
CHRISTMAS FLAT DIGGING

Location

2518-2526 DUNOLLY ROAD-WEDDEBURN ROAD RHEOLA, LODDON SHIRE

Municipality

LODDON SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7624-0177

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 6, 2022

What is significant?

How is it significant?

Why is it significant?

Hermes Number 7475

Property Number

History

The original discovery of what the discoverer called Byr Lyn, but which the diggers immediately called Berlin, was the opening of Clelland's Gully by Alexander Clelland on 21 August 1868, from which he received an official

reward of £100. Mr Know Orme, the warden, wrote to the Secretary of Mines about the opening of the Berlin field - *'The Berlin diggings are distant about twelve miles westward of Inglewood, and four from Kingower, and are on Kingdaraar Creek, which flows into the Loddon after a course of about twenty miles. The population of the 15th instant about 400.* [James Flett, 1979, The History of Gold Discovery in Victoria, pp. 292-296]

Please note Kingdaraar Creek now spelled Kangdaraar Creek and Berlin Goldfield is now named Rheola.

The alluvial gold from the Rheola area was being extracted from shallow deposits and was patchy. The gold ranged from nuggets of more than 90lb. weight downwards. E. J Dunn, Geological Survey of Victoria, wrote the following in 1912 re nugget mining at Rheola - *It is remarkable that some very heavy nuggets were found not resting on bedrock but sometimes several feet above it in the gravel. Such was the case with the Viscount Canterbury nugget, found at Rheola, as the famous Berlin rush in now named. On this field the gold was so course that washing the gravel was not resorted to. The top material – drift, gravel and clay, etc – was stripped for 10 to 12feet to the wash-dirt and this later was turned over with a long-handled shovel and thrown back. If there was any gold present it was either seen in the gravel or felt on the shovel.*

Christmas Flat was opened in 1868. By the early 1870s, the Berlin or Rheola Goldfield had become Victoria's richest gold nugget field. From the mid 1870s, occasional big nuggets continued to be found in the area, the last famous one being the 875 ounce 'Hand of Faith' nugget found in 1980 by Kevin Hillier using a metal detector.

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/>