

Alexandra & Immediate District Historic Sites VIEWING & WALKING TOUR 1

An historical tour of old goldmining sites and places of interest from the golden days of the Lower Dunstan.

OTHER GENERAL WALKS - Alexandra Guide 1, Alexandra Guide 2 & Roxburgh Gorge Walk.

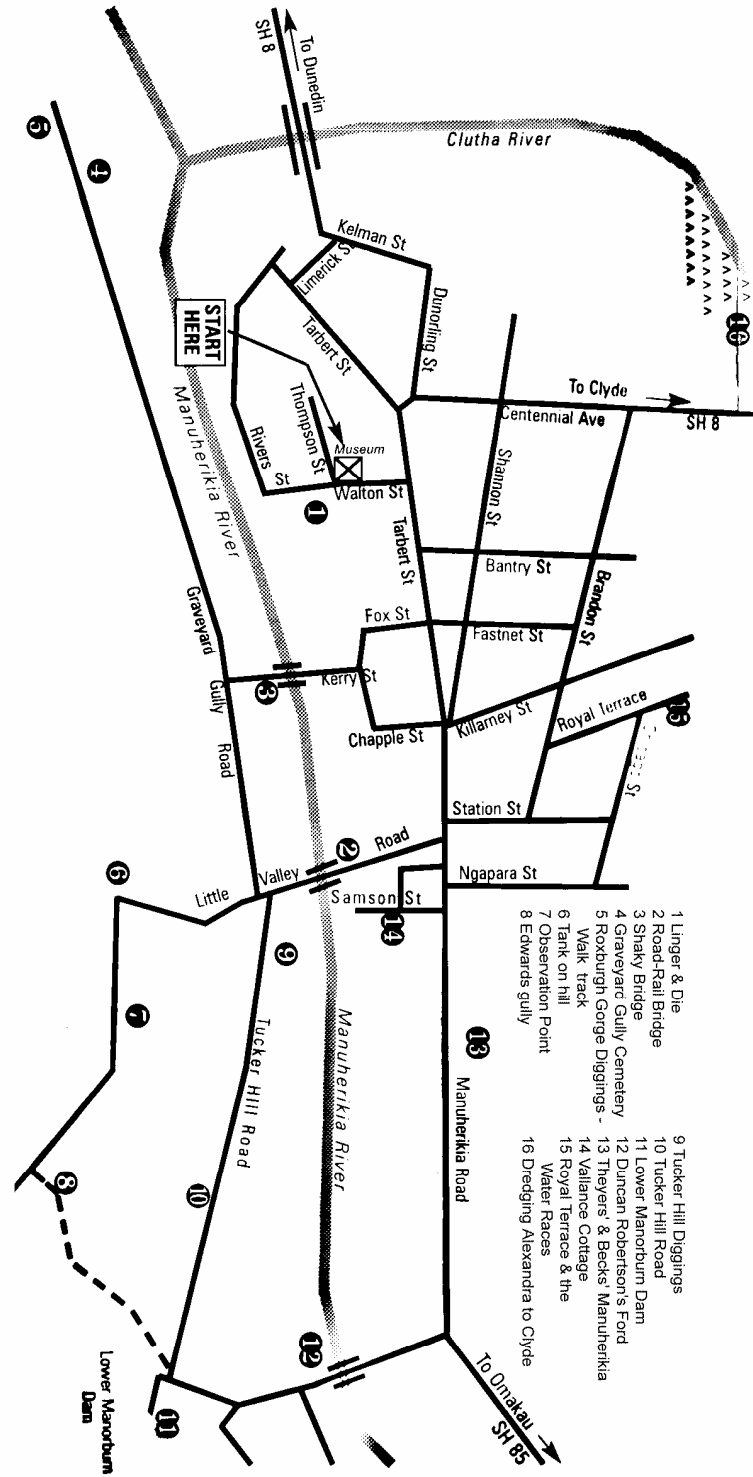
Researched by: Professor John McCraw / John Douglas - Safari Excursions Tours & Walks with assistance from Dr Mike Floate (OGHT). Drawings supplied by Doug Ayson.

Backed by: Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust / Alexandra Museum / Department of Conservation. Appreciation to Department of Conservation for the assembling and erection of plaques.

Visitors are warned, that following this guide, you do so at your own risk. Some of these sites are on private property and respect to the property owners would be appreciated. Access may also be denied to some sites eg., times of stock movement, at lambing time. Gates you come across should be left closed and leave no litter behind when you depart.

