

Heritage Notes for the

5 Quartz Hill Walk and 6 Welsh Village Walk

Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park

Follow in the footsteps of prospectors and discover the traces that gold mining left in the landscape on these self-guided walks. Learn about the ingenious ways miners found and retrieved gold. Step back in time among the atmospheric ruins of Welsh Village, an abandoned goldrush settlement. Learn about Dja Dja Wurrung culture before and during the goldrush.



Womin-dji-ka (Welcome)

Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park is part of the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung People *Djaara* whose rights were recognised through a Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the State of Victoria in March 2013. The Dja Dja Wurrung People maintain a close and continuing connection to *Djandak*, their traditional Country.

Djandak is a cultural landscape that includes both tangible objects such as scarred trees, oven mounds, rock wells, and stone artefacts, and intangible stories. *Djandak* is a living entity, which holds stories of creation and histories that cannot be erased.

You can learn more about Dja Dja Wurrung Culture from the interpretive signs at the Garfield Water Wheel and Welsh Village.

Parks Victoria pays our respects to Dja Dja Wurrung Elders, past, present and emerging, and asks that visitors do the same. Aboriginal artefacts are protected by law, and it is prohibited to disturb them in any way.

Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park

Gold was first discovered by Europeans in the Castlemaine area at Specimen Gully in 1851. The discovery triggered the Mount Alexander goldrush, bringing flocks of migrants from around the world, hoping to strike it rich, and changing the physical and cultural landscape forever.

The gold rush, and the social and political changes that it triggered, helped shape the multicultural democratic Australia of today.

This remarkable story is etched into the landscape of the Castlemaine Diggings, one of the best preserved mid-nineteenth century goldfields in the world, and Australia's first National Heritage Park.

Peel back the layers of history on one of the self-guided walks through the Northern Diggings, starting at the Garfield Trailhead, located approximately 120km north-west of Melbourne via the Calder Freeway.

Before you set out

The Nimrod Reef Mine and Welsh Village is a designated Special Protection Area due to its historic significance, so the 6 Welsh Village Walk is not marked or signed through that area. Dogs and bikes are prohibited.



Download the free geo-referenced Castlemaine Diggings Northern Walks map from the Parks Victoria store on [Avenza Maps](#) and use your phone's GPS to help you find where you are in relation to the places and stories in these notes.

If you don't have the Avenza Maps app on your phone, you will be prompted to download it. Access to WiFi is recommended.



Dogs may be walked on a lead on the tracks around the Garfield Water Wheel, including the 5 Quartz Hill Walk. They must be kept on a lead and under control at all times. Please collect and remove your dog's droppings for the sake of other visitors and to avoid stress to native animals.



Dogs and bikes are not permitted at the Nimrod Reef Mine and Welsh Village and must not be taken beyond the Welsh St carpark on the 6 Welsh Village Walk.



The Castlemaine Diggings are a heavily mined landscape and contain a variety of ongoing hazards, including uneven and unstable ground, mineshafts, open cuts, quarries, and mine tailings. For your own safety, please stay on mapped tracks and supervise children.

Please comply with local signs and do not climb over or around barriers, fences or on the ruins. Do not park or rest under trees. Tree and branches may fall at any time and swing away from the tree.

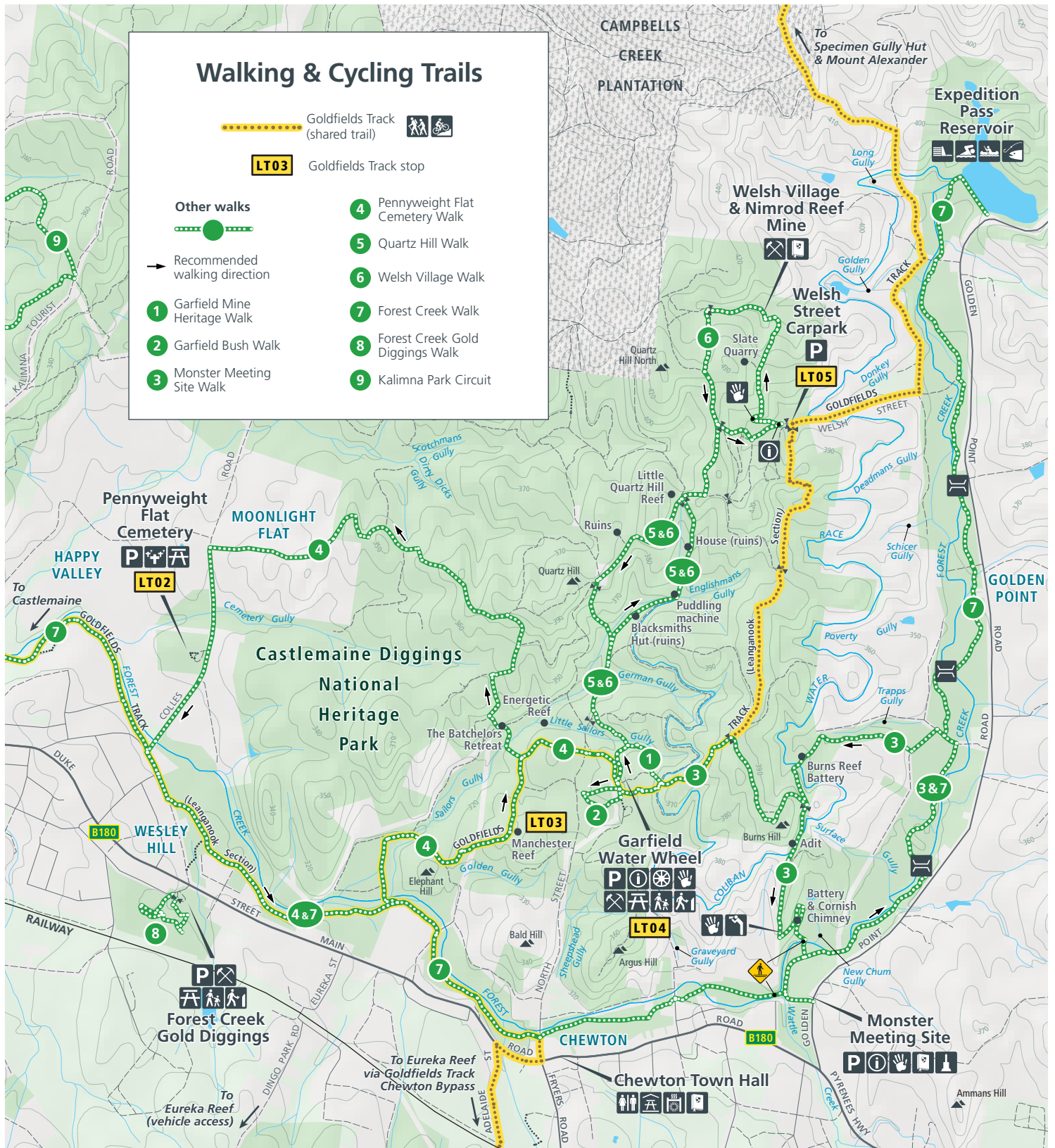
Mobile phone reception is unreliable in the Park, particularly around Welsh Village. You may get a signal by moving to higher ground.



