
Pennyweight Flat & Precinct

Location

Colles Road, CASTLEMAINE VIC 3450 - Property No L10283

Municipality

MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1675

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 7, 2008

What is significant?

Pennyweight Flat cemetery was established during the early years of the Mt Alexander alluvial gold rush and some 200 burials took place between 1852 and 1857. Many of the burials were children and the cemetery was known for many years as a children's cemetery. However, the cemetery also contains the graves of both European and Chinese miners. The simple graves are partly built up with loose rock due to the stony ground and are informally placed among a stand of regrowth eucalyptus trees. The non-auriferous nature of the ground ensured that the cemetery was undisturbed by mining. The cemetery was long regarded as an authentic relic of the gold rush era. Restoration was first carried out from 1928 to 1930.

The cemetery reserve is set in a rural valley surrounded by forested hills and dramatically situated on a small rocky knoll. The cemetery is on the eastern side of the former alluvial gold-bearing flat at the junction of Forest Creek and Moonlight Creek. Pennyweight Flat and its surrounds were extensively altered by mining activities and included the site of a government camp, was the location for a political agitation meeting, and later in the century, included a Chinese market garden south of the cemetery. The valley has been preserved by a long period of low-intensity agricultural use. The open, rural nature of the alluvial flat enables the cemetery knoll to be viewed from across the valley.

How is it significant?

The Pennyweight Flat Cemetery and surrounding precinct is significant for aesthetic, historic and social reasons

at a State level.

Why is it significant?

Pennyweight Flat Cemetery is of aesthetic significance for its romantic siting of rudimentary graves among indigenous trees on a stony rise. The cemetery knoll overlooks Pennyweight Flat, an isolated alluvial gold-bearing valley; the rural setting with a backdrop of forested hills forms an integral part of the cemetery, reinforcing the remote nature of the burial ground.

Pennyweight Flat Cemetery is of historic significance as a rare surviving example of an early goldfield burial ground associated with the alluvial gold rush in the Forest Creek / Castlemaine district. The site was long known as a children's cemetery and was regarded from the 1860s as a relic of the early gold rush. The surrounding precinct is also of historic significance for its association with alluvial mining from 1851 until 1914, as the site of an early government camp, and for its association with a goldfields political meeting. The precinct also contained the site of a Chinese market garden, and Zeal Bridge crossing Forest Creek named in honour of a late nineteenth century state politician.

Pennyweight Flat Cemetery is of social significance as an important reminder of the hardships of life on the early goldfields. The large number of children buried in the cemetery is evidence of the existence of families in the goldfields at that time. Similarly, the presence of Chinese graves among Europeans attests to the cultural diversity of the mining population.

Classified: 29/01/2007

Hermes Number 71726

Property Number

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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