This tour, excluding Walk #5, could take one day. It starts from the Alexandra Museum, Walton Street. (First right off Tarbert Street along the road to Ranfurly, Highway 85.) (Tour two starts from Rotary Park, at the Clutha River just up from the Alexandra Bridge.)

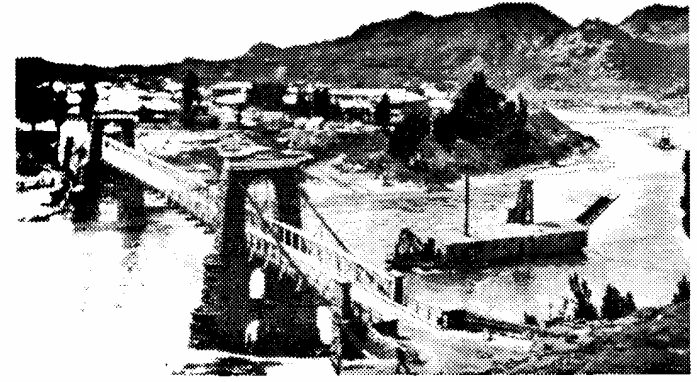
Alexandra Museum. This all steel Water-wheel comes from the 1880's mining claim located in the upper section of the Fraser Basin - Alpine Reef, Old Man Range. The wheel was dismantled in 1970, transported down to Alexandra and reassembled for display outside the museum.



- 1 Linger & Die
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- 14 Vallance Cottage
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- 16 Dredging Alexandra to Clyde

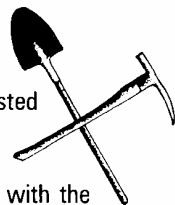
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New Zealand's Heart of Gold
OTAGO GOLDFIELDS
Catch the gold fever



1 LINGER AND DIE. View & walk.

"Linger and Die" is the name now given to the large scooped-out recess in the Manuherikia river bank from the Centennial Swimming Pool northwards. This is now reclaimed land but still subject to periodic flooding. The whole site was dredged by the Golden Link (1899-1902) and though it struck rich gold under the terrace at the northern end, the company did not pay out a dividend to its shareholders. Several attempts were made to rediscover this lead which is believed to follow an old course of the Clutha River. One of the most persistent efforts lasted from 1905 to 1908 when tunnels were driven from the bottom of a large pit 10 metres deep. In the end the miners could not cope with the large amount of water pouring through the porous gravels. It is believed the name "Linger and Die" stems from this long-drawn out effort which finally ended in failure.



2 MANUHERIKIA No 3 ROAD-RAIL BRIDGE. Little Valley Road. View & walk.

Construction of the Otago Central Railway to Clyde commenced in 1879 and progress was slow. The line did not reach Clyde till the Alexandra bridge was completed in 1906. The bridge is 90.2 metres long and 12 metres high above the river. Negotiations by the Alexandra Borough Council and Vincent County were successful in having the bridge built to accommodate road traffic. The local bodies built the approaches and contributed an annual sum for maintenance. Some recent flood levels, including that of the big flood of 14 December 1995 are recorded on the western pier of the bridge.

The line closed in April 1990 as a direct result of the Clyde dam work finishing in 1989. In December 1990 at Clyde the rails were lifted and all removed back to Middlemarch. In May 1993 the rail corridor was offered to DOC and now forms the "Otago Central Rail Trail" from Middlemarch to Clyde.

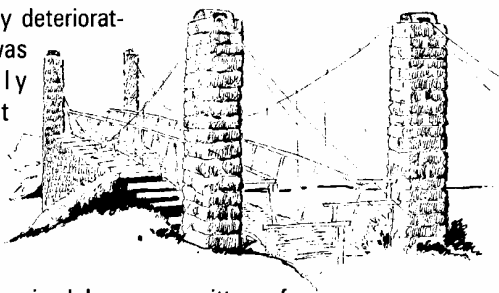
3 SHAKY BRIDGE. View & walk.

Shaky bridge can be reached from Kerry Street or by turning right off Little Valley Road onto Graveyard Gully Road, and following along past the Clock Information Board.

The bridge was built by Grant and McKellar and opened as the Manuherikia Light Traffic Bridge in 1879. After the opening of the nearby Manuherikia No 3 road-rail bridge in 1906, the old bridge was little used. So when the Chairman of the Vincent County Council, worried about future maintenance, offered to sell it for a pound, Lewis Cameron, who lived across the river took up the offer and promptly handed over the money. The

bridge slowly deteriorated and was eventually closed. It was handed back to the local authorities in 1951 and with money raised by a committee of enthusiasts, was restored as a foot bridge and dedicated to the pioneers.