These loop walks can be walked in either direction, but we strongly recommend following the direction suggested on the maps and signs which corresponds with the order of features interpreted in these notes. At track junctions, look for the number of the walk you are on, as shown in the map and descriptions.

Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park

Northern Walks



- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Parking | Cemetery | Fishing | Highway | Castlemaine Diggings NHP |
| Park information | Monument | Canoeing | Main road | Other reserve |
| Toilets | Picnic shelter | Swimming | Sealed road | Waterbody |
| Trailhead | Picnic area | Lookout | Unsealed road | Significant creek / water race |
| Mine site | Barbecue (electric) | Dam | 4WD | Stream / gully |
| Learn about Dja Dja Wurrung Culture | Family walk | Pedestrian bridge | Walking track | 10 metre contour |
| Historical site | Self guided walk | Shallow water crossing (seasonal) | | |

5 Quartz Hill Walk



Grade 3, 3km loop, 1-1.5hrs

Well-marked earth and gravel tracks. Uneven ground. Moderate hills with a few steep sections. Bushwalking experience and a moderate level of fitness recommended.

Trace the path of prospectors who followed the gold up through the gullies into the hills. Starting from the Garfield trailhead, this loop walk explores the upper reaches of Sailors Gully and Quartz Hill.

Heading north from the trailhead, you briefly follow the same track as the 1 Garfield Mine Heritage Walk, passing where the mine manager, John Ebbott, and his wife Margaret, and their eleven children, lived.

The Ebbott's five-room cottage overlooked a tramway that took the quartz from the mine to the battery beside the water wheel. Close to the junction where the two walks diverge, you can also view the Garfield mineshaft and relics around it (stop one in the track notes for the 1 Garfield Mine Heritage Walk).

Just after the Garfield Mine Shaft, the 5 Quartz Hill Walk heads north-west (left at the junction), then north through Sailors Gully. Where the track divides again, keep to the right. You will return via the left fork later.

Following in the footsteps of the diggers

Thousands of prospectors walked this way, making their homes in these hills. Many lived in canvas tents, cooking on open fires. Gold and water were scarce. Until companies formed to mine the quartz reefs and the water races were constructed, there would have been few more permanent structures.

Machinery and bricks were expensive, so companies usually dismantled their buildings and equipment to be transported and rebuilt at their next mine. While some physical traces of mining can still be seen in the landscape, others have been transformed or obliterated by later phases of mining, forestry or nature.

Some of these traces can be explored on this walk. As you climb Quartz Hill, you pass the ruins of a blacksmith's hut, a puddling machine, and a miner's house.

The stone walls of the blacksmith's hut are still partially standing, along with an upright wooden pole that may have been a hitching post for horses to be tied to. Blacksmiths played a vital role on the goldfields. Shoeing horses was only a small part of their work, which also involved making and repairing mining equipment, such as picks, pans, buckets, hammers, boilers, grinding and winding machinery.

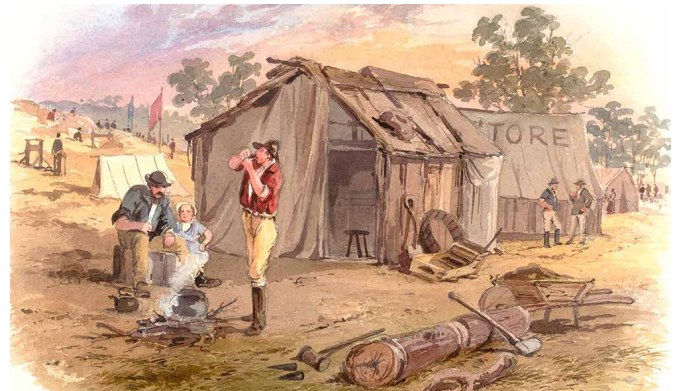
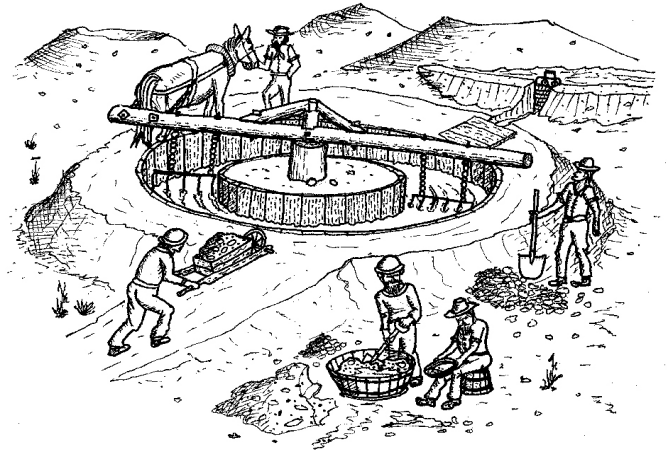
Further along is the remains of a puddling machine, used to separate soil from gold more quickly than by panning. Diggers constructed circular ditches with an island in the middle, often lined with wood. On the island was a pivot post that supported a long pole pulled around the edge of the ditch by a man or a horse.

