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# HARP OF ERIN QUARTZ REEF WORKINGS & PAULUSSY'S BATTERY SITE

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## Location

BUCKLAND VALLEY E488542, N5920204 CENTRAL INTERMEDIATE ADIT: E488654, N5920040 LOWER ADIT BURIED: E488572, N5920026 BUCKLAND, ALPINE SHIRE

## Municipality

ALPINE SHIRE

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8224-0076

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 5, 2024

### What is significant?

The Harp of Erin Quartz Reef Workings and the site of Paulussy's water-powered stamp battery and water race in association with the history of the Paulussy family is of important regional significance. The context of the archaeological remains, historic features and the history of the site in the broader context setting of the remote Buckland Valley Goldfield is an important aspect of the history of the surrounding Buckland Valley Goldfield landscape.

### How is it significant?

The Harp of Erin workings and Paulussy's battery site is of historical, social, technological and archaeological significance to the State of Victoria.

Criterion C – Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's regional cultural history.

Criterion D – Importance in demonstrating the principle characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects.

Criterion G - The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

### **Why is it significant?**

The Harp of Erin quartz reef workings and Paulussy's battery site and immediate surrounds are of historic, social and technologically significant to the State of Victoria. The combined associated sites;

- Are good, well-preserved examples of quartz reef mining in mountainous regions of eastern Victoria.
- Demonstrate the differences between early alluvial and quartz reef mining methods.
- The reef workings demonstrate the principal extraction processes of small 19th century quartz reef mining operations.
- The battery site demonstrates the process of water-powered quartz reef mining technology for the extraction of gold.
- The history of reef workings, the mill site and the surrounding context provide a powerful opportunity to demonstrate what life was like for a miner and family on the remote mountain goldfields of eastern Victoria.

Regional Significance (Heritage Inventory): Paulussy's battery site contains evidence of the layout and operation of water-powered stamp milling technology. The adjacent Harp of Erin workings provide an important context for the mill site. The sites combined in association with the history of Stephen Paulussy and his family providing important social and personal insight into life of the Paulussy family in the Buckland Valley.

The mill played an important role in sustaining quartz reef mining at a time when in other districts reef mining was waning. Paulussy's battery provided opportunities for miners and prospectors to test the values of their reefs, and if economical, continue to cart and crush at the mill; or determine whether to set up their own plants at their relative claims. Paulussy's battery filled the gap where government subsidised stamp batteries usually filled the need for public crushing facilities.

Technological Significance – Medium/High: the cutting of the battery site, in association with the water race, offers a good remaining example of late 19th century water powered quartz milling technology.

Archaeological Potential/Significance- Medium/High: The site of the battery and immediate surrounds have potential to reveal further artefacts and features associated with the operation of this water-powered stamp mill and gold recovery process used at a small-scale mountain public crushing plant that was used for over a 15-year period. The reef workings can reveal insight into quartz reef mining techniques and methodologies.

Historical/Social Significance – Medium/High: The site of Paulussy battery in conjunction with the Welcome Reef (Camp Flat, The Harp of Erin quartz reef workings, the potential site of the Paulussy residence and the family grave in the Buckland cemetery, clearly demonstrate what the life of an immigrant miners was like living in a remote mountainous goldfield and the opportunities that life on the Buckland offered this man and his family.

Interpretation/Presentation Values – High: The proximity of the site to the adjacent old Buckland road and to the Camp Flat recreational camping area offer good opportunities for interpretation of the site and the life of the Paulussy family. The site was identified as part of an interpretive place in the Buckland Valley Recreational Master Plan (2021).

Interpretation of Site

This area of State Forest is partially developed for recreational camping and day visitation. Outlying areas remain largely unmanaged and contain a range of historic mining features Paulussy's Battery Site and Water Race The site of Paulussy's waterwheel driven battery and water race is well defined and clearly shows the layout of the plant. The site is readily accessed and has high interpretation values. The free-standing elevated earth and cobble water race at the rear of the battery is of unusual and aesthetic construction. Mine Workings Much of the site is heavily overgrown with blackberries and understory vegetation and ground cover regrowth from the 2019 bushfires. The extent and concentration of workings is evident on the LiDAR imagery, few quartz reef mines on this field appear to have such a concentration of surface workings and features. The geological nature and distribution of the reef and the nature of the gold-bearing shoot have given rise to the extensive amount of energy and labour that has gone into the workings over several decades. The westerly dipping formation, in the direction of the slope, accounting for such as large number of short adits to gain access to the reef. Dray/Sleigh Tracks The quartz appears to have been carted via sleigh or dray track to the gully to the south, thence to the battery. Rough periods of working can be ascertained by later mullock dumps covering earlier sleigh tracks, etc. Hut/ Building Sites It cannot be certain if the hut/building sites on the north end of the workings and above the old Buckland road were occupied by miners associated with the Harp of Erin workings, the battery, or the earlier alluvial workings below. Early alluvial workings The areas of early alluvial workings are represented by cobble heaps, sluice banks, head races and water races. The setting of the battery site and water race amidst the earlier alluvial bank sluicing workings clearly demonstrated an evolution of mining types in the Buckland. The history of the plant and its importance in providing a public crushing service for miners prospecting of quartz reefs in the immediate district was an important contributor to further geonomic growth and development of that industry for over 15 years. The history of Stephen Paulussy, his immigration, early mining partnerships and subsequent marriage and raising of his own and sister-in-law's children is also a unique story of long life in a remote mountainous goldfield community.

Hermes Number 210147

Property Number

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## History

Quartz Reef Mining on the Buckland "Nothing is more certain than the fact that quartz reefing will at no distant day almost if not entirely supercede alluvial workings. Were it not that considerable capital is required and a lengthened period of time intervenes before any returns can be realized from the working of quartz that branch of mining would ere now have absorbed all the available labour in this locality. " "Yesterday afternoon considerable excitement was created upon the gold-field in consequence of the handsome yield obtained from the first three tons of quartz crushed upon the Buckland, resulting in a fraction under twenty ounces to the ton. On Saturday afternoon the crushing machine, in connection with Matthews & Co's claim, was first set to motion, consisting of two sets of Chilean rollers, driven by an engine of ten horse power." Although the Buckland goldfield is largely known for its rich alluvial gold deposits and its dramatic historical events, the field saw the working of significant quartz reef gold deposits. From the late 1850s into the early 20th century. Over 300 quartz reefs of varying sizes and value were discovered and worked to varying degrees. Quartz reefing and its ancillary industries would play an important part in the history of the field, proving to be an important contributor to the economy. The Harp of Erin Workings Mr. Stephen Paulussy has obtained from the Harp of Erin reef, Upper Buckland, 35oz. retorted gold from 32 tons of quartz. This reef has been worked since 1873, one crushing giving a return of 560oz., and a number of crushing's paying good dividends. The reef looks well, promising another good crushing in the early part of the new year." At Buckland (Upper and Lower) water is anxiously waited for, both by mill owners and sluicers. Messrs Paulussi [sic] and Barsiza are cutting a race from the left branch of the Buckland River, and when completed will erect a crushing plant at the site of the old Harp of Erin Reef. Paulussy has discovered has discovered a new shoot of stone which promises good returns in the Harp of Erin Reef, Upper Buckland. The reef has been in the possession of Paulussy for more than 20 years, and large quantities of gold have been taken

from it. The reef was discovered by F. Maguire in early 1868, at about the same time as the Red Jacket reef on Clear Creek. A number of claims were taken out along the line of the reef. The Claims Registers show a number early claim holders, including; Patrick McGuire, M. Malcolm McGill, Patrick Walsh and Charles McGuire. Maguire is reported as having taken £20,000 worth of gold, valued at £4 1s 6d per ounce, before Paulussy took over the mine. In October 1873, 124 tons of stone were crushed for 380oz of gold, a product of two months' work by Messrs Paulussey Harrington and Maguire. The following December a further 197oz were produced from 70 tons of quartz. The mine had intermittent crushing's into the 1880s. It is not clear whether these crushing's were made at an earlier battery on the site of Paulussy and Barsiza plant of 1885. In June 1885 Stephen Paulussy and Stephen Barsiza were cutting a water race from the left branch of the Buckland to the site of a crushing plant at the Harp of Erin reef. This plant crushed stone and mullock from the Harp of Erin as well as undertaking public crushings for other parties. The plant was still operating in 1900, though it is not clear whether Paulussy was still working the mine. Paulussy died in 1909, and government geologist, J. Easton reported that in about 1912, that Rowe and Wilson were driving a lower-level adit from near the river to the west. Little of their efforts is known. Paulussy's Battery Site "At the Upper and Lower Buckland, alluvial mining has been almost at a standstill, and many of the Chinese miners have temporarily taken to other occupations. From quartz very little gold has been won; still, new machinery has been erected. Paulussy and Co's new mill (the Harp of Erin) consists of one battery of four stamps, driven by a ten-horse power water-wheel. This company is crushing all the loose mullock cast away as worthless during the previous workings of the reef, but which they now find, with a plant of their own, pays them very good wages to crush." Stephen Paulussy arrived in Victoria in 1859, arriving from Dalmatia, Dubrovnik (a region of Croatia) where he was possibly born in 1842. Apparently heading for the Buckland not long after his arrival, Paulussy mined alluvial and quartz claims in partnership with his shipmates for many decades. In the 1860s he was a member of a party which invested heavily in the Welcome reef at Camp Flat. The company invested in costly crushing machinery and infrastructure. Unfortunately, the reef didn't come up to expectations and the company became insolvent in 1868 with the mine and machinery sold at auction. Despite the financial setback, Paulussy continued to mine in various claims in the Buckland. In 1885 Stephen Paulussey and Steven Barsiza erected a 4-head waterwheel driven battery on at the old Harp of Erin reef. Paulussy was familiar with the mine and held the claim in partnership with others during the 1870s. A water race was cut from the left branch of the Buckland to drive the waterwheel. The origin of the 4-head battery is not known, but it served its owners well crushing their own stone from the Harp of Erin. Paulussey and Barsiza were able to offer their battery for public crushing's. This appears to have been a fairly lucrative business for many years. as the mill continued to operate well into the turn of the century, with the taking crushing's into the early 1900s. Stephen Paulussy married Catherine (nee O'Brien, nee Pandrige) in July 1885 and had two children, William in 1886 and Ellen Frances in 1890. In 1894, Stephen and Catherine reared the children of Catherine's younger sister, Margaret Walsh, after she died suddenly. The children, Clara 4 years, and Edmond 1 month, were reared as siblings to William and Ellen. They lived in a four roomed weatherboard cottage near the battery site at the Junction. Stephen Paulussey died on the 24th January 1909 at his residence aged 67 years and is buried in the main Buckland cemetery. Paulussy appears to have lived most of his in the Buckland Valley, some 50 years.

*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/>*