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# GARDEN OF THE MANILA MEN

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## Location

SLATY CREEK ROAD CABBAGE TREE, HEPBURN SHIRE

## Municipality

HEPBURN SHIRE

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7623-0345

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 6, 2021

The site is significant in the way it shows the ethnic diversity of mining settlement and market gardening, and differences in populations that were viewed by most Europeans as all 'Chinese'. The structure of garden beds here is different to other garden sites in this area (e.g. to the south, near Slaty Creek) where beds are smaller and run in various directions. The larger Ah Youngs Garden to the south on Humbug Hill (H7623-0336) is spread over a larger area in separate 'terraced' areas and has no visible bed structures.

The site is an illustration of gardening and settlement by a group of people with distinct gardening methods, and with valuable mining experience from the Californian goldrush, prior to coming to Victoria.

Interpretation of Site	The garden site would have developed organically, as a source of food, after people from Philippines arrived in this area and started mining. Pigs would have been reared in association with gardening, and sold locally and in Creswick. Pig manure and 'night soil,' gathered from local dwellings, would be important for maintaining soil fertility on these poor, acid Ordovician-based soils. The soils appear to be partly alluvial, perhaps carried up from the creek beds, and enriched with pig manure and night soil from human habitation along Mopoke Gully. Tree (various Eucalyptus species) cover on the site does not impede viewing, and protects the site to some extent. The western edge of the garden is raised. The whole bed area would have been fenced with brushwood.
Hermes Number	207145
Property Number	

## History

In the mid-1850s, Manilla men came to the Victorian Goldfields from the Philippines via California, where they were involved in that gold rush and learned mining techniques. On arrival in the Creswick area, many set up living sites in the Cabbage Tree area and formed a strong community around Mopoke Gully. Here, they extensively sluiced with other miners.

This garden would have supplied produce for them and other miners in the area. Some produce would have been sold on site to residents near the gardens, but some would have been carried to market and hawked for sale around Creswick, or possibly sold in a nearby store on Petticoat Road.

Manilla men considered their community, culture and gardening to be very different to that of the Chinese from mainland China, although most European settlers apparently did not distinguish between the two groups (Henderson, 2012, p21). Apart from the hardships experienced by Chinese miners, the literature mentions some antagonism between the Manilla men and the wider Chinese mining community from mainland China and Hong Kong. Some members of the Manilla community worked in bush sites in other professions, such as selling wattle bark to tanneries in Ballarat and supplying firewood.

Please note: the term 'Manila men' (or Filipino) is used deliberately, as it is how they were referred to at the time, e.g. in Zubiri. et al, **The Filipinos in Australia**, 2010. Nearly all these settlers were men.

*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.*

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