COMET, HOPEWELL, LITTLE HOPEWELL, MENTOR, SPEEDWELL, AND STAFFORDSHIRE REEF COMPANIES

Location

SKYE ROAD STAFFORDSHIRE REEF, GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Municipality

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7622-0094

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 12097

Property Number

History

Contextual History:History of Place:
Heritage Inventory History of Site:
The [Staffordshire] Reef at Italian Gully,
08.06.1859: there are 20 to 25 claims working the reef and there are three engines on the ground of which two are in the course of erection in Long Gully; gold has been obtained to a depth of 180 feet.; between 1? and 35 dwts per ton have been obtained from the prospecting claim.
04.07.1859: Mr. Porter of Long Gully is nearly finished erecting a first rate engine of 30 horse power at Kangaroo

Gully; and Messrs Black are in the course of completing a 15 horse power engine, and Mr. Wilson's engine is in full working order.
VICTOR Co, Staffordshire Reef
09.1861: erecting 8 head battery
10.1861: yield 6 dwt 12 gr per ton from 150 tons at a depth of 112 feet where the vein is 7 feet thick.
11.1861: yield 4 dwt per ton from 200 tons at a depth of 160 feet where the reef is 7 feet thick.
12.1861: yield 8 dwt per ton from 260 tons at a depth of 140 feet where the vein is 8 feet wide.
No. 11 SOUTH Co., Staffordshire Reef,
12.1860: yield of 13 ounces 14 dwt from 70 tons of stone, which was crushed at the Mentor Co.'s mill.
No. 10 SOUTH COMPANY
BRITANNIA QUARTZ MINING COMPANY
BRITANNIA COMPANY
02.1861: yield of 51.5 ounces from 54 tons crushed at the Mentor Co. mill.
03.1861: excellent prospects, reef is 7 feet thick at a depth of 100 feet, yield is expected to be 1 oz per ton.
04.1861: working a 3 feet wide vein at a depth of 110 feet.
05.1861: erecting 10 horsepower steam engine and 5 head battery purchased from a Ballarat firm for £800, also building a dam to supply water for the machinery.
06.1861 : boiler on ground but still awaiting steam engine, as a consequence work is at a stand still.
(new company - Britannia Co.)
07.1861: 6 head battery erected
08.1861 : crushing started but machinery defective and have not yet cleaned up; 40 tons crushed.
09.1861: yield 6 dwt 21 gr per ton from 241 tons at a depth of 120 feet.
10.1861: yield 10 dwt per ton from 200 tons at a depth of 110 feet where the vein is 6 feet thick.
11.1861: yield 1 oz 12 dwt per ton from 170 tons at a depth of 150 feet where the reef is 3 feet thick.
04.1863: 6 head battery
28.11.1865: 2 separate shafts sunk 20 feet apart for winding and pumping due to the rotten nature of the ground; down 417 feet; ground now harder, shafts connected together with draw lift in the winding shaft worked by a bob at the connection with 2 plunger pumps in the old pump shaft
10.02.1868: 18 inch cylinder horizontal steam engine; 15 inch cylinder horizontal steam engine; 2 large Cornish flue boilers; 13.5 inch cylinder horizontal steam engine with; 2 large Cornish flue boilers; 16 head battery with revolving stampers; winding gear; pumping gear; 540 feet of 9 inch pumps.
09.1868: plant and tailings purchased by Greig and Company; to erect Chilian mill and treat tailings
NO. 15 SOUTH Co., Staffordshire Reef, adjoins the No. 14 South Co.
03.1861: ground taken up in anticipation of the success of Porter's system.
NO. 14 SOUTH Co., Staffordshire Reef
02.1861: yield of 8 dwt per ton from stone crushed at the Mentor Co. mill.
03.1861: looks very well.
04.1861: whim erected; shaft down 120 feet; negotiating with Mr. Porter to crush the 50 tons of stone that has been raised.
05.1861: yield of 9 dwt per ton from 102 tons crushed at the Mentor Co.'s mill.
06.1861 yield of 6 dwt 5 gr per ton from 165 tons from the 120 foot level, this stone was crushed at the Mentor Co. mill; propose to erect machinery
O'LAUGHLIN AND some Italians,
1920's or 1930's: open cut Staffordshire Reef south of the Newtown - Berringa Road, and used a 5 head battery.
Staffordshire Reef Co.?
09.02.1900: had to abandon operations because of heavy water and are now awaiting machinery.
13.04.1900: let a contract for further sinking having previously been abandoned at 160 feet because of the water, machinery has since been erected and sinking will resume on Monday.
15.06.1900: experimenting with the use of round timber in combating the swelling of the ground.
16.11.1900: shaft is being skidded prior to the introduction of cages.
16.08.1901: negotiating to purchase a battery.
06.12.1901: reduced the number of men underground to reduce costs until the battery is completed.
15.03.1902: battery to be completed in about 3 weeks.
28.03.1902: battery and dam nearly completed; awaiting the completion of housing and tramway before starting to crush.
10.01.1903: yield of 34 ozs 9 dwt from 397 tons; temporarily closed the main shaft.
06.02.1903; machinery and lease has been sold to a Mr. Ditchburn for £600; he intends prospecting the lode that was passed through at the 510 foot level.
MENTOR COMPANY (PORTER AND COMPANY),
STAFFORDSHIRE REEF QUARTZ MINING COMPANY, (from 1863)

