocally as nineteenth century artefacts.

No documentary records have been found for any puddling machines constructed in the nineteenth century, which had an outer diameter of 22 feet. There is one example recorded where the diameter was 20 feet, but this was an exception; the average being much closer to 16 feet [1.180-186]. If the puddling machine at this site was constructed in the nineteenth century then its size was highly unusual (perhaps indicating a regional variation), or it was not constructed in the nineteenth century. If the latter, then it is quite likely it was constructed in the period between 1933 and 1936 when it is known there were over a thousand men engaged in any one year in alluvial mining in the Bendigo district.

Statement of Significance The site has potential for education and interpretation due to the relatively undisturbed nature of the puddling site (criterion C and criterion D).

Level of Significance Regional

Recommendation The site should be protected under the heritage overlay of the Great Bendigo Planning Scheme, by registration with the Victorian Heritage Council, in accordance with the general principles of the conservation policy for mining sites, and should be included as a significant sub-area within the Splitters Gully Mining heritage Area. In particular, further historical and archaeological work should be undertaken to determine the provenance of the puddling machines.

Heritage Boundaries The Splitters Gully Mining Heritage Area is bounded on the south by Simpsons Road, on the east by Loeser Road northwards as far as the first gully north-east of Apollo Hill, on the north by this gully as far as 100 metres east of the leftmost branch of Splitters Gully, on the east by a line 100 metres east of the leftmost branch of this gully to Splitters Gully Track, on the south by this track as far as its intersection with Loeser Road, on the east by Loeser Road northwards as far as its intersection with a cross track, on the north east by a line from this intersection to the summit of Adelaide Hill, on the west by the line of the second gully west from Adelaide Hill extended across the right branch of Splitters Gully to Splitters Gully Track and thence along a line 100 metres west of the leftmost branch of Splitters Gully southwards to the head of the first gully west of Apollo Hill, and finally along a line 100 metres west of this gully to Simpsons Road.

- References**
1. P. Milner, "Mining machinery installations in Victoria: 1857-1939." A classification according to type and size." Technology Report, Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, University of Melbourne, No.TR 89/12, March 1989, xxiipp, 383pp.
 2. "Mining intelligence. Large nugget from the Whipstick." The Bendigo Advertiser, Monday, 17 February 1868.
 3. Reports of the Mining Surveyors and Mining Registrars, Sandhurst mining district, Sandhurst division.
 4. "List of nuggets found in Victoria." Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Victoria, no.12, Department of Mines, Victoria, 1912.
 5. Dicker's Mining Record, March 1868, 71.

Notes

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

Chronology 17.02.1868 □ We had almost begun to think that the Whipstick, once so famous or the production of nuggets of large size, was worked out; but it appears that there are still those lumps of gold, which in days of yore gladdened the hearts of the miners. A German, named Jacob, who had been "hatting" in Splitter's Gully, Whipstick, for many a weary day, and had hardly been earning his tucker, came on Saturday morning last on a nugget which weighed 275ozs 13dwt. He was picking down the siding of some old and partially worked out ground at a depth of 5 feet, when the pick struck against the nugget, which at first he thought was a boulder, but the second stroke of the pick unearthed the glittering mass of

gold. ... [2]

03.1868□275ozs 13dwt nugget (No.121) found at a depth of 5 feet by a German named "Jacob". It was almost pure gold, with a little ironstone. [3.17-18, 4.12, 5]