Miners filled the ditch with water and soil, and paddles or iron rakes stirred the water to separate the soil from any rocks or gold it contained. When the muddy water (slurry) drained away, the miners could retrieve the heavy gold that had sunk to the bottom.

The steepness of the track increases as you leave Sailor's Gully. Near the head of the gully are the remains of a miner's hut. The stone walls have mostly collapsed but would likely have been capped by a canvas or bark roof. Miners' homes were modest by today's standards, consisting of only one or two rooms and no bathroom.

During the early goldrush, stone homes were rare. A simple canvas or bark home could be taken apart, picked up, and easily moved to a new location. As quartz mining began to replace alluvial mining, miners became more likely to stay in one place for longer, and stone fireplaces and homes became more common.

There were no guarantees of striking it rich, and relatively few people did. To be successful, you needed to be adaptable. A builder might become a miner, then a sheep shearer or carpenter. A family might build a mill to cut timber but end up making flour instead.



Top: Illustration of a puddling machine in operation by Robert Kaufman. **Centre:** Canvas and bark miner's hut at Forest Creek by ST Gill, 1852. Source: State Library of Victoria.

Bottom: Miners in front of a bark hut with a stone fireplace and iron roof in New South Wales, 1872. Source: National Library of Australia.



Want to learn more about homes and communities on the goldfields? Continue on the 6 Welsh Village Walk or download the heritage notes and visit the Specimen Gully Hut and Gold Memorial.

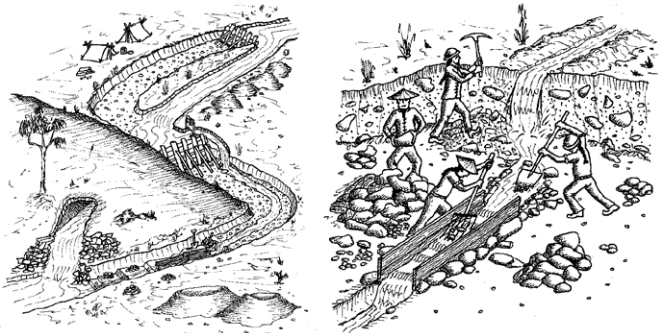
Necessity, the mother of invention

According to Albert Einstein, “The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.” and success on the goldfields depended on it. The methods, technology and resources needed to extract gold changed significantly, depending on whether you were searching for gold in the soil (known as alluvial gold) washed down into the creek beds and flats) or in the quartz reefs it had formed in.

i **Want to learn how gold came to be in these hills?** Download the heritage notes and explore the **1** Garfield Mine Heritage Walk or Eureka Reef Heritage Walk.

Alluvial gold could be found by prospectors working alone or with a few friends. Men worked their way up the gullies, panning or digging into the creek beds with little more than a gold pan. With a few more resources or a friend or two, prospectors could shovel soil into cradles, or tubs, or construct puddling machines to speed things up.

A steady supply of water allowed them to wash larger volumes of soil more quickly, and creeks were often diverted to enable ground sluicing. Miners worked their way up into the hills, searching for the quartz reefs the gold had washed down from.



Creek diversions (left) and bank sluicing (right) were used to wash large volumes of soil, and often erased the evidence of earlier alluvial diggings. Illustrations by Robert Kaufman. From the 1930s, gas-powered pumps and cannons were used to direct large volumes of water at creek banks, eroding them into steep cliffs. You can see sluicing equipment and its impacts on the **5** Forest Creek Gold Diggings Walk and view dramatic sluiced cliffs at Spring Gully and Red Knob in the Central and Southern Diggings.

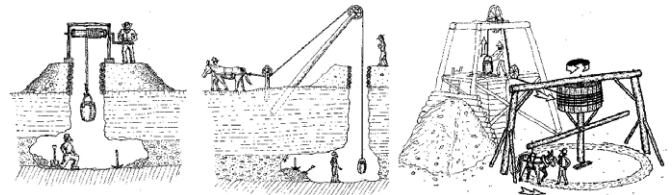
Removing the riches from the reefs

Extracting gold from quartz is challenging. Although miners could sometimes do well by chipping away at surface quartz with picks, it was hard, slow work. If the quartz lay below ground, shafts had to be dug to access the reef from above, or adits (tunnels into the side of hills) and stopes to access the reef from below. Lifting and winding mechanisms had to be constructed to remove material or drain water from the shafts.

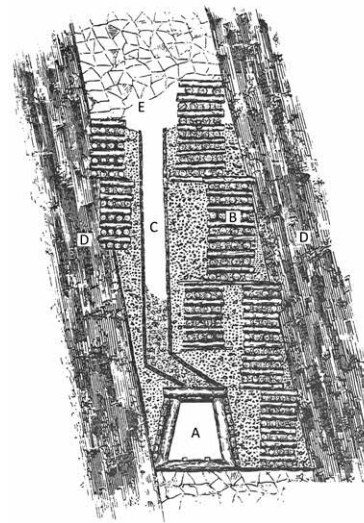
After extracting blocks of quartz from the reef, it had to be crushed to powder with hammers or in grinding pans. This was easier after roasting the quartz in kilns, which made the quartz more brittle.

Most of these technologies would have been used in this area at one time or another, however later waves of mining and different techniques used can make it hard to identify their traces.

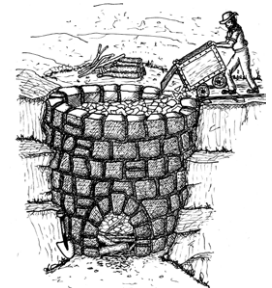
There was only so much success you could have on your own. Quartz mining on a larger scale required money and cooperation. Companies began to form, as miners pooled their resources to scale up their efforts. Steam-powered pumps and winding machinery made it possible to dig deeper shafts, pump out water, and bring up more quartz for crushing. Crushing batteries driven by steam or water wheels made breaking up the quartz much quicker and easier.



