

# WELCOME STRANGER TOURIST TRAIL

**Location**

OLD BEALIBA-MOLIGAUL ROAD MOLIAGUL, CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE

**Municipality**

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE

**Level of significance**

Heritage Inventory Site

**Heritage Inventory (HI) Number**

H7624-0267

**Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 11688

Property Number

**History**

Contextual History:History of Place:

Heritage Inventory History of Site:

1850s Bulldog Reef: This reef has been worked both sides of the Bulldog or Black Lead. To the north, it was also called the Black Reef or Welcome Stranger Reef. On the south it was also Moliagul Reef ... The northern end was discovered in 1857 and by 1859 was returning 2 1/2 oz/ton ... a shaft was sunk to the west to work the reef at the 200 ft level.

1857: Bulldog Gully was opened in May 1856, and the Black Lead, of Welcome Stranger fame, in 1857.

May 1857: There was also a large rush on 25th May to Bulldog Gully ... but the gold was neither rich nor extensive, although there was a great number there.

1857: This reef was worked first at the time of the Bulldog Rush by all foreigners - Italians, Frenchmen and Jews - in August 1857, and the reef was yielding well at this time. It was also called Black Reef.

1859: Only one claim working on the Bulldog Reef, but it was averaging 2-1/2 ounces to the ton and was 40 yards long and 140 feet deep.

June 1859: Bulldog Reef [Moliagul] - 1 claims, 40yds aggregate length, yielding 2-1/2 oz/ton.

1860s Bulldog Lead, Black Lead: Nuggets - Welcome Stranger 2332 oz (1869), 113 oz (1869), 114 oz (1859), and 36 oz (1866). This was a well-established area by the time John Deason and Richard Oates found the Welcome Stranger. A piece of ground still occupied was a Chinese market garden cultivated by J. Youlk. Further down in Bulldog Gully were two dairies owned by Walter Brown and Mrs. Gutcher.

March 1861: [This reef] is being energetically and profitably worked.

1862: Number of claims working - a year of great reefing activity. About this time, Richard Meer's 'Reunion Co.' had the reef - five acres on lease...

1867: ..1867 and later it was worked for a long time by McJuncken and party.

1869: Moliagul became famous when the 'Welcome Stranger' nugget was discovered by Cornish miners, John Deason and Richard Oates, at Bulldog Gully, Moliagul, on February 5th, 1869. The nugget was the largest found in Victoria, and the largest of the world's nuggets. The gross weight was 2520 ounces. Some of the gold was kept by the finders, but the amount sold was valued at £9,553. Owing to the nugget's great size (about 2 feet long and 1 foot wide), it could not be weighed on the largest scales at the London Chartered Bank, Dunolly, so was taken to Walls's blacksmith shop nearby, and reduced to a number of fragments on the anvil.

8th Feb 1869 - Welcome Stranger ... It weighed 210lbs gross and 2268 oz, 10 dwts, 14 grains of smelted gold have been obtained from it irrespective of a number of pieces of gold and specimens which have been given away by the finders. The finders are John Deason and Richard Oates, miners who have worked in this locality for about seven years and have a puddling machine there, and the nugget was found ... about an inch below the surface on the western side of the gully slope, going from Black Reef down to a gully which is known as the Bulldog Gully or Black Lead. They estimate the size as about 21 inches in length and 10 inches in thickness, but unfortunately broke the nugget in three parts before they informed anyone of it. The spot where the nugget was found is about 50 yards west of the Bulldog Reef in which the quartz lode runs from one to four feet wide and has been worked to water at a depth of, say, 100 feet, and is about 200 yards east of the alluvial gully known as Black Lead, and where the depth of sinking is from there to 10 feet with a sandstone bottom. The nugget was found in some surfacing (of which from 10 inches to a foot is generally puddled) of loose, gravelly loam, resting on thick red clay, with a bottom of sandstone about 10 inches from the surface. The actual amount paid for the gold sent to the bank was £9534.

Sept 1871: A lease has been taken up on the Black Reef and Stewart's Reef, by a company to be styled the William the Conqueror Company, and mining operations are to be commenced forthwith. The reefs both yielded largely when originally worked, and the ground taken up includes that where the 'Welcome Stranger' nugget was got, which was found close to the cap of the Black Reef.

1896: In the 1896 activity in mining at Moliagul [this reef] was worked again by Lidge who got up to 2-1/2 ounces to the ton.

1897: The obelisk commemorating the finding was erected by the Mines Department in 1897 during a period of renewed reefing activity at Dunolly.

August 1898: Moliagul Consolidated Co ... timbered to surface from 82 feet.

Oct 1898: Moliagul Consolidated ... called for tenders to drive on course of leader from prospect shaft, close to Welcome Stranger obelisk.

Oct 1898: Erected whip frame. Monday, start Whip horse.

April 1899: Moliagul Consolidated - plant from Dunolly all delivered on mine. Boiler and plant to hand from

Ballarat.

May 1899: One pair of poppet legs erected, next set raised today. Foundations cut, bed logs in position to carry horses for engines, pumping and winding gear.

August 1899: Boiler built in. Cutting down flue and excavating foundations for smoke stack. Overhead wheels in. Brace and railings will be finished next week. Costeening east and west to south of Welcome Stranger Monument; 12 feet west of monument cut leader showing gold. This will trench along when further advanced with costeening.

Sept 1899: All brickwork finished; boiler and cistern finished. Steam pipes connected. Building house over boiler. Sinking winze on indicator near monument.

August 1899: Shaft unwatered and timbered. Resumed sinking. Will open out at 200 feet to cut both reefs. Trenching new find west of main workings ... Accepted tender to dismantle, cart and erect battery.

Jan 1900: Moliagul Consol - Battery, ready to commence erection.

May 1900: Good progress connecting winding engine.

June 1900: Complete erection engines, expect coupled next week.

6 Dec 1900: Moliagul Consols - This lease (No. 3695) lies about 10 chains S-W from the Queen lease... Five hundred feet north of the main shaft, and within the area contained within the lease, is the 'Welcome Stranger' monument, an obelisk erected by the Mines Department to mark the spot where the 'Welcome Stranger' was found by John Deason and Richard Oats in 1869. A pumping and winding plant suitable for sinking to 300 feet is erected at the mine.

1901: The Moliagul Consols Mine which worked the Black Reef, south of the site of the Welcome Stranger discovery, closed, and its plant was auctioned in 1901.

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*