The white paint mark on the eastern pier, marks the level of the big 1878 flood, but the smaller December 1995 flood as a result of the level of silt in the river (and from Lake Roxburgh), reached a higher level with water just breaking over the decking at the eastern end.



4 GRAVEYARD GULLY CEMETERY 1863-1868. View & walk.

The road along Graveyard Gully Road, follows a very early water race which conveyed water from the Manuherikia River some distance away to claims at Prospectors Point. The white cottage on the east side of the road past Shaky Bridge, dates from the mining period and is still occupied.

The Cemetery was the first burial ground in Alexandra. Over 30 early pioneers, some victims of the great snow storm of 1863, lie buried here. The Rev. L Chisholm of Milton, while on holiday in Alexandra in 1897, raised money to build the stone wall and cairn.

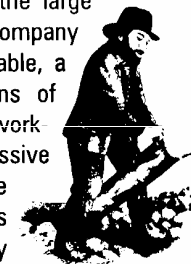
5 ROXBURGH GORGE DIGGINGS. (Doctors Point 1877-1916 & 1930's.) Day walk.

A few hours or a whole day may be spent on the Lake Roxburgh Walkway following an old bridle track from behind Graveyard Gully Cemetery, down the eastern side of the lake. The best time for the walk is during the months of November and early December when the wild thyme is in flower and the heat in the gorge not excessive. Though the creation of Lake Roxburgh in 1956, inundated many mining workings, many interesting sites have survived, especially at Colemans Gully and Doctors Point. Along the track, cave dwellings, remains of stone huts (especially at Colemans Gully) and small scale sluicing will be seen, while at Doctors Point there are large scale workings in a good state of preservation.

The first small rush to Doctors Point was in 1877 when gold was

discovered on a rocky shelf high above the river. Shortage of water and the presence of big boulders made mining difficult but the returns were good. A second small rush occurred in 1908 when gold was discovered on an even higher level shelf. The difficulties were the same and still were not solved even after the employment of machinery by a public company formed in 1913. Some mining was carried out in the 1930 Depression period. During this period, steel fluming was used to refurbish the main race.

Extensive Sluicings and stone-walled tailraces are features of the lower workings. At the upper workings, to the south, 70 metres above the lower workings, is the large excavation of the Doctors' Point Mining Company complete with a crane running on a cable, a water-powered winch and the remains of tramways. A short distance from these workings on a prominent spur, is an impressive rammed earth holding dam with stone buttresses, which from a distance looks like a fort. A water race from Shanty Creek has several stretches of refurbish fluming which are now dangerous to walk.



6 TANK ON THE HILL. View & walk.

From 1873 until 1903, an open race from Chatto Creek supplied Alexandra with water. In 1903 the town was reticulated with water mains supplied from the concrete tank built on the ridge above the town.

This tank received water from James Rivers' water race which began at Speargrass Creek dam in the hills south of Little Valley and traversed 22km over very rough rocky country to a dam and then onto Tucker Hill diggings. There was constant conflict between the Alexandra Borough Council and Rivers over Rivers' failure to supply the agreed quantity of water. There were many court cases and finally the Supreme Council ruled that Rivers could not be expected to supply water that did not exist. Apparently the Council had not checked the priority of Rivers' Water Rights - a matter which was especially important when water was scarce.

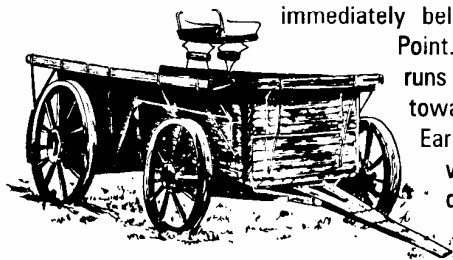
The tank was abandoned in 1909 when water for the town became available from Butchers Creek.

7 OBSERVATION POINT - LOOKOUT. View.

From the Observation Point, there is a panoramic view of Alexandra and the Manuherikia Valley with its adjacent mountains. Immediately to the south are the rocky ridges of the Knobby Range separated by the Roxburgh Gorge from Flat Top Hill overlooking Fruitlands. The Old Man Range / Kopuwai with

the prominent Obelisk (Old Man Rock or Kopuwai) and TV Tower on the skyline, dominates the south western view. To the west over Obelisk Range, beyond the gorge of the Fraser River, the sharp peaks of the Remarkables are visible on the horizon. To the right of the Fraser River is the Cairnmuir Mountains, and then Cromwell Gorge with Clyde township and the Clyde Dam at the entrance. Through the gorge there is a glimpse of the Pisa Range in the distance. The Dunstan Mountains, form the north western horizon with Leaning Rock or Old Woman Rock (Hachaeata) prominent at the mountains southern end. North of the Dunstan Mountains lies St Bathans Range and the distant Hawkdun Range close the head of the valley.