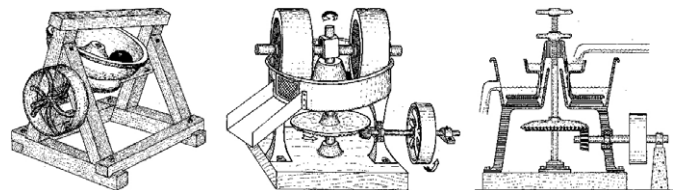
Above: some ways of lifting quartz out of a shaft by hand or horsepower (left to right): a windlass; a whip; a whim with a headframe over the shaft. Later these were replaced by steam-driven machinery. Illustrations by Robert Kaufman.



Above left: Mining a reef from below using a vertical stope: A) the adit (tunnel) or main drive; B) supporting stacks of timber and rubble; C) the pass leading to the quartz reef; D) the walls of the reef; E) the quartz reef yet to be mined. Illustration by Robert Avitabile. Source: *Discovering the Mount Alexander Diggings*, Mount Alexander Diggings Committee, 1999. **Above right:** roasting quartz in a wood-fired kiln. Illustration by Robert Kaufman.



Below: Examples of technology used to grind quartz to powder. Left: a berdan pan used a heavy iron ball rotating in a tilted pan. Centre: a Chilean mill with two large heavy revolving wheels. Right: grinding pans varied in design but generally employed a combination of fixed and rotating plates. Illustrations by Robert Kaufman.



i **Want to learn more about crushing batteries?** Download the heritage notes and follow the walks for the **1** Garfield Mine Heritage Walk or Eureka Reef Heritage Walk.

When you reach the track junction, you can turn south-west (left) to stay on the **5** Quartz Hill Walk and loop back towards the Garfield Trailhead, or turn north-east (right) to continue on the **6** Welsh Village Walk. The Little Quartz Hill Reef Company operated just to the north of this junction. The **5** Quartz Hill Walk heads south-west, curving around Little Quartz Hill towards Quartz Hill.

From golden beginnings to iron-clad success

Just to the west of where the walk leaves Toby’s Track and turns south (left) onto Quartz Hill Road, close to the crown of the hill, lies a large open cut mine. This, and the piles of quartz removed from it, are among the few remaining traces of the rich and colourful history of mining on Quartz Hill.

In 1852, this outcrop of quartz was being broken off, roasted, and crushed with hand-hammers. This crude method of working was hard work but could yield rich returns.

Among the lucky ones, were two brothers from Northern Ireland, David and James Thompson. They took over an abandoned 25ft (7.6m) hole on Quartz Hill in 1855, and only dug another 3ft (1m) until they hit very rich gold.

Their success on Quartz Hill encouraged them to mine elsewhere, and their fortune proved lucky for the town of Castlemaine too. The Thompson brothers erected a flour mill on the corner of Kennedy and Parker streets in 1867, followed by a foundry (iron and brass works) in 1875.

The Thompsons' adaptability and willingness to diversify, grew the business into one of the largest engineering firms in the State, employing close to 400 people and significantly contributing to the economy of Castlemaine.

The foundry designed and produced a wide range of mining machinery, sluicing and dredging equipment, pumping plants, steam locomotives, railway crossings and munitions. The foundry still operates today.

Descending Quartz Hill, which is moderately steep in places, you re-join the track you left earlier, and retrace your steps back to the Garfield Trailhead. Keep right (south) at the junction where you began the loop.

6 Welsh Village Walk



Grade 3, 5km loop, 2-2.5hrs

Gravel and earth track. Uneven ground. Track unclear and not signed through Nimrod Reef Mine and Welsh Village. Moderate hills with a few steep sections. Bushwalking experience and a moderate level of fitness recommended.

**From Welsh St carpark / Goldfields Track stop
LT5: 1.2km loop, 45mins**

Step back in time amid the atmospheric ruins of Welsh Village, an abandoned goldrush settlement, and learn about Dja Dja Wurrung history before and during the goldrush.

The full walk starts by following the same route as the 5 Quartz Hill Walk. It can also be walked as a shorter loop or detour from the 4 Goldfields Track (stop LT5) starting from the Welsh St carpark.

From the Garfield Trailhead: follow the 5 Quartz Hill Walk, until you reach the turn off for the 6 Welsh Village Walk. Turn north-east (right) along Tobys Track and then north onto an unnamed track (follow the signs). Where the track divides, follow the loop to the east (right) towards Welsh St and the car park. Follow the signs from there.

From the Welsh Street carpark / 4 Goldfields Track (stop LT5): leave your bike or vehicle at the carpark on Welsh St and follow the signs to begin the loop part of the walk from there. Dogs and vehicles, including pedal bikes, are

prohibited at the Nimrod Reef Mine and Welsh Village and should not be taken beyond the carpark.

Look for the interpretive signs located at the car park and further along the walk to learn about the mine and village and Dja Dja Wurrung's cultural connection to the area.

The track is steep in places and may be slippery in wet weather. To the east (right) of the track, there are mullock heaps and glimpses out over Donkey Gully and the Golden Point Flats from between the trees, and to the west (left) is a slate quarry at the crest of the hill. The track is not marked or signed through Nimrod Reef and Welsh Village due to the special historic significance of the site.

Slated for construction

Slate is a hard rock that splits relatively easily into thin slabs, making it a much-sought after building material used for walls, roofs, tiles and paving. It was quarried in Wales as early as the 1100s, with the industry peaking in the 1830s-1870s.

This quarry operated in the 1950s, however, its slate was used long before that, first by the Dja Dja Wurrung People, and then by gold miners. There are several disused quarries in the area, including this one and the one at nearby Specimen Gully. Slate is still mined near Castlemaine.

The seams of slate that run through this area were created millions of years ago, long before the dinosaurs. 480 million years ago, Central Victoria lay beneath a warm shallow sea, teeming with corals and early fishes. The earth's crust was unstable, with tectonic plates on the move.

Over the next 40 million years, plates in the east and the west pushed towards each other, compressing the seabed to half its former width, and the ocean drained away. The folded sand and mud layers were welded together as sandstone and mudstone. Molten rock, rising up through the earth's crust, heated and compressed the mudstone turning it into hard slate.

The cliffs and blocks around you exhibit great diversity of colour, which reflects the different minerals that accumulated in the layers of the mudstone. The dark bands contain more carbon or iron sulfide, red and purple bands contain more hematite (iron oxide), and green bands contains more chlorite.

The large blocks of broken slate at the foot of these impressive cliffs demonstrate why it is not safe to climb them or get too close to the foot of the cliffs.

A golden gully fit for a king

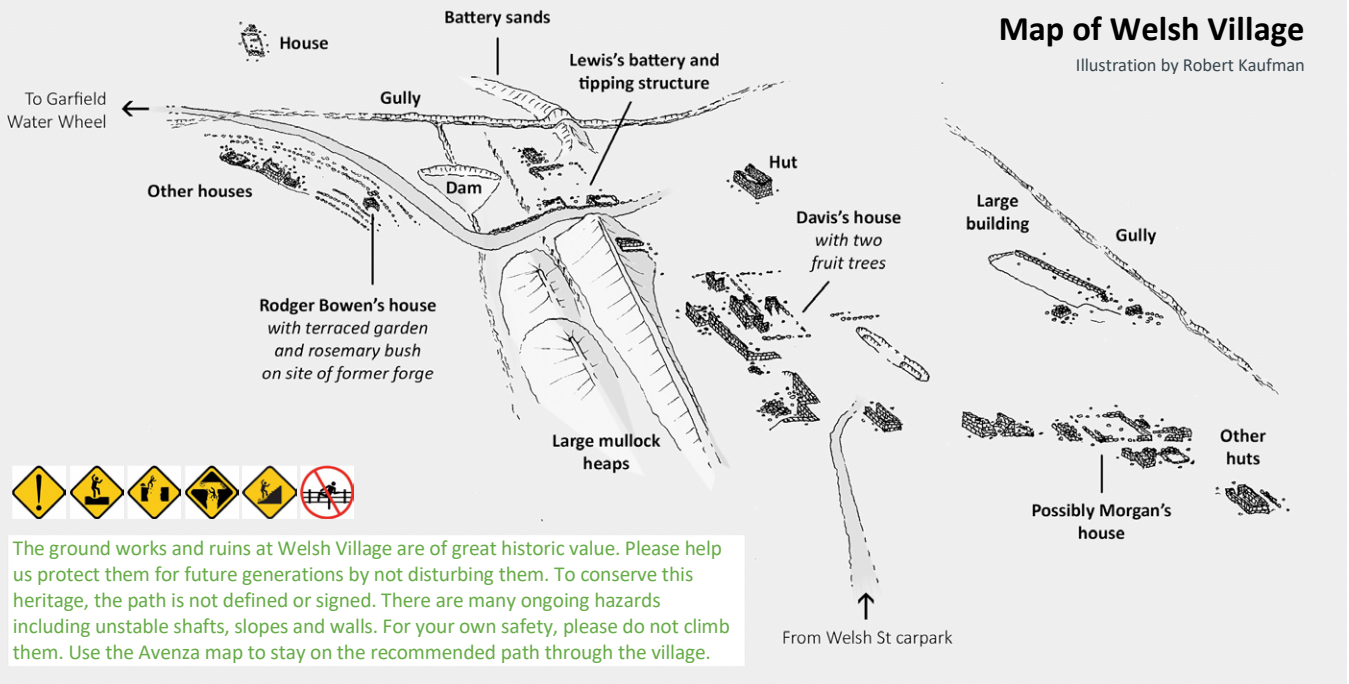
Beyond the slate quarry, the track starts to descend into Golden Gully, passing through the Nimrod Reef Mine. Nimrod Reef (also known as Donkey Reef) lies between Donkey Gully (behind you) and Golden Gully (ahead).

There are many shafts and mullock heaps on both sides of the track, a very large open-cut mine that has been partially filled in by later phases of mining, and an adit (tunnel) dug by Jones and Lewis, who held claims on this reef.

