

TUNNEL BEND 1866



Entrance to the diversion tunnel as it is today.

In 1866, this tunnel was constructed by the Goulburn Valley Sluicing Company to divert water so that access could be provided to the gold deposits along a stretch of the Goulburn River.

The mining surveyor in his quarterly report of September 1866 noted:

“A party has been formed for working the bed of the River Goulburn below Gaffneys Creek. The bed of this river has long been known as highly auriferous, but up to the present time has only been partially worked by means of ‘wing dams’ from its banks (Chinamen being the principal adventurers hitherto); but this party propose diverting the stream from its course for a distance of about a mile in length, a highly favourable bend of the river has been secured, across the isthmus of which the current will be carried by means of an open channel, terminated by a short tunnel.”

In mid-1867 the company had fourteen men employed on constructing the tunnel, sawing timber for boxes and building a dam for raising water into a head ditch for sluicing purposes. They had stripped two large paddocks, but were unable to reach the bottom without the aid of a Californian wheel and pumps, which were expected to be in action shortly. A couple of months later, heavy floods carried away their dam and ‘injured’ the company’s works to the tune of £700 or £800. They planned to rebuild and resume operations when the flooding subsided, however there is no evidence this happened.

Source and Images:

Pam Craig (Stewart) & Peter Luke, Gaffneys Creek Progress Association

Peter Horan & David Lean, Jamieson Museum

Barbara and Des Miller & John Wood, Woods Point Museum

Rudi Paoletti, ‘Gold for the Taking, A Pictorial History of the Heyday of the Walhalla-Wood’s Point Gold Belt, 2007’

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