
BRAGG'S WATER RACE AND DAM

Location

CRESWICK-BUNGAREE ROAD AND MELBOURNE ROAD CRESWICK AND SLATY CREEK ROAD CABBAGE TREE, HEPBURN SHIRE

Municipality

HEPBURN SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7623-0333

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

The site has a HIGH level of historical significance at a local level. Due to the excellent

preservation of a large part of the Creswick goldfield, the intertwined narratives of mining,

water supply, environmental consequences and rapidly evolving legislation can be read in

the landscape. At a state level the site contributes to broader narratives of water supply

and mining (Victorian Historical Theme 4.5 & 4.6) and informs the development of both

Historical Significance

mining and water management laws for the State of Victoria.

The race system is one of many on the Creswick alluvial goldfield that together make up

an important and well preserved cultural landscape of water management.

Combined with Creswick's strong forestry education facilities and proximity to Melbourne

and Ballarat, an increased awareness in this well preserved mining complex could provide

Creswick with excellent educational and tourism opportunities illustrating mining techniques and how mining shaped Victoria's water laws.

This site has a high level of archaeological significance.

The race is well preserved for its entirety and is a representative example of an 1850s

water race that was utilised over several decades for both mining and water supply purposes. Archaeological features include the race alignment, negative cut features, spoil

Archaeological Significance

and sediment deposits, dams, diversions, sluice points, bitumen pipe remains and potential gauges, flume remains, and sluice lining materials.

Although water races are common on Victorian Goldfields very few races in Victoria have

been documented and mapped in detail and the integrity of remaining goldfield water

management complexes is largely under researched.

The race was constructed in the early 1850s to service the Humbug Hill Sluicing Companies claims at Humbug Hill . Braggs dam was constructed c 1860 to supply water to

the claim. Water from the race was sold to other miners along the race route and augmented council water supply. The water was carried accross Slaty Creek to reach

distant company claims at Bald Hills in 1861 . New bitumen pipe technology was used but

Interpretation of Site

failed , being replaced by iron pipes. The Humbug Hill Sluicing Company represents an

important early example of corporate alluvial gold mining in Victoria, with a strong emphasis on water management.

The race was taken over in entirety in the mid 1880s by the Creswick Council to augment

the town water supply and water was also leased to Chinese miners. The race and dam

appear to have fallen into disuse by the early 20th century.

Hermes Number 195090

Property Number

History

Much of the race between Bragg's Dam and Humbug Hill remains in an excellent state of preservation, despite disturbance in several small sections by road construction and logging. In addition, construction of Cosgrove Reservoir in 1977 inundated approximately one kilometre of the race upstream of Eatons Dam. Bragg's race is generally about one metre wide and up to 1.2 metres deep, curving around Ashwell's Gully and Lincoln Gully en route to Humbug Hill. Extensions of the race to the White Hills, and beyond to Long Point and the Bald Hills², are poorly preserved, with only small sections still extant. The good state of preservation of the Humbug race almost certainly relates to its later re-use as part of the municipal water supply, where the channel was cleaned out and possibly widened, until the 1960s (L. Bren pers comm. 20 April 2012) .

A small holding or settling dam was also constructed on the east side of Humbug **Hill**. Such dams could serve to lower the velocity of water flowing through the race by spreading it over a wider surface, before the water was then distributed to the working site (Tracey 1997:7). The dam is located about 60 metres south-west of Bragg's race, and the dam wall is 45 metres wide. The floor of the dam is covered with numerous potholes, usually about one metre in width. A small blockage in Bragg's race diverted water through a secondary race into the holding dam, from where it was used in ground sluicing on the southern slopes of Humbug **Hill**. It is not clear when this small dam was used, although it appears to post-date construction of Bragg's race.

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/>