Alexandra town and the junction of the Manuherikia and Clutha Rivers dominate the foreground with the Tucker Hill diggings immediately below Observation Point. Dunstan Flat runs from Alexandra towards Clyde and Earnsclough Flat with its extensive dredge tailings, lies across the Clutha River.



8 EDWARDS GULLY DAMS.

Teviot Road -"Old Coach Road" to the Manorburn Ford. Allow 30-60 minute walk.

Access is allowed here on to private property but may be denied during lambing and at times of stock movement. Please respect the owner's property.

Two stone-walled mining dams lie in Edwards Gully a short distance off Little Valley Road. Just over two kilometres beyond the Observation Point a track leads off to the left. This is the remains of the old coach/wagon road which came across the Knobby Range from Teviot (Roxburgh) and ran down the ridges to the ford across the Manorburn. It then crossed Galloway Flat to ford the Manuherikia River at Duncan Robertson's crossing.

After a short walk along the old road, the old race from Speargrass Dam is reached and can be followed down the gully along a marked walking track to the Upper Dam. This dam was built by James Rivers in 1901 to store water for his claim at Richmond Hill (known today as the sandpit.) The water was taken from the dam by a race and pipeline. Some of the low stone pylons which once supported the pipeline, can still be seen.

After a 5 to 10 minute walk down the gully along the old water

race, you will come upon the Lower Dam - Stockyard Dam. Campbell and Jackson in 1893 built this dam and a race from Speargrass dam to supply water to their claim at Tucker Hill. In 1903, James Rivers who now owned both dams, agreed to supply water to the Borough of Alexandra. Because of a misunderstanding about water rights and the difficulties of maintaining the long race through rough country, the supply scheme was unsuccessful.

9 TUCKER HILL DIGGINGS.

View & walk.

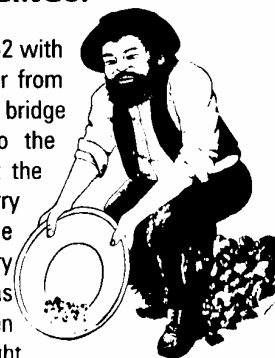
Mining here began first in late 1862 with extensive diggings lying just over from the Manuherikia No. 3 Road-Rail bridge and to the left of the road to the Lookout. There was no water at the site and miners were forced to carry their gold-bearing sand down to the river for washing up. A layer of very hard lime-cemented gravel was also a hindrance. (It can be seen protruding from the bank on the right hand side of the road a few metres beyond the bridge.) In spite of these difficulties, the diggings could be relied upon to provide small amounts of gold. It is said the name "Tucker Hill" arose from the miners standard reply of "just making tucker" to questions about how they were doing.

Water was first bought to the northern end of the diggings in 1864 by way of the Rose, Thistle & Shamrock race. Water to the southern end of the diggings only arrived in 1893 when George Campbell and Thomas Jackson completed their water race from their dam in Speargrass Creek south of Little Valley. From top of the ridge overlooking the diggings, (it can still be seen halfway up the hill) the water descended in a series of waterfalls until again picked up by a race which then took it along to their claim. James River took over Campbells & Jacksons claim in 1896.

10 TUCKER HILL ROAD to Old Teviot Road at Manorburn ford. Old Teviot road is a legal but unformed road through private property.

View & Walk.

Tucker Hill Road branches off Little Valley Road to the left just beyond the Manuherikia No 3 Road-Rail bridge and passes through Tucker Hill diggings. About 2 kilometres (2.2 km) along the road on the hillside on the right, there is a fine example of a water race supported by stone walls. The sudden beginning of the stone work indicates that a wooden fluming had carried the water to this point. This was part of the Rose, Thistle and



Shamrock water race (1864) which was intended to supply water to the northern end of Tucker Hill diggings.

Early in the 1900's, James Rivers moved from the Tucker Hill diggings to what he called 'Richmond Hill' after his birthplace in England. Here, from 1904-1906 he sluiced the white quartz gravel. Today, the mine ('the Sandpit') is a quarry for sand which is used for concrete and plastering, making concrete bricks and road work etc.