STAFFORDSHIRE REEF COMPANY (name given to the company in March 1864)
SPEEDWELL COMPANY (first reference December 1868)
SPEEDWELL TRIBUTE COMPANY (14 men from December 1874)
09.1859: first gold produced
08.1860 : windlass replaced by a whim; owner of Porter and Company's mill
12.1860: prospects for the southern portion of the reef look good because of the good result by the No. 11 South Co.
02.1861: yield of 12 dwt per ton from a depth of 170 feet; Claim No. 9 now belongs to this company; crushing No. 10 Co. and No. 14 Co. crushed their stone at the Mentor Co. mill.
03.1861: company name appears in this report as Mentor Company (Porter Company); yield of 15 dwt per ton from a vein 8 feet thick at a depth of 170 feet in the northern part of their claim next to the Comet Co. lease; purchased the ground of the New Homeward Bound Co.
04.1861: average yield of 7 dwt 9 grs per ton from 450 tons; Mr. Porter is experimenting with a vaporising system of amalgamation, and had some trouble with the retort cracking.
05.1861: obtained 7 dwt per ton from a vein 4 to 12 feet thick at a depth of 175 feet; this vein has been traced through claims Nos. 1 to 9 South and generally yields improve with depth.
06.1861: average yield of 8 dwt 11 grs per ton from 177 tons taken from a vein 7 foot wide between the 150 and 170 foot levels.
07.1861: yield 6 dwt 12 gr per ton from 294 tons at a depth of 150 feet; the vein is 6 to 12 feet wide; 24 head battery, which crushed stone for this mine as well as the stone from the Rose, Thistle and Shamrock.
08.1861: yield 4 dwt 17.5 gr per ton from 467 tons at a depth of 160 feet.
09.1861: yield 4 dwt 6 gr per ton from 312 tons at a depth of 150 feet.
10.1861: yield 5 dwt 5 gr per ton from 356 tons at a depth of 110 feet where the vein is 6 feet thick.
11.1861: yield 4 dwt 8 gr per ton from 296 tons at depths from 20 to 160 feet.
12.1861: yield 6 dwt 6 gr per ton from 400 tons at a depths of 50 to 120 feet where the vein is 8 feet wide.
12.1862: last return from the original company
(new company)
24.03.1863: company averages 8 dwt per ton, and crushes 110 to 130 tons per week; an engine of 65 horse power is being erected with 40 heads of stamps; a tram-road 1000 yards long laid with iron rails is also being formed. The company intends working on the open or face system. The tram-road commences at the mill and runs along the side of the gully to the foot of the reef giving a face of 202 feet. The works, when completed in about two months, are estimated to cost £9000. There are three dams containing 9,000,000 gallons of water, and two more in the course of construction. The company has 17 shareholders and is registered under the Limited Liability Act. The works are under the supervision of Mr. Pritchard and Mr. W. O. Porter is the manager.
04.1863: Porter and Company's old stamp battery purchased, comprising a 15.25 inch by 30 inch steam engine, a boiler: 25 feet 6 inches by 5 feet 4 inches and a 10 head battery; amalgamation with ripples, copper plates and shaking tables; tests showed that the first copper plates after the ripples yielded double or treble that obtained in the second ripple; erecting 40 head battery with revolving stampers and provision for an extra 20 heads; each battery of 5 heads operated independently by means of a countershaft and clutch connecting to each wiper shaft; wrought iron lifters and stamper shanks with screwed tappets; wrought iron discs steeled on wear surface; steeled wrought iron wipers; replaceable shoes on stamper heads; self-feeding, double discharge boxes in cast iron; stamp battery supplied by Langlands Brothers, Melbourne, for £1894; powered by a 23.75 inch cylinder steam engine with a 48 inch stroke and two boilers: 26 feet 6 inches by 6 feet 6 inches with 42 inch flue contracting to 32 inches; to add a third boiler from the old battery; to erect steam engine on a brick and bluestone platform 10 feet high; the blanket tables front and back constructed on the Black Hill pattern; also have two 13 inch plunger house lifts; the machinery was designed by Mr. Martin, engineer at the Black Hill Company; the tramway from the battery to the mine will have 40 pound rails for 935 yards; the rails were obtained from Cornish and Bruce, having first been used on the Melbourne and Mount Alexander Railway; also constructed a weatherboard directors' house, carpenters' shop, office and store and five stalled stable, 45 feet by 18 feet and smithy erected
the battery is modelled on the Black Hill Co.'s battery at Ballarat, which at the time was regarded as the most efficient in the country; it cost £11,365 and was completed in 1864; the shaft was connected via an adit to the battery which was a quarter of a mile away.
08.1863: 24.5 inch cylinder steam engine on a brick and bluestone pedestal; two boilers; a 40 head battery with revolving stampers; double 14 inch plunger pump; mercury troughs, blanket floors and barrels similar to that used at the Black Hill Company's works; brick chimney stack 65 feet high; boiler feedwater pump
substantial buildings erected over the machinery, with the necessary offices, stables, storerooms and smithy
03.1864: Staffordshire Reef Co.(new company name) yield of 929 ozs 5 dwt from 7787 tons or 2 dwt 9.25 gr per ton from depths of 15 to 170 feet.
06.1864: yield of 651 ozs 19 dwt 8 gr from 7500 tons, or 1 dwt 17.75 grs per ton, from a lode of 1 to 28 foot thick

