
DAVIS' WATER RACE

Location

CRESWICK REGIONAL PARK, HEPBURN, HEPBURN SHIRE

Municipality

HEPBURN SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7623-0332

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site

This race was constructed in 1854 and represents one of the earliest races in Creswick associated with ground sluicing and alluvial mining.

This site has a high *level* of archaeological significance.

Archaeological
Significance

The race is a representative example of an 1850s water race that was constructed and utilised under the permit system. Archaeological features include the race alignment, *negative* cut features , spoil and sediment deposits, dams, diversions, sluice points and

flume remains, and sluice lining materials. It is significant as many of the earliest races along creeks *have* been destroyed by subsequent working. Its' history can be used to trace the development and implementation of water management regulations on Central

Victorian Goldfields.

Although water races are common on Victorian Goldfields very few races in Victoria *have*

been documented and mapped in detail and the integrity of remaining goldfield water management complexes is largely under researched.

The site has a HIGH *level* of historical significance at a local *level*. Due to the excellent preservation of a large part of the Creswick goldfield, the intertwined narratives of mining,

water supply, environmental consequences and rapidly *evolving* legislation can be read in

the landscape. At a state *level* the site contributes to broader narratives of water supply

and mining (Victorian Historical Theme 4.5 & 4.6) and informs the development of both mining and water management laws for the State of Victoria.

Historical Significance

The race system is one of many on the Creswick alluvial goldfield that together make up

an important and well preserved cultural landscape of water management.

Combined with Creswick's strong forestry education facilities and proximity to Melbourne

and Ballarat, an increased awareness in this well preserved mining complex could provide

Creswick with excellent educational and tourism opportunities illustrating mining techniques and how mining shaped Victoria's water laws

Hermes Number

195089

Property Number

History

The extant section of race one of the earliest races in Creswick and was the first along Back Creek constructed under the permit system in 1854. Originally constructed by Davis & Mitchell in 1854, G. Russell soon purchased shares in" this race, and by 1857 B. Eaton had taken over Mitchell and Davis' share in Water Permit No.1 (Back Creek).

The race transported water from dams along Back Creek to ground sluicing and alluvial mines at Georges Diggings, Doctors Lead and Portuguese Flat.

In 1858 Russell, Eaton and Bragg were involved in major dispute of water rights on Back Creek and the ensuing court cases are illustrative of the complications of water management experienced in many areas of Victoria on the early gold fields.

Details of the court case can be found in 'Archaeology of Water Management on the Creswick Alluvial Goldfields' (P. Davies, S. Lawrence and J. Turnbull, 2012).

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/>