Just before the Manorburn ford, the old Teviot Road descends the ridge from the right. The road was used by wagons (only a few coach trips were made and then only by one driver) and the grooves worn by their wheels can still be seen. This road continued to be used for access to Little Valley until a new road was constructed through Graveyard Gully about 1925. After a flood swept through the Graveyard Gully in 1948, the old road had to be used again while a new road by way of Observation Point was constructed.

A walk up the old road to the top of the first ridge brings into view the extensive Manorburn diggings. These shallow workings were the scene of several 'rushes' and the locality was nicknamed 'Coolgardie' after the rich Western Australian gold-field.

Continuing along Tuckers Hill Road requires fording the Manorburn and is not recommended for cars. Even 4-wheel drive vehicles should take care, especially when the Manorburn is high.

11 LOWER MANORBURN DAM.

View & walk.

Constructed in 1934 as part of an irrigation dam-building programme instituted by the Government during the 1930's Depression, the Lower Manorburn dam is really just a large weir designed to raise the water level sufficiently to irrigate Galloway Flat. During most winters, the reservoir freezes sufficient enough and allows for ice skating and curling.

About 20 metres upstream from the dam wall, and now covered by water, was an earlier small weir. Built of schist blocks in 1909, it was known locally as the 'Manorburn Steps'. Its purpose was to hold back mining tailings to prevent them flooding out over Galloway Flat. Both gold and antimony was mined in Dans Gully, located on the true right bank of the middle basin and on the terrace opposite.

Just downstream from the dam wall was the site of the Rose, Thistle and Shamrock Co's aqueduct. This huge wooden-trestle structure built in 1864 was of some 800 feet (240m) long and 90 feet (27m) high, designed to carry the company's water

race, which began in the Manuherikia River, near the mouth of Chatto Creek, crossing Galloway Flat to the Manorburn and onto Tucker Hill. Owing to a miscalculation, the race was too low to reach its true objective and the company was liquidated. A section of the aqueduct was blown down by gale force wind in 1867 and eventually wood from the aqueduct disappeared - probably for use as firewood. The shoreline makes for an excellent picnic spot as well as for its scenic views.

12 DUNCAN ROBERTSON'S FORD. View & information only.

The only vehicle access to Alexandra during the 1860's was at this ford across the Manuherikia River by Robertson's Balmoral Hotel, downstream from the present Lower Galloway Bridge. Wagons and coaches which had come down the Manuherikia Valley, had to first ford the river at the upper end of Galloway Flat near the old Moutere Station, travel down the Flat and then recross at Robertson's ford. Similarly, traffic which had come over either on the Dunstan Road (Mountain Road) or on the Teviot Road crossed also at this ford. Robertson operated a ferry for pedestrians.

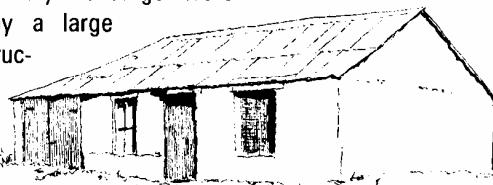
Even after the road from Springvale to Alexandra was built, in spite of the river crossings, the road through Galloway was preferred because it was shorter and not so steep. The ford was finally abandoned when the Lower Galloway bridge was opened in 1922. The hotel was badly damaged in the 1866 floods and later destroyed, swept away in the big 1878 flood. Opposite the old hotel site is Lion Rock, an isolated outcrop of schist which is said to resemble a crouching lion. It gave its name to the Lion Rock gold dredge which worked unsuccessfully here from 1898 to 1899.

13 THEYERS & BECK'S MANUHERIKIA BREWERY. View from road.

The mud brick store shed on the western side of Manuherikia Road opposite the Alexandra Holiday Camping Grounds, is the only remaining building of the Manuherikia Brewery. The brewery itself lay on the left side of the main entrance to the Camp. It was erected in 1870 by Billy Theyers and Canute Beck and is said that they made excellent beer using water from a nearby spring. 'Beck's Race' bought water all the way from the foot of the Dunstan Mountains to their water wheel, which worked the plant. Production of beer gave way to cordial manufacture in 1880 which continued until Beck's death in 1908. The factory was sold in 1909.

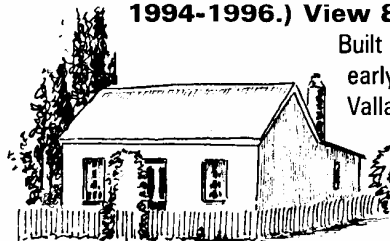
In 1915, the building was taken over by Stephen Spain of Earnsclough Station for canning rabbit meat. The canned meat was sent to Britain for the armