

PATHWAY TO GOLD – CAPTAINS FLAT HERITAGE TRAIL FACT SHEET

July 2003

This fact sheet provides additional information to the map in the heritage brochure 'Pathway to Gold'.

Gold was discovered in the area in 1864 and the Koh-i-noor and Commodore-Vanderbilt (formerly El Capitan) mines were established in 1886. In the period to 1899, over 100 000 tons of ore were mined locally. Slag from operations is evident on the left of Jerangle Road, going out of the village.

Gold mining on a less organised basis continued from 1864 and some remnants of mining races, built by Chinese and other miners, still exist outside the village. JE Wright of Foxlow Station (10 km from the village on the Captains Flat Road) discovered copper bearing ore in 1874. Production continued on a restricted basis to 1926.

Lake George Mines Pty Ltd commenced operations in 1939 and ceased 9 March 1962. 3 946 650 tons of ore were extracted by underground methods to produce lead, zinc, copper, pyrite and gold extracts. The geology of Captains Flat still attracts many geologists and students to the village.

Large farms have surrounded the village and farming is an important part of the economy of the area. The Captains Flat dam offers anglers an opportunity to enjoy some quiet fishing and to admire the waterfall. Bush walkers and four-wheel drive enthusiasts frequent the surrounding Tallaganda State Forest and the Tinderry Mountains.

1 Wilkins Park: Proclaimed as a public recreation ground in 1893, it is named after Mine Operations Manager Bert Wilkins. It is believed that this is the area that the bullock 'Captain' used to graze after straying from Foxlow Station, 12 km from the village, reputedly giving the town its name. John Hosking, who owned Foxlow Station, purchased land that is now the Captains Flat playing field sometime after 1839. John Hosking became Sydney's first Lord Mayor in 1842.

2 Colin Winchester Oval: Named after Federal Police Assistant Commissioner, Colin Winchester. The Winchester family came to the town in 1940 and owned a bakery from 1945 to 1952. The Winchesters lived here until 1963.

3 Miners' Memorial: Dedicated to the miners and their families on 1 October 2000. Cobar Mines purchased the jenny wheel from Lake George Mines Ltd. Residents of Captains Flat, the Flaherty family, located the wheel and transported it back to the village when Cobar Mines closed. The jenny wheel now forms part of the memorial.

4 RSL & Citizens Bowling Club: The green and clubhouse was built by volunteer labour beginning in 1947, with materials supplied by the mining company. The RSL Club took over the Bowling Club's assets and liabilities in 1967 and the RSL and Citizens Bowling Club was formed in 1986. The stained glass window depicting the spirit of the RSL was moved to the new club from the old RSL club when it closed in 1986. Games are again being played following the recent restoration of the green with the assistance of the ACT Greenkeepers Association. Visitors are welcome. Phone: 6236 6284.

5 Post Office: A fine example of architecture of the time, the front of the building has been altered only slightly. The postal service was established on 16 April 1883. The current Post Office was built by Mr Charles Bruce in 1898. A telephone, one of the first in the area, and telegraphic equipment was installed in 1886. An agency of the Government Savings Bank opened on 2 September 1889. In 1971 it was recommended that the Post Office take on non-official status. It is now privately owned.

6 Community Hall: The hall was once a 400-seat picture theatre and still has a good-sized stage. The sloping floor was remodelled in 1975.

7 The Outsider Restaurant and Gallery: The restaurant is located in a 100-year-old building. The Art Gallery has a spectacular mosaic floor. The restaurant is opened Friday to Sunday. Phone: 6236 6160. www.outsidercafe.netfirms.com

8 The Captains Flat Hotel: First opened in 1938, the hotel has been built and furnished in the 1940s style. It has 20 guest rooms and reputedly had the longest bar in the southern hemisphere at the time of construction. Phone: 6236 6201.

9 Workers' Club: Formerly a billiard hall, it was owned by the Kerr family and became a Workers' Club in the early 1950s. It is currently closed.

10 Bradley House: An example of original housing. It is a private residence.

11 Bollard House: A house built by Jack Bollard from materials from the original Koh-i-noor mine smelter chimney, which he demolished. It is a private residence.

12 Keating's Collapse: The site where sections of the hills collapsed into the mine, leaving fault lines. Situated on the right hand side of the hill on Jerangle Road leading out of town.

13 Bryant House: An example of early housing. It is privately owned.

14 War Memorial: The focus of the annual Anzac Day ceremony. In 1920 William Ballard started collecting donations to build the memorial.

15 Police Station: Built in 1896 it was originally the Court House. Take note of the air vents, which include the crest of Queen Victoria's crown.

