
PRINCE OF WALES MINE SITES

Location

5 HOPKINS STREET EAGLEHAWK, GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Municipality

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7724-0314

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 12153

Property Number

History

Contextual History:History of Place:

Heritage Inventory History of Site:

1855 [1896, Sept 22]: The South Prince of Wales. [the Prince of Wales line of reef] was first pegged out on Good Friday 1855. The outcrops of quartz that had prior to this been discernible on the top of the hill near the old engine shaft had for some time been a favourite hunting ground, where visitors could occasionally pick up very good specimens. There were at the time two camps of blackfellows in the immediate vicinity, and one of the aboriginals picked up and sold to Mr. Hamilton, a storekeeper, a stone that contained 10ozs. of gold. This resulted in some prospecting, and a man named George Clark (no relative of the speaker's) first sunk a shaft and obtained payable gold. As a consequence the reef was first called Clark's reef. Clark soon disposed of his claim to Messrs Hopkins and Denyer, whose names were prominent in the annals of early mining. They soon acquired two or three adjoining claims, and amalgamating the lot, rechristened the line "prince of Wales", a title which has

proved lasting. The first little crushing plant on the line was put up by Hopkins and FDenyer in 1857. It consisted of four light stamps and a Chilian mill. Shortly afterwards a Mr. Brown bought into the claim. In January 1858, the light battery was replaced by heavier stamps, , and these early in 1860 gave way to a 24-head battery of revolving stampers. At this time good cakes of gold were coming in weekly. The old engine and pump shaft was commenced and the first winding engine erected in the latter part of 1860, and for about 14 years the mine was worked with profitable results, but later on the line was idle for some time.

1856 [c. 1907]: New Prince of Wales. Some early day records. Record available show that the ground now included in the New Prince of Wales lease was first worked in 1856. At that period rich surface spurs were operated upon, and a large quantity of gold was won by the pioneer prospectors. It is recorded that crushings from spurs yielded from 1 to 10ozs. to the ton. In 1859 the small claims were amalgamated and two co-operative parties were formed. Hopkins and Co., a party of four, taking the southern ground, and the Pegleg Company, the northern. Hopkins and Co. working to a depth of about 300ft. were very successful, and the Pegleg Company operated with good results a W. lewg down to 100ft. or more. The two co-operative parties bewteen them paid in dividens over £80,000. The enxt claim N. of the Pegleg, known as the N. Pegleg also met with the same results. At a later period an amalgamation of Hopkins and Co. and the Pegleg claims was effected and they became the Prince of Wales United. It is also recorded that this company worked with success from 260 to 320ft ...

Feb 1860: Eaglehawk Division [G W Hart].The Crushing and Pumping Companies are advancing with their works. Among which I may mention the Prince of Wales Company, they have just put up a 25hp engine with 24 stamps; at present they are raising between 3 and 400 tons of stone per week, and employ 20 men; they are now waiting for water, but when in full work they will give employment to about 60.

May 1860: Eaglehawk Division , Steam machinery [includes]: Prince of Wales Co., Pennyweight Reef, 15hp, 12 stamps - crushing.

March 1864. Eaglehawk Subdivision - In quartz mining a decided improvement has, of late, taken place, many of the principal reefs giving yields which have not hitherto been surpassed. The Catherine Reef, The Prince of Wales, and the St. Mungo Companies have been especially fortunate and not withstanding the increasing depths to which the reefs are sunk, the quartz continues equally rich. .

Dec 1864. Eaglehawk Subdivision - The Prince of Wales Company still maintains its average. .

March 1865. Eaglehawk Subdivision - The St. Mungo Company's last cake was of 265oz., the Argus's, 161ozs.; and very lately the Pegleg Company struck stone of very great richness.

June 1865. Eaglehawk Subdivision. - The Peg-Leg Company has been getting large returns, and at a depth of 130ft immense bodies of quartz have been discovered ... The Prince of Wales Company and many other are paying expenses.

Sept 1865. Eaglehawk Subdivision - The returns of the Prince of Wales and Peg-Leg companies will show that they still hold a good position

Dec 1866. Sandhurst Division - The Star Reef Company and Prince of Wales Company have suspended operations for the present

March 1867. Sandhurst Division - The Price of Wales Company report having cut stone at a depth of 320 feet, which gave 22dwts/ton..

September 1868: Sandhurst Division - ...The Peg-leg Company, Prince of Wales Reef, are working spurs...