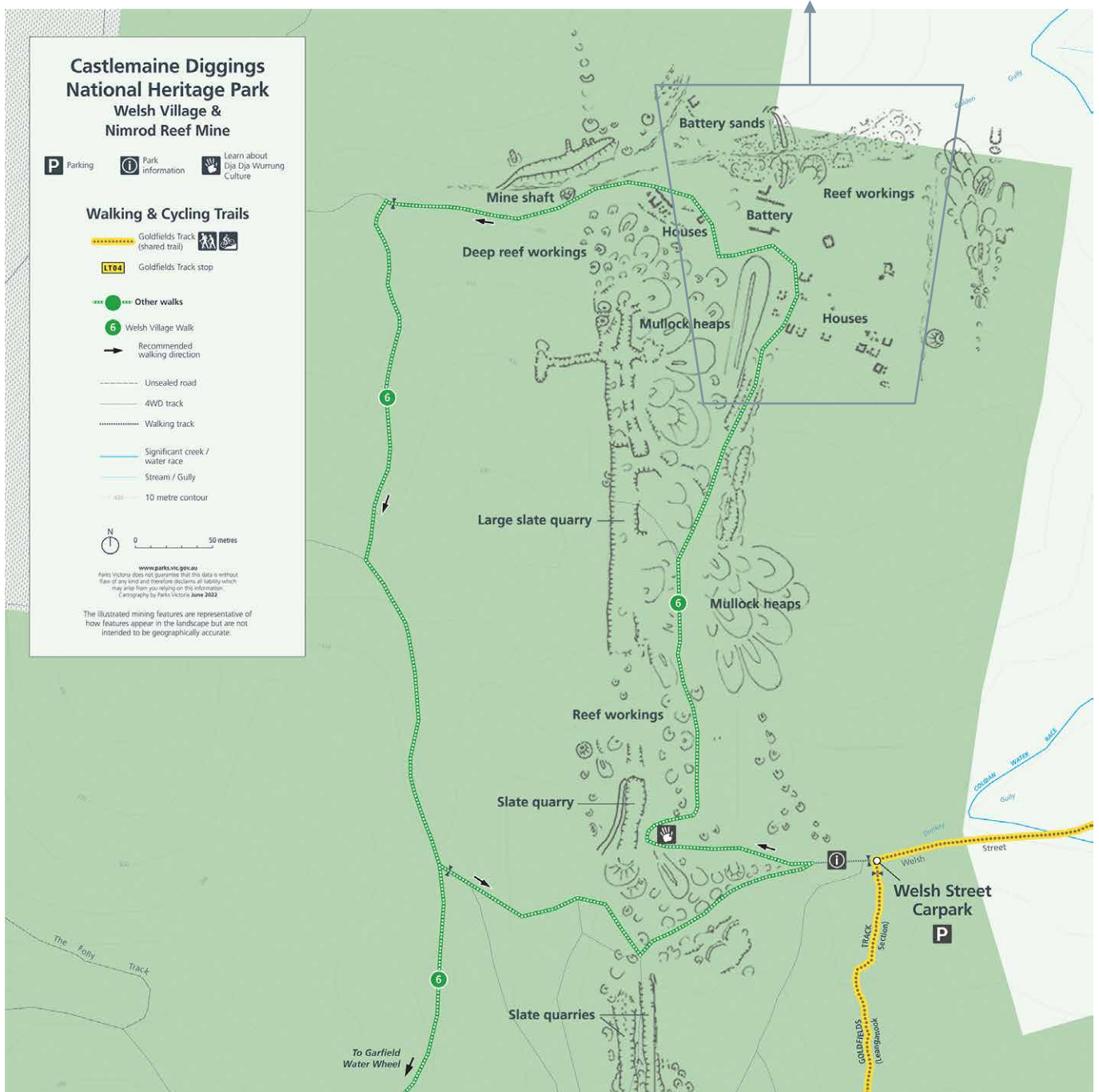
"M'Glenchey and mate" began mining Nimrod Reef in 1854, and after the introduction of the Miner's Right in 1855, which allowed miners to take out mining claims, other parties took up adjoining claims.

Map of Welsh Village

Illustration by Robert Kaufman



The ground works and ruins at Welsh Village are of great historic value. Please help us protect them for future generations by not disturbing them. To conserve this heritage, the path is not defined or signed. There are many ongoing hazards including unstable shafts, slopes and walls. For your own safety, please do not climb them. Use the Avenza map to stay on the recommended path through the village.



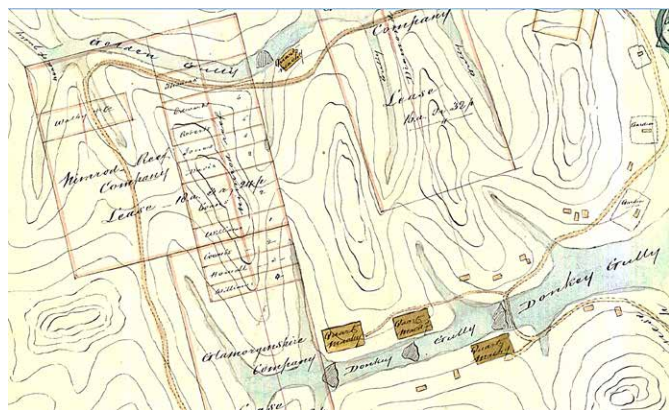
It was common for miners on the goldfields to seek out others from their home countries, and documents from this time show a predominance of Welsh surnames: Williams, Morris, Price, Lewis, Jones, Powell, Bowen, Morgan, Evans, Davis and Davies.

The reef at the surface proved very rich, with some parties getting over 9kg of gold from 1,000kg of quartz. By mid-1859, seven steam-driven crushing batteries were in operation, and nine claims were being worked by 49 miners.

However, it wasn't without challenges. From 1861, as the surface gold was exhausted and shafts were dug deeper, water became a persistent problem. With significant investment required in drainage machinery and dwindling returns, work became intermittent.

In 1888, the original co-operative, Crown Nimrod, was bought out by a Melbourne syndicate. Torrential rains brought mining almost to a complete halt in 1889 and by 1896 work had ceased on the main shaft. Efforts continued into the 1900s, but the boom was over.

i **Want to learn more about alluvial and quartz reef mining techniques?** Refer back to the information for the **5** Quartz Hill Walk and download the **1** Garfield Mine Heritage Walk heritage notes.



This plan from 1859 shows the claims over Nimrod Reef (at left), the location of four crushing batteries or "quartz machines" (the brown rectangles), and their associated dams (irregular dark patches in the gullies). To the right is a large claim over Diamond Reef. The foundations of Lewis's crushing battery in Golden Gully can still be seen at Welsh Village. Source: Mining plan from 1859, State Library of Victoria.

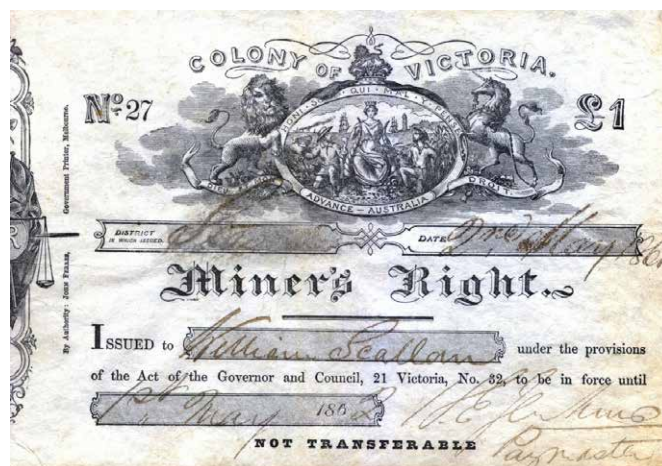


Nimrod Reef Mine in the early 1900s with the headframe (or poppet head) over the shaft at left and the building housing the steam-powered winding and pumping machinery on the right. Source: The Virtual Exhibition 1998, Department of Natural Resources and Environment via the Chewton Town Hall Collection.

From the right to build a home, to a community of stone

Descending into Golden Gully, you can see the ruins of several stone cottages and workshops. This settlement, which has become known as 'Welsh Village', was constructed by the miners of Nimrod Reef. It was one of many small settlements with houses, stores and hotels, and sometimes even schools and churches, in the mining locality of Golden Point.

From 1857, the Miner's Right entitled holders to claim a Residential Area – up to a quarter acre of land for a home and garden. Miners searching for shallow alluvial gold rarely stayed in one place for long, but quartz reef mining was a longer-term prospect and offered miners a more settled life.



A Miner's Right issued in 1861. Source: Castlemaine Art Gallery and Museum.

Miners, including those working at Nimrod Reef, began to claim their Residential Areas and replace canvas tents with homes of wood and stone.

In the earliest days of the goldrush, men often left their families back home, but it wasn't long before women and children became a common sight on the goldfields. If miners had enough money, they sent their children to school (which could be in a tent or under a tree). However, most children had to help with the mining or in the house or garden (collecting wood, carrying water, washing clothes).

Work usually stopped half-an hour before sunset. In the evenings, people sat around the fire or hearth – cooking, talking, reading, singing or playing music on whatever instruments they bought with them or could fashion out of the materials to hand.

i **Want to learn more about the Miner's Right and how it was won?** Download the heritage notes and follow the **3** Monster Meeting and **4** Pennyweight Flat Cemetery Walks.

A change is as good as a rest

Sunday was strictly maintained as a day of rest from mining but was rarely a rest from anything else. Families repaired equipment, extended their homes, took their weekly bath, and finished off the week's housework.

Laundry was one of the worst tasks. Water had to be collected from the nearest creek or dam. Clothes caked in mud from the diggings had to be soaked, scrubbed, rinsed and wrung out by hand. Women usually did this on a Monday, but a single man had to wash and mend his clothes on his day off.

When the chores were done, people put on their best clothes and went to church, shopped for food or clothes, attended dances and had picnics. Sports like cricket, football, horse-racing, cockfights and boxing were popular. Sunday was also the day that mail arrived at the Forest Creek Post Office, bringing long-awaited letters from home.



An open-air service competes with music and dancing on a Sunday at the diggings. 1860s, unknown artist. Source: State Library of Victoria

Held together by mud and kinship

Most of the buildings were constructed with irregular blocks of local sandstone, held together with mud mortar, sometimes with the addition of smaller stones. Often, stone was only used for the foundations and fireplaces, with the walls and roofs wood and bark. Bricks were only used in a few buildings, likely after the 1880s. Small quantities of corrugated iron and slate from the nearby quarry were also used. Dry stone walling (without mortar) was used for retaining walls to contain mullock heaps.

Can you see some colour variation in the ruins?

Sandstone with a yellow hue was found near the surface. Sandstone with a grey or blue hue was brought up from below the water table where it was not exposed to the weathering and oxidation that turned it yellow. Buildings with grey or blue stone were likely built after 1868 when mining commenced below the water table.

Welsh Village was inhabited by Welsh miners for over fifty years, held together by national and family ties. There is evidence that Thomas Morgan, William Davis and Rodger Bowen were still living there in 1893.

Echoes of another time and place

The Davis family were the last of the original settlers to leave, remaining there until Mrs Davis finally moved to Alexandra in her old age. Look for the ruins of their house with several fruit trees growing in front of it.

Rodger Bowen's house can be identified by its terraced garden beds with a huge rosemary bush. Behind the house a neat, flagged path leads southwards, probably the path used by Rodger Bowen each time he set out to work his shafts.

Visit in spring, and you may also see daffodils – the national flower of Wales – and other European bulbs in flower. Can you recognise any other non-native species?

Take a moment to sit quietly among the ruins and reflect on what life was like here in the late 1800s.

What would it have been like to live here?

Most homes were simple, with only one or two rooms, just large enough for the number of beds required, a fireplace for warmth and cooking, and perhaps a table. Light came from the fire, candles stuck in empty bottles, or oil or kerosene lamps. Beds were usually stretchers made from wooden frames and canvas or flourbags, sometimes with a mattress of gum leaves.

The miners used whatever was available. A pair of boots, or flourbags stuffed with clothes might make do as a pillow. Buckets could be turned upside down and used as stools. Trunks or packing cases became tables. People only purchased things they couldn't make themselves, such as wool blankets, or the luxury of a possum skin rug for winter warmth.



Saturday night in a digger's hut by N. Chevalier, 1865. Note the simplicity of the furnishings and crowded quarters. Source: State Library of Victoria.

Meals were also simple. Billy tea, mutton and damper were the standard fare, and often all that was available, particularly in remote locations like this. General stores at Golden Point or along Forest Creek would have sold a variety of goods, including clothing, tools, household items, candles, kerosene, tobacco, tea, coffee, flour, sugar, salted meat and tinned goods.


Butchers sold freshly slaughtered meat – usually mutton, sometimes beef, and occasionally pork. Other fresh produce (like chicken, eggs, milk, fruit and vegetables) was rare and expensive.

Scurvy, caused by a lack of Vitamin C, and malnutrition were common. Some families planted fruit trees and tried to grow their own food, but land and water were limited. It would have been almost impossible to survive as a vegetarian on the diggings.

The monotony was occasionally broken by hunting wild animals and birds. A possum or cockatoo pie was considered a fine meal after months of nothing but mutton and damper. And the skins and feathers could be put to good use.

Can you imagine what the village was like on a Sunday when the batteries fell silent and families gathered to pray or play sports, perhaps share a meal with friends? Maybe you're playing a tin whistle and watching the children dance, or replying to a letter from your family back in Wales?



