
BRITANNIA CO

Location

SNAKE-VALLEY-MORTCHUP ROAD SNAKE VALLEY, PYRENEES SHIRE

Municipality

PYRENEES SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7622-0359

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Other Names PRINCE ALFRED,

Hermes Number 11773

Property Number

History

Contextual History:History of Place:

Heritage Inventory History of Site:

BRITANNIA COMPANY (name used in June 1860)

BRITANNIA QUARTZ COMPANY

PRINCE ALFRED COMPANY (December 1868)

PRINCE ALFRED TAILINGS AND CEMENT CRUSHING COMPANY (December 1869)

NEW BRITANNIA QUARTZ REEF COMPANY (assumed that it is operating on the same claim) (March 1872)

BRITANNIA COMPANY (September 1882)

STAR OF THE WEST / WESTERN STAR CO. (October 1894)

BRITANNIA ECLIPSE Co. (1911 to 1913).

CARNGHAM STAR Co.(1935).

11.1859: yield of 19 dwt per ton from 7 tons has stimulated prospecting of the reefs in the division.

05.1860: erecting crushing machinery

06.1860: erecting large steam powered crushing machine

07.1860: an excellent steam crushing machine has started

09.1860: the reef yields about 1 oz per ton.

11.1860: yield of 16 dwt per ton.

03.1861: yield of 122.25 ozs for the week ending 16 th March, this gave 6 ozs 8.75 dwt to each shareholder; four men were killed when the shaft and drives collapsed.

05.1861: two steam engines, one very large; Adventure shaft down 180 feet; have not crushed since the disaster.

06.1861: have not yet begun to crush from their new shaft.

07.1861: opened the main drive in their new shaft; have a new battery and intend to commence crushing at once.

09.1861: only quartz mine at work at Carngham, yield of 17 dwt per ton from stone taken from a depth of 160 feet.

11.1861: continuing with their usual success; dividends and quality of stone is about the same; shares are worth about £300.

12.1861: yield from the last crushing was 193 ozs and from the previous crushing was 200 ozs; present depth is 120 feet, sinking a further 70 feet; width of the reef varies from 4 to 12 feet.

06.1862: obtained a yield of 80 ozs for a fortnight.

26.06.1862: yield 279 ozs 16 dwt from 11 days crushing was the best result of any mine in the Carngham area.

08.04.1863: has not crushed for the last two months; two shafts are being sunk on a new principle, one will be used for pumping purposes and the other for winding; a brick chimney 65 feet high is under construction; two engines of 30 and 25 hp are being erected, one for pumping and the other for winding; the works will cost £2000 to £3000.

10.1863: erecting machinery and sinking shaft; will not be able to crush for 2 months.

03.1864: yield of 289 ounces 6 dwt from 900 tons or 6 dwt 10.17 gr per ton from a lode 7 feet wide at a depth of 280 feet.

06.1864: yield of 590 ozs 1 dwt from 1827 tons, or 6 dwt 11 grs per ton, from a depth of 280 feet.

09.1864: yield of 924 ounces 7 dwt from 2614 tons 7 cwt or 7 dwt 1.8 gr per ton from a lode 8 feet wide at a depth of 280 feet.

12.1864: yield of 1501 ounces 7 dwt 12 gr from 2983 tons or 10 dwt 1.6 gr per ton from a lode 8 feet wide at a depth of 280 feet.

06.1865: yield of 780 ounces from 2925 tons or 5 dwt 8 gr per ton from between depths of 332 and 350 feet; the richness of the stone does not change with depth.

09.1865: yield of 882 ounces 8 dwt 2 gr from 3198 tons or 5 dwt 12.4 gr per ton from depths of 280 to 340 feet.

12.1865: yield of 631 ounces 18 dwt 12 gr from 2778 tons or 4 dwt 13.33 gr per ton from depths of 280 to 340 feet.

03.1866: yield of 478 ounces 13 dwt from 3160 tons or 3 dwt 0.7 gr per ton from depths up to 400 feet; width and value about the same throughout.

06.1866: yield of 533 ounces 9 dwt 12 gr from 2495 tons or 4 dwt 6.63 gr per ton from a depth of 412 feet.

09.1866: yield of 697 ounces from 3039 tons or 4 dwt 14.08 gr per ton from a depth of 400 feet.

12.1866: yield of 323 ounces 6 dwt 18 gr from 1398 tons or 4 dwt 15 gr per ton from a depth of 500 feet; quality of stone appears to be improving with depth.

03.1867: yield of 119 ounces 19 dwt 12 gr from 600 tons or 3 dwt 23.98 gr per ton a depth of 500 feet.

06.1867: average from the crushings of stone from the 500 foot level is better than at shallower levels.

09.1867: yield of 205 ounces 10 dwt from 829 tons or 4 dwt 22.98 gr per ton from a depth of 500 feet.

12.1867: has been given up.

N.D. Wilson reports that after 5 years (say the mid 1860's) the company had obtained 10,610 ozs of gold.

