

El Dorado - Reids walk

Reids walk is a shared path that winds its way through the tailings and settling ponds that El Dorado's historic gold and tin mining dredge left behind.

On the way you can visit the creek, ending up at the 11 Swing Bridge and if you wish continue back along the road to El Dorado Village, about 1 km.



1. Dredge construction site.—the pontoon for the dredge was constructed in a dry dock area and then floated out into the dredge paddock where the main construction was done
2. Amalgamating shed and wash room—where the gold, tin and ilmenite were separated. The grey ilmenite sand is still on the site.
3. Settling Dams—Designed by Hugh Falconer and Ally Smith, settling ponds or dams were designed to divert the creek into bodies of water so that the level of pollutants leaving the mine would not travel downstream on to farming properties . They were built by gangs of men with horses and drays. One dam was built to hold 54.8 mega litres of water.
4. Lookout - high view over the creek and the mining remains
5. Cocks Pioneer open cut sluicing works—A 6600 volt 285 hp electric motor pumped water to a cannon that sprayed 5000 gallons per minute to wash rocks and sand more efficiently. The working extended from The Top Cot to this area. A section of the creek was rerouted to this side of the valley by the sluicing
6. Swing/suspension bridge- The current bridge was built in 2007 to replace the locally made bridge . Earlier bridges were made from local planks and timbers, providing a narrow pathway above the water, sometimes with a side rail and sometimes without. In the 1950s a suspension bridge was constructed at a much higher level above the water using cables from the mining. It has been known to flood.
7. Water race— This was hand dug and provided water to the various mining operations. It starts upstream at Kangaroo Crossing and is approx 7km long
8. Heavy wire cables- several of these are still found around the mined embankment areas of the creek crossing
9. Wains Crossing—named after the Wain family who lived in a mud brick cottage across the creek and to the right
10. McEvoy mine shaft No 4 site -Heritage listed of regional significance
11. Cock's Pioneer Top Cut Open Cut mine -Heritage Listed Regional Significance- The remains of the last Open cut Sluicing mine 11 acres in size, 160 ft deep, this hydraulic sluicing mine closed in 1941.
12. Slum dam-used to contain slum from the mining.
13. McEvoy miners memorial—In July 1895 , a sudden onrush of mud and water in the No 4 McEvoy mine killed six of the miners. They and other miners killed in mining accidents are remembered by the memorial created in 1995 100yrs later.
14. Monument Hill—Once a barren hill except for one tree, it is now covered widely in vegetation and has a memorial placed at the top. Erected by the family of Charles Bawden who served in the Boer War 1899-1902, having died from a disease he contracted while on service