Want to learn more about sickness and health on the goldfields? Download the  Pennyweight Flat Cemetery Walk heritage notes and visit the cemetery.



A gold buyer and store at Forest Creek, by S.T. Gill, 1852. Many stores accepted gold as payment for goods instead of cash. Source: State Library of Victoria.

Leaving the village, the track climbs in stages (some moderately steep) in an easterly and then southerly direction over Quartz Hill North, before reaching the junction where you started the loop through Welsh Village.

If you parked on Welsh Street or took a detour off the ■ Goldfields Track: turn left (east) at here and follow the track back to the carpark (Goldfields Track stop LT5).

To extend your walk: follow the directions above and join the Goldfields Track to Expedition Pass Reservoir (2km, 30min), where you can stop for a swim. Then head south along the 7 Forest Creek Trail and return to Garfield via the 5 Monster Meeting Walk (6.5km, 2hrs).

To return directly to the Garfield Trailhead: continue straight on (south) to the junction where the 5 Quartz Hill Walk and 6 Welsh Village Walk diverge. Here, you can return to the Garfield Trailhead by following either track:

- Continue straight on (south-west) to return via the section of the 5 Quartz Hill Walk that you haven't walked yet: new features to explore, a slightly steeper descent, allow a bit longer.
- Turn south (left) to retrace your steps: a similar distance, but slightly gentler descent, recommended if you are short on time or energy.

● The Goldfields Track



Grade 4, 12.6km one-way from Castlemaine to Specimen Gully Rd, 6-8 hrs

Well-marked, shared-use track. Gentle to moderate hills. Mostly Grade 3 with some steeper and rougher Grade 4 sections. Bushwalking or mountain biking experience recommended.

The 210km Goldfields Track passes through the Castlemaine Diggings on its way from Ballarat to Bendigo. It is divided into four longer sections, including the Leanganook Track (Castlemaine to Bendigo), and into shorter (part or full day) walks.

The 12.6km Heritage Walk between Castlemaine Railway Station and Specimen Gully Rd, visits the Garfield Water Wheel (stop LT4 in the *Goldfields Track Walk or Ride Guide*), with short detours to Pennyweight Flat Cemetery (LT2), Welsh Village (LT5), Expedition Pass Reservoir and Specimen Gully Hut (LT6). For more information or to download files for your handheld GPS, visit goldfieldstrack.com.au.

Look for the ■ gold-capped posts and signs. Allow extra time for detours and to explore the goldrush features along the way. Bikes are prohibited at Welsh Village: please leave them at the carpark on Welsh St.

Acknowledgements

These heritage notes were drawn from multiple sources, including David Bannear, Robert Kaufman, heritage reports, mining surveys, accounts in the *Mount Alexander Mail* and *The Argus* newspapers (retrieved via TROVE, National Library of Australia), and:

- Robyn Annear, 1990, *Nothing but Gold: The Diggers of 1852*, Text Publishing, Melbourne
- Valerie Hill, 1998, *The Welsh Village, near Castlemaine, Victoria: A study of people in the landscape*, in *Australasian Historical Archaeology*, Volume 16
- Marjorie Theobald, 2021, *Mount Alexander Mountain of Gold 1851-1861*, Chewton Domain Society

Taking care of the park



The Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park has been included on the National Heritage List as Australia's outstanding gold rush landscape. The Park's goldrush features are of great national cultural and historic significance. Left undisturbed, they will remain for many future generations to rediscover.

You can help protect the heritage values of the Park by following these simple guidelines:

- No bins are provided. Please take all rubbish away with you for recycling or disposal.
- Fires are prohibited in this area. Firewood collection is prohibited throughout the Park.
- Firearms are prohibited.
- Culturally important Aboriginal sites are found throughout this landscape. Please tread lightly and be mindful of conserving both physical and intangible heritage. All artefacts are of cultural significance and are protected by cultural heritage laws.
- Please do not touch the ruins or disturb the ground. All plants, animals, historical artefacts, archaeological sites and geographic features are protected by law.
- Fossicking, prospecting and digging for gold are only permitted within defined areas and are strictly prohibited in the Special Preservation Area around the Nimrod Reef Mine and Welsh Villages. A prospecting map of the Park is available from parks.vic.gov.au.
- Vehicles, including motor bikes, may only be used on formed open roads, not on walking tracks. Drivers must be licensed and vehicles registered and roadworthy.

Be prepared, stay safe



The Castlemaine Diggings are a heavily mined landscape and contain a variety of ongoing hazards, including uneven and unstable ground, mineshafts, open cuts, quarries, and mine tailings. For your own safety, please stay on mapped tracks and supervise children.

- Comply with local signs and do not climb over or around barriers, fences or on the ruins.
- We recommend hiring an experienced guide to safely explore mining relics located off the mapped tracks. Enquire at the Castlemaine or Maldon Visitor Information Centres.
- Do not park or rest under trees. Tree and branches may fall at any time and swing away from the tree.
- It can be cold and wet in winter and very hot and dry in summer so be prepared for adverse weather conditions.
- Mobile phone reception is unreliable in the Park, particularly in the gullies. You may get a signal by moving to higher ground.

Emergencies

For emergency assistance call Triple Zero (000).

The Northern Diggings are in the North Central Total Fire Ban District. Bushfire safety is a personal responsibility. Anyone entering parks and forests during the bushfire season needs to stay aware of forecast weather conditions. Check the forecast before leaving home. The Welsh Village is an isolated, heavily forested location. We do not recommend visiting Welsh Village or undertaking these walks on hot, dry, windy days or when storms are forecast.

Check the Fire Danger Rating and for days of Total Fire Ban at emergency.vic.gov.au, on the VicEmergency smartphone app or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226.

On days of Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating this Park will be closed for public safety. Do not enter the Park. If you are already in the Park you should leave the night before or early in the morning. Closure signs may be erected but do not expect an official warning. Check the latest conditions at parks.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 1963.