1891-1900: A first glimmer of the field's recovery manifested itself in 1891 when Lansell's New Red, White and Blue Mine on the Sheephead Line, unexpectedly struck a rich formation as it was almost on the point of ceasing operations. From 18,344 tons of stone that year, it returned 11,422 ounces of gold, and paying out £25,875 to the shareholders, headed the dividens list for the field. The strike marked a turning-point and by 1892 a revitalisation of the field had occurred. There were dazzling, old-time returns from the New Chum United and the field's annual production soared to almost 200,000 ounces.

A feature of Sandhurst mining during the period was that prosperity did not hinge upon one or two mines. There was a succession of out-standing yields from several mines, some of which had produced only indifferently before. 1890 Johnson's Reef had been the premier mine; in 1891 it was the New Red, White and Blue; in 1892,

the New Chum United. The Johnson's Reef Company became the chief gold-spinner in 1893-4 with the Princess Dagmar also outstanding. In 1895, the Lady Barkly and the New Prince of Wales headed the dividend lists. A year later they had been toppled by the New Chum Railway and Koch's Pioneer Mine. The procession continued. In 1897 it was the Great Southern and the Victoria Quartz, the St Mungo and the New Moon. In 1898 the Garden Gully United staggered the mining world with its returns and retained pride of place in the dividends catalogue until the turn of the century.

1893: The South Prince of Wales, the starting of whose machinery they were assembled to witness, was formed out of the southern portion of the old Prince of Wales lease, and a lease to the southward including the old Southern Cross claim ... registration in July 1893 ... The completion of this work has been delayed by the fact that the first boiler proved defective, but a new one, answering all tests, has replaced it and work will now be started ... The winding engine was purchased from the General Gordon (lightning Hill) and consists of a single cylinder engine, 10 inches in diameter, with 9 feet 4-inch stroke, with 8 feet drums and a Cornish fine boiler 25 feet 6 inch. The whole cost £700. Prior to the erection of the plant, the present main shaft, which is 800 feet from the Prince of Wales boundary, and about 475 feet from the old Prince of Wales shaft, was cut down about 100 feet and sunk to 200 feet.

1895: Annual Report- The following are some of the highest returns obtained by companies from quartz during the year:-

New Red White and Blue Company, Bendigo, 10,635oz.

Lady Barkly Company, Bendigo, 8,936oz.

New Prince of Wales Company, Bendigo, 7,600

Windmill Hill Company, Bendigo, 6,968oz.

1897, Annual Report: list of mines from which ore has been treated and dividends paid during 1897: New Prince of Wales.

1898: Report on the Northern Mining District, Sandhurst. Machinery erected - ... an up-to-date crushing plant of 30 heads, New Prince of Wales Company, Eaglehawk; air-compressor at Lansell's Comet mine.

June 1899:

New Prince of Wales - The gold of this company was first worked in 1856, and some rich surface spurs were operated on, giving from 1oz to 10oz per ton. Some of the parties did well. In 1859 the small claims amalgamated and two co-operative companies were formed; Hopkins and Co. (a party of four) taking the southern ground, and the Peg Leg Co. the northern. Hopkins and Co. were very successful with stone worked to a depth of 300 feet, and the Peg Leg Co. worked a west leg with good results to a depth of 108 feet, the two companies paying between them over £80,000 in dividends. The next claim north, too - the North Peg Leg - was also profitable. Expenses becoming heavy Hopkins and Co. and the Peg Leg Co. decided to amalgamate, and became the Prince of Wales United Co. This company, too, worked with success from 260 feet to 320 feet on a west leg, the last crushing being one of 30dwt., but work was stopped because some of the directors objected to the expense of sinking the shaft another lift. In 1891 the present company was formed to work this abandoned reef, and a new shaft was sunk. The old reef was not got, however, for at a depth of 230 feet the new shaft came upon another reef, which continued in the shaft to 300 feet, where a plat was cut in the quartz. The capital called up for purchase, erection of plant, and mining work, was 3s. 6d per share, and a loan of £639 was received from the Government. On this capital 21s. was paid in dividends, and the amount of the loan was repaid. Since then the shaft has been sunk another 100 feet, and another shaft has been sunk north of it to a depth of 590 feet, and a battery has just been erected at a cost of £6679. The two winding plants cost, it may be mentioned, £3406. With the irony of fate, no sooner had the battery been erected than the stone it was built to crush went poor. There is, however, an enormous body of quartz still standing, and it will be strange and very unfortunate if another run of payable stone be not met in it. The new battery plant is a most complete one - a high pressure compound condensing engine, with a stroke of 42 inches, an air-pump of 14 inches diameter, working vertically between the cylinders, a Cornish multitubular boiler, and a 30-head battery set on solid iron frames. A large dam 190 yards from the battery supplies the water.