16 St Luke's Anglican Church: Opened by Bishop Charmers in September 1895, the new porch was added in 1925. Currently Anglican and Roman Catholic services are conducted here. Parishioners restored the interior of the church in 2000. Stained glass windows made by local landholder Mr Alois Mikula were installed and dedicated in 2002. For information regarding Anglican church services phone 6236 6378.

17 Captains Flat Public School: Built by William Nicholls in 1889. The first headmaster was Mr John Filshie and about 90 children were enrolled. A classroom and weather shed was added when enrolments reached 126 by the end of the year. Enrolments have fluctuated through the years and in 1959 the school had 12 teachers and students from Kindergarten to the fourth year of High School. 44 children attend Infants and Primary school in 2003.

Schardt Street: Named after Count Adam von Schardt – a veteran of Waterloo. The Count was a German national who followed his sons to the district in the 1860s. Katherina Schardt, a blind girl who started the first hospital for incurables in NSW, was the daughter of Frederick Schardt of 'Queanbeyan Flat' on the Captains Flat Road.

18 St Brigid's Catholic Church School and Convent: Mother Mary McKillop was interested in establishing the Order of St Joseph sisters in the village. She came via Bungendore to visit the chapel and proposed convent on 14 April 1899 and again on 27 July 1901. His Lordship, Rev G Young opened the Schardt Street school, which replaced the original church. The Sisters of Mercy instructed 156 children in the first year. The school closed in 1962, however the building continued to be used for Church Services until the 1990s. The original convent, on Foxlow Street, has been converted into a two-storey brick home. The school is now privately owned and offers short-term accommodation. Phone: 6257 2599

19 Old RSL Club: Opened in 1957 by Governor-General Sir William Slim, the RSL club moved to the RSL and Citizens Bowling club in 1986. It is now a private residence and the current owners enjoy the dance floor, billiards room and bar.

20 Hospital: The hospital occupying this site was opened in 1950. It closed soon after the mine closure. It was purchased by the Yarrowlumla Shire Council then sold in 1985 to residents who ran a privately owned museum from the premises. The Nurses' Home became a private residence. The museum is currently closed.

Railway: First requested by mine owners in 1897. A trial survey commenced in 1928. Construction on the line commenced in February 1938 and the line opened on 28 November 1939, taking ore to Bungendore. The last train operated 28 August 1968. The branch was selected as the site for the making of the film 'Ned Kelly' starring Mick Jagger in 1969.

21 Station Master's House: Now a private residence.

22 Weighbridge: 3 946 650 tons of ore were transported to Port Kembla, NSW, from 1 January 1939 to 9 March 1962.

23 Gantry Crane: The remaining bridge-like portion of the crane.

24 Railway Goods Shed: Now the State Emergency Service headquarters.

25 Lookout: Miners climbed these steps to the Lake George Mine at the start and close of each shift. The entrance to the mine was slightly to the right of the top of the steps. It was bulldozed to extinguish a fire that started in the mine. Halfway along the pathway, which has been constructed along the foundations of the changing rooms, you will see a plan of the mine buildings, most of which have been removed. Each union had its own changing room. Enjoy the view of our village and compare it with the panoramic lithograph depicting the view as it was in 1938.

25 Railway Station: The station building is unusual in that it was placed at ground level and is an island. It is owned by NSW Estate Rail and is being leased as a private residence.

27 Captains Flat Dam: Built by Lake George Mines to supply water for mining operations. A new water treatment plant became operational in 2002. The dam has been stocked with Murray Cod and Yellow Belly.

28 Waterfall: A beautiful hidden waterfall situated on the edge of the Captains Flat Common in the Molongolo River Gorge. The river runs through the village.

29 Cemetery: The first known burial was in the 1890s and the last known burial was in the 1960s.

Bushrangers: The Clarke brothers were very active in the region. One of several hideouts they had in the area is in the mountains between Captains Flat and Parkers Gap, where the bushrangers had a view of Foxlow Plains and the roads leading to the goldfields in Braidwood, Araluen and Majors Creek. The brothers twice held up Foxlow Station.

The Water Wheel: A camping area in Lowden Forest Park Forest, east of the village. The historic water wheel once drove a generator to provide lighting for a logging camp.

Deua National Park: The entrance to the park is 17km south of the village. The Walking Trail takes you to the Big Hole, across the Shoalhaven River and to the Marble Arch. The Big Hole is a limestone collapse nearly 100 metres deep and 50 metres wide.

A history of Captains Flat, 'Boom to Bust – And Back Again. From 1883...', can be purchased from our local businesses.