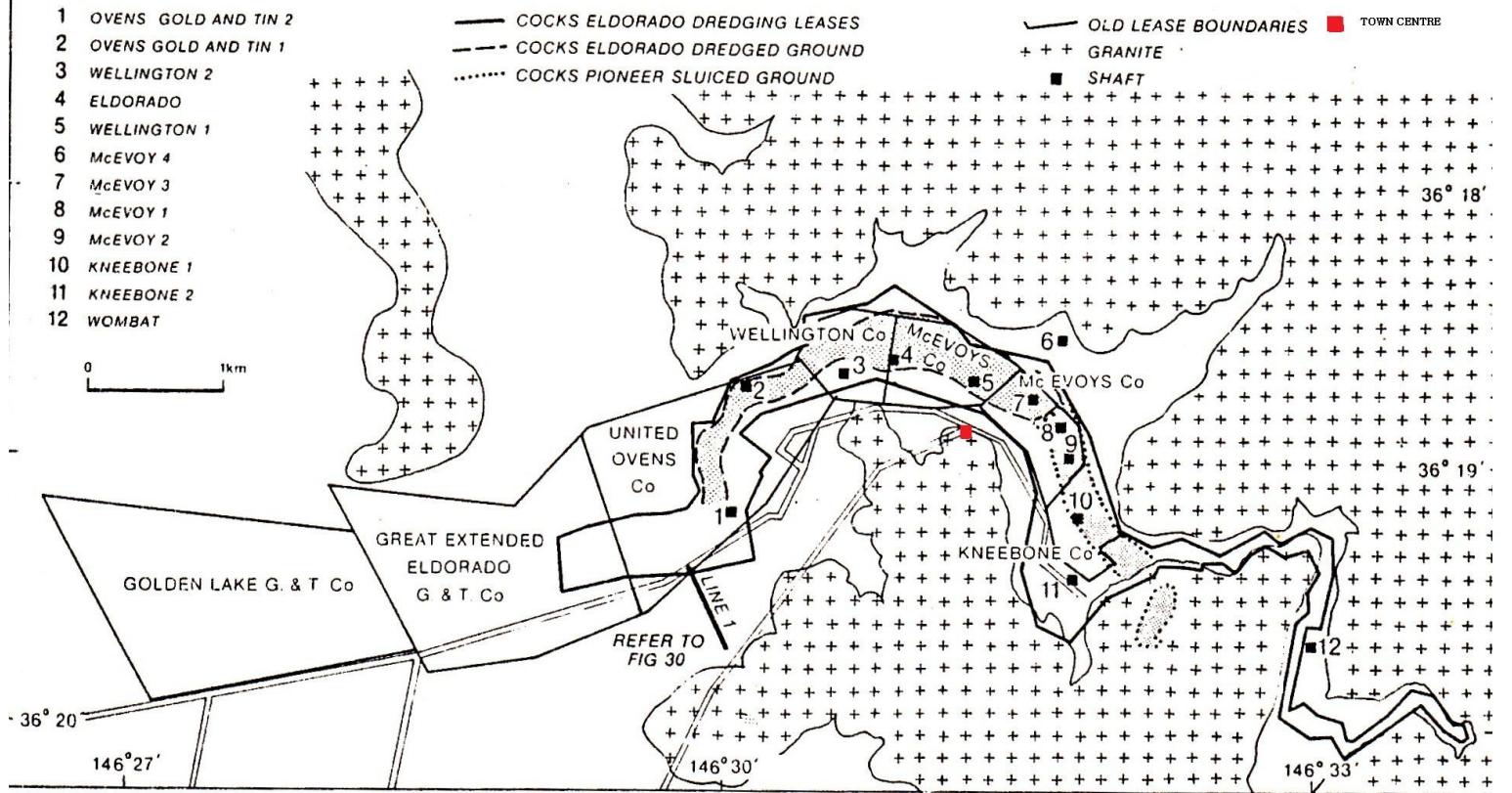


Fig. 22. Plan of shaft locations and the extent of ground worked at Eldorado

El Dorado Mining History

Three different mining methods were used in the El Dorado valley. They were:

Deep Lead Mining from 1859 to 1901

From 1859 to 1954 there were at least forty-four mines and/or claims that worked in the El Dorado Valley, most of these before 1901.

The most prominent deep lead mines were the Kneebone Mine, Wellington Mine, and McEvoy Mine. The latter mine had four different shafts during its life from 1859 to 1901. After the McEvoy disaster in 1895 that claimed the lives of six men, the McEvoy's final shaft was sunk on the northern side of Reid's (Reedy) creek. The McEvoy Mine was considered to be a very dangerous mine and finally closed in 1901. Another miner's life was lost in the mine in 1900.

Open cut Sluicing from 1900 to 1942 (with some short breaks)

The open sluicing mines from 1900 were:

1. Cocks Pioneer Electric Gold & Tin Sluicing Company - 1899/1900-1909

2. Cocks Pioneer Gold & Tin Mines No Liability - 1914-1929

3. Cocks Pioneer Gold & Tin Mines (1934) No Liability - 1934-1942

Evidence of the open sluicing can be seen at the eastern end of the township

Dredging from 1936 to 1954

The earliest deep lead mining sites have been reworked by open cut sluicing and the dredging operations.

The Cocks El Dorado Gold & Tin Mining Company's dredge was opened in 1936 and operated for eighteen years, closing down in August 1954. The largest remaining dredge in Australia, this dredge recovered 70,664 ozs of gold and 1,356 tons of tin from 35,368,000 cubic yards of dirt. (*Geological Survey of Victoria Bulletin No 60*). (Other records indicate the figures to be 80,000 ozs of gold, 1450 tons of tin from 39,000,000 cubic yards of dirt). El Dorado's first mines were powered by steam generated engines. The open sluicing mines were first powered from their own wood fired power stations, and in 1934 when Cocks Pioneer re opened, 6,600 volt power was made available from Yallourn. This power also drove the Cocks El Dorado Gold dredge. The El Dorado dredge used the third highest power rate in Victoria, after Melbourne & Geelong. The Cock(s) name incorporated in the open sluicing and the dredge companies was in honour of John Cock(s) a well respected mining manager during the late 1800s in El Dorado and later in Chiltern.

Dredging is the most well known of the three, and it provides El Dorado with its unique tourist attraction.