at a depth of 150 feet.
09.1864: yield of 847 ozs 9 dwt 12 gr from 7041 tons, or 2 dwt 9.75 grs per ton, from lodes of average width of 6 feet and depths of up to 140 feet.
12.1864: yield of 623 ozs 6 dwt from 5912 tons, or 2 dwt 2.6 grs per ton, from depths up to 165 feet.
03.1865: yield of 602 ozs from 4662 tons, or 2 dwt 14 grs per ton, from a depth of 150 feet; have struck some excellent quartz in a lode below the water level at a depth of 230 feet.
06.1865; yield of 971 ozs from 5252 tons, or 3 dwt 16.9 grs per ton, from a 5.5 foot lode at a depths of 200 feet.
09.1865: yield of 689 ozs from 4778 tons, or 2 dwt 21.25 grs per ton, from an 8 foot lode from depths of 80 to 200 feet.
12.1865: yield of 650 ozs 11 dwt 12 gr from 3978 tons, or 3 dwt 6.5 grs per ton, from a 4 foot lode at a depth of 200 feet.
03.1866: yield of 711 ozs from 4841 tons, or 2 dwt 22.49 grs per ton, from a 12 foot lode at a depth of 200 feet.
06.1866: yield of 456 ozs from 3775 tons, or 2 dwt 9.98 grs per ton.
09.1866: yield of 55 ozs from 600 tons, or 1 dwt 20 grs per ton.
09.1867: unable to find payable stone; suspended operations and surrendered their lease.
1863 to 1867: grade of the ore were low, and costs were also kept low; the mine employed between 150 and 250 men; this mine was taken over by the Speedwell Co. in 1868 and operated in a small way until 1875; it was then worked by tributers until 1887.
(new company)
12.1868: yield of 68 ozs from 200 tons, or 6 dwt 19.2 grs per ton, from a 4.5 foot lode at a depth of 35 feet.
12.1870: now getting payable stone.
09.1871: rich stone at the 110 foot level, but later stone was very poor.
09.1872; in the hands of tribute party for a period of 12 months.
03.1873: being worked by a tribute party recently organised.
09.1873: let on tribute to 14 men for 3 years; they have a tunnel, tramway and large bodies of stone; 2 dwt per ton will give them £2.10 per man per week and pay 10% to the company.
12.1873: getting some good stone from their 130 foot level.
03.1874: small returns; prospecting for better stone.
06.1874: small returns; into some better stone.
09.1874: tributers struck some excellent stone in July at a depth of 130 feet; yield of 287 ozs 18 dwt from 670 tons; lode is 7 foot wide.
12.1874: yield of 383 ozs 6 dwt 6 grs from 1309 tons, or 5 dwt 20.55 gr per ton; dividends of £79 5s per man for the quarter; the owner's per centage was £234 10s 8d.
03.1875: the Speedwell tribute continues to yield well.
06.1875: yield is not as good, but even at less than 2 dwt per ton it pays for all expenses.
09.1875: battery has not been in continuous operation because they have to sink to access the good stone which they expect will last till the end of the tribute.
