
WARDLE'S WATER RACE

Location

EAST AND WEST OF OSBORNE ROAD, CURRY'S HILL, WOMBAT STATE FOREST

Municipality

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7723-1264

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 27, 2023

What is significant?

Remaining sections of the race located in the Wombat State Forest , east of Osborne Road

How is it significant?

Early relic of the Victorian gold rushes

Why is it significant?

Race is significant due to its age (late 1850s/early 1860s) and association with Edward Wardle, a notable mid 19th-century water race entrepreneur

Interpretation of Site Late 1850s/early 1860s water race that only survives within the Wombat State Forest. Elsewhere the race has been destroyed because it exists on private land.

Hermes Number 209435

Property Number

History

Edward Wardle, gold miner and water race entrepreneur, lived in Connell's Gully, Table Hill, Daylesford, for 38 years. In the late 1850s/early 1860s he constructed a 30 miles (48km) race which took water off two small creeks (tributaries of Kangaroo Creek, Blue Mountains) and through a tortuous route brought water to Daylesford to enable sluice mining to be undertaken. Giving evidence to a Government Select Committee (1864-65) Wardle stated that his race had, over a 8-year period, had delivered annually 9 million gallons. It was still operating in 1867 as the *Ballarat Star* (28 Oct 1867, P.4) has a story on how a young lady saved a 3-year old boy from drowning in the fast flowing water in Wardle's race. Edward Wardle was also associated with at least two other water race systems. 1862: Coliban Water Scheme – Victorian Heritage Register Site H1021 A 1899 newspaper report of a Government Select Committee presents the claims by Mr. Wheeler that Edward Wardle as the person who conceived (in 1862) the idea of the Coliban Water Scheme. In that years, Wardle, had applied to the Mines Department to get a licence to use water from the Coliban for the purpose of supplying the mining communities of Bendigo and Castlemaine. Wardle had made preliminary surveys and devoted a great deal of time and money on the idea. Wardle ended up in a three-way tussle with two other water race designers – Brady and Riley. In the end, Joseph Brady is recognised as the designer of the Coliban Water Works in 1863. 1866: River Loddon & Tributaries Water Race – Victorian Heritage Register Site H1230 In 1866, Mark Amos and Edward Wardle constructed a race that diverted water directly from the Loddon River near Glenlyon along a contour race to the heads of various gullies at Fryer's Creek (Fryerstown-Vaughan area). A 15-mile (24 km) open channel was built that included 11 timber flumes on trestles up to 100 feet (30 m) high.²⁵ At the Fryerstown end the company built a tunnel, known as Devil's Gully Tunnel that was over 400 feet (122 m) in length. All the work was done manually with pick, shovel, hammer and drill. With separate gangs working on the race, flumes and tunnel, the project took only six months to build and was completed in 1866 at a cost of £5,000. [Peter Davies, Susan Lawrence and Jodi Turnbull, 2016]

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/>