
HEPBURN ESTATE

Location

1330 DAYLESFORD-CLUNES ROAD SMEATON, HEPBURN SHIRE

Municipality

HEPBURN SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7623-0022

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 7073

Property Number

History

Heritage Inventory History of Site: The following history was extracted from The Berry Deep Leads: an historical assessment, CF&L, October 1986, Charles Fahey. Located on the farm of the Anderson brothers - millers at Smeaton - the Hepburn Leasehold was floated in June 1881. In December 1881 the first bores were sunk. The company's initial shaft sinking operations were frustrated by water. In 1884 the company placed a tender for a 70-inch Cornish beam engine - the contract was let to Mr John Hickman for £3,415. In their report for December 1884, the directors reported that a contract for 300,000 bricks had been let and 100,000 had been delivered. A new contract was let to sink the shaft through rock to 316 feet. Two new boilers - 26ft x 6½ft - were purchased from the Duke No. 1 Company (Maryborough). A brick stack 80 feet high, footings for four more boilers and a 83 feet high poppet head were also erected. By the end of November 1884 calls had exceeded £21,000. By June 1885 the company's shaft had been sunk 274 feet, the engine house had been completed and the beam engine installed, a blacksmiths shop had been built, and three boilers purchased. The works so far had cost £37,162 and

gold valued at £58 had been won. By the following year the shaft had been sunk to 508 feet and a changing room, office and mine manager's residence had been built. Gold production picked up in the late 1880s - three years work producing 15,828 ounces of gold - but the yields were still insufficient to cover investment costs. The company, despite the size of their plant, were still being plagued by water, which required even more pumping power: in June 1888, an additional two boilers and a Tangye pump were added. As much of the gold was found in cement was a ten-head stamper had also to be installed. The company continued to operate into the 1890s. In 1893 the company discovered a rich run of wash and in 1894 were able to pay out its first dividend: 6 pence per share. Up to this date the gold returns had been £125,087, calls £90,600, and expenses £216,743. By 1895, however, the drives from the main shaft had been driven to an unprofitable distance and plans were drawn up for a new shaft. The following plant was to be shifted to the new (No. 2) shaft - one 24 inch cylinder pumping engine and gear, one 16 inch winding engine and gear, a capstan engine and gear, one roots blower, three Cornish flue boilers, four puddling machines, and one puddling engine. A mine managers house, store room and blacksmith's shop was also erected at the new shaft. The surplus plant at the old (No. 1) shaft, including the 70 inch Cornish beam engine, was offered for sale. When the No. 1 shaft was abandoned it had produced gold to a value of £153,481. The No. 2 shaft went onto to become one of the main Creswick mines of the late 1890s: by 1901 the shaft had yielded gold worth £80,941 but expenses had totalled over £71,000. It had paid out £14,000 in dividends, but this was a small return for the £94,900 invested by shareholders. Machinery In 1884 the company's plant consisted of one 24 inch cylinder winding engine (used for pumping); one Cornish pumping engine - 70 inch cylinder, 9 feet stroke - capable of working two sets of pumps - 14 inch and 17¾ inch; four Cornish flue boilers; four puddling machines and one 16-inch cylinder engine to drive same. Additional plant was to be installed to this due to the large volumes of water encountered. Significance The Hepburn Estate mine indicates many of the problems faced by mines on the northern end of the Berry leads. Although the eighth producer of gold this mine was less profitable than the 16th producer. To deal with the water problems the company possessed some of the most extensive plant on the lead, particularly its 70 inch cylinder, Cornish beam pump and brick engine house.

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.

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