12.1875: tribute company are doing fairly; the terms of their agreement stop them from working some good stone.
03.1876: very little crushed; working to open up their mine.
06.1876: crushing steadily and paying from fairly poor yields.
09.1876: purchased small winding engine to work deeper, stone above the water line is becoming worked out.
12.1876: erected a winding engine, a 7 horse-power vertical engine (donkey engine); the engine is fixed in a chamber 375 feet from the mouth of the tunnel and winds from a shaft sunk 65 feet below the tunnel level; it takes very little water and or firewood and is efficient; struck the lode 65 feet below their old workings.
03.1877: prospecting for new stone.
12.1877: yields declining; making plans to open out at a deeper level.
03.1878: working on poor stone, but hoping for better.
06.1878: in payable stone.
09.1878: have lost the run of the gold.
03.1879: erected winding gear; cleaned out an old 150 foot deep shaft and intend sinking another 50 foot before opening out.
09.1879: getting better yields.
12.1879: prospecting without any success,
03.1880: still prospecting.
06.1880: working a poor body of stone which is improving.
12.1880: have struck a payable lode 28 feet wide.
03.1881: making wages.
09.1881: yields have been poorer than expected.
12.1881: have worked their present level and are making preparations to sink deeper.
03.1882: shaft sunk to 240 feet and opening out at 230 feet.

06.1882: struck the lode which is poor at present, but improving.
09.1882: crushing the surface leaders after failing to find anything at depth.
12.1882: crushing surface stone and surface leaders with fair results.
03.1882: have not done well during the quarter.
06.1883: still stoping in poor stone .
09.1883: prospects are improving.
12.1883: yield is better but it is not permanent.
03.1884: vigorously prospecting.
06.1884: have struck a 7 foot lode which is very poor.
09.1884: have not struck anything permanent.
03.1885: have not struck anything permanent.
06.1885: have not made wages.
09.1885: have recently struck better stone.
12.1885: doing fairly well, stone is improving.
03.1886: have not done so well this quarter.
06.1886: have done better this quarter but their prospects are not bright.
09.1886: have struck golden stone and are raising a trial crushing.
03.1887: have not done so well this quarter.
06.1887: have done very little crushing this quarter; actively prospecting but as yet without results.
09.1887: have worked out the shallow ground and do not have sufficient means to explore at depth and have ceased quartz mining and are washing the surface of the claim.