(new company - Prince Alfred)

12.1868: new company treating tailings of the Britannia Co.; yield of 24 ounces 5 dwt from 216 tons or 2 dwt 5.88 gr per ton of tailings.

(new co-operative party formed to re-work the tailings)

09.1869: tailings treatment plant: 16 horsepower steam engine, 2 buddles for concentrating sand; reverberatory furnace for roasting mundic; 2 Chilian mills with 2 ton rollers; one shaking table, one 7 inch surface pump, one tailings pump; there are 8 men and 3 boys employed; buddles collect 9 tons of concentrated sand and mundic per week.

12.1869: each week reduces 100 tons to 8 tons of concentrated sand, which yields 1 oz per ton.

06.1870: have been at work for 6 weeks during the quarter; concentrated 600 tons of tailings into 36 tons of sand and pyrites yielding 38 ozs 12 dwt 9 gr.

(new company - New Britannia Quartz Reef Co.)

03.1872: everything is ready for crushing to test the quartz reef during the next quarter.

03.1873: has not succeeded and consequently quartz reef mining has ceased again in the division.

12.1880: prospects have warranted the purchase of machinery.

09.1881: making steady progress.

09.1882: reported to have good prospects.

12.1882: all tests are proving to be satisfactory.

1883: announced the discovery of a rich lode and the prospects look promising.

12.1883: depth 500 feet and still sinking.

03.1884: depth 600 feet and driving to cut the lode.

12.1885: promising lode recently discovered.

(new company - Star of the West Co., from October 1894 (or 1896) called the Western Star Co.)

17.09.1894: at 700 foot level; shaft and plant in good order and erection of battery progressing satisfactorily.

26.04.1895: putting up rise at the 700 foot level; yield of 15 ozs 17 dwt from 100 tons.

24.05.1895: crushing for: Miller & Party, 36 ozs 7 dwt 14 gr from 73 tons, and for Burkett, 10 ozs 17 dwt 8.5 gr from 27 tons; crushed 150 of its own stone for a yield of 23 ozs 11 dwt.

03.06.1895: operations confined to pumping

05.07.1895: mortgagees have agreed to pay wages and the mine will resume work and the boilers will be cleaned out, machinery overhauled and pumping recommence.

28.12.1895: one of the most important mines in the Division; held by English shareholders; sunk to 700 feet, but has been unsuccessful and consideration being given to sinking to 1000 feet; has a magnificent plant of winding engine, pumping engine, steam capstan, and 20 head battery.

10.10.1896: driving; seated the balance bob and building up the No. 3 plunger column.

01.01.1897: has the most extensive plant and deepest workings in the district; sank 100 feet during the year to 810 feet; a balance bob was installed at depth of 700 feet, and a third plunger was seated at 750 feet; company was stoping and driving at 600 and 700 foot levels; machinery includes: 24.5 inch cylinder pumping engine, a 22 inch cylinder battery engine, a 20 inch cylinder winding engine, a 12 inch cylinder capstan engine (the aggregate horse power of the engines is 160), a tangye engine supplies water for the battery and rain water is collected to supply water for the boilers, three large steel boilers, a 20 head battery with heavy stamps, a 10 inch draw lift pump and three sets of plunger workings.

(new company - Western Star Co. working Britannia Reef, Baker's Reef, Result Reef, Sinclair's Reef, Welshman's Reef.)

1898: Company formed after some exploratory digging by a few parties on the Britannia, Baker's, Result, Sinclair's, Welshman's Reefs.

1898: put in 2000 feet of cross-cuts at the 800 foot level at a cost of £20,000; a further £10,000 being raised to sink the shaft a further 200 feet.⁵⁶

03.1898: a crushing of 5 tons yielded 3 ozs per ton.⁵⁶

1899: shaft sunk to 1000 feet.⁵⁶

02.1900: a cross-cut at the 700 foot level intersected Sinclair's Reef and hit a heavy water flow; and continuous pumping had little effect on it; a new shaft was sunk on Sinclair's Reef to a depth of 252 feet and hit a heavy flow of water; nothing payable was located.⁵⁶

(new company - Britannia Eclipse Co)

1911: yield of 19 ozs from 92 tons.

1912: yield of 155 ozs from 328 tons.⁴⁸

1913: yield of 178 ozs 11 dwt from 361 tons; reached a depth of 150 feet; operations ceased.⁴⁸

(new company - Carngham Star Co)

1935: carried out some testing on a shoot formerly worked by the Britannia Eclipse Co; a steam plant supplied power for the winder, a separate oil engine drives a lift pump, and an 8 head battery located a short distance away has its own steam plant; a yield of 24 ozs was obtained from 94 tons.

1980's: used as a rubbish tip; shaft which had been opened to a depth of 10 m was filled using mullock from the east side of the shaft by the Department of Conservation Forests and Lands; area grazed by pigs since late 1980's.

1860's to 1935: total recorded production of 17,110 ozs 9 dwt 3 gr or 532.208 kg.

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/>