Since its formation the New Prince of Wales Co. has crushed 60,585 loads for 23,193-1/2 oz., and paid £31,500 in dividends.

1900, Annual Report - list of principal companies and mines from which ore has been treated and dividends made during 1900:- [includes] New Prince of Wales.

c. 1907: New Prince of Wales: It was in the year 1891 that the New Prince of Wales Company was formed ... they

erected a suitable winding plant ... The 20-head battery has proved a very necessary adjunct to the machinery equipment, as it has enabled the company to continue the treatment at times of low grade ore, which otherwise would have not have proved remunerative. In the years 1906 and 1907 the stone milled for the full terms averaged less than 4dwt. to the ton, yet with the small yield the company more than held its own, which is an achievement in the mining and treatment of low grade ore, creditable alike to the company and the district.

1912-14: By 1912 wage increases of up to 15 per cent had been achieved despite the recession in the industry. It was not only in the matter of wage claims, however, that the new militancy was asserting itself. Since the passing of the Goldbuyers Act, aimed at stamping out gold-stealing in the mines, the question of the searing of miners rankled bitterly.... Local mine-managements and miners laid charges and counter-charges. One night in early August 1912, Detective Timanus paid the South New Moon Mine a surprise visit as the midnight shift was coming off. One miner, John Hutchens refused to permit Timanus to lay hands on him. Hutchens was a man of highly reputable character. He readily agreed to be searched by Dawe, the mine's regular searcher; no gold was found on him.

When the shift lined up next afternoon, Hutchens was hauled out and given his dismissal notice. The rest of the shift refused to go below unless Hutchens was reinstated. A reason for his dismissal was demanded; the company refused to give one.

Employing 140 men, the South New Moon was one of the more important mines on the field, but it had a poor record in industrial relationships. Other shifts immediately struck in sympathy with the men who were out. The mine was declared black and picketed. The company threatened to bring in outside labour. The men stood their ground and a week later the management capitulated. Hutchens was reinstated and work resumed.

The issue continued to fester. It was indicative of growing industrial unrest in the mines. Strikes occurred the same year at the New Red, White and Blue and at the New Moon, and the following year (1913) at the Virginia and the Prince of Wales over the question of compulsory unionism. The latter strike dragged on for months ending at length in the unconditional capitulation of the strikers. Its failure was symptomatic of the fading prosperity of the industry. With the onset of World War I and the numerical decline of the work force, the bargaining power of the miners virtually disappeared.

1915, September 7: Bendigo Mining Companies - [includes] New Prince of Wales.

1930s: Gold production in the thirties was appreciably supplemented by local alluvial mining and cyaniding. A great many hydraulic sluices were working in the Bendigo district by the mid-thirties and some 1,500 men found employment in alluvial mining. The mountains of tailings or battery sand that rose about the valley and filled houses in summer with a gritty dust, were a cyanider's dream, and in the 1930s some thirty plants, employng 300 men, were operating about Bendigo. The largest company, the Adelaide, based Devonshire Sands, paid out £3,700 in dividends in 1935.

1936: Cyanide - Approx 23 plants are operating at Bendigo, Eaglehawk, and Huntly, between 200 and 300 men employed..

1936: This is the most important of the Prince of Wales group. The ground when first worked in 1856 gave yields of 1 to 10 oz. per ton. In 1859 two co-operative companies were formed, the Hopkins and the Peg Leg, these later amalgamating as the Prince of Wales United. The New Prince of Wales was formed in 1891, and worked until 1915, producing 56,566 oz. of gold, and paying £49,500 in dividends. The shaft was sunk to 904 feet, and most of the gold was obtained from spurs associated with east backs at 260 feet and from 590 feet to 790 feet. The No 2 shaft was taken to 920 feet. The present Prince of Wales Company has a length of 650 yards along the Carshalton line, and is developing the 787-ft and 887-ft levels in search of spurs worked by the old company. The shaft was unwatered to 887 feet.

1937: companies which have not survived include the New Prince of Wales, Virginia South Extended, and South Frederick the Great.

1938: New Prince of Wales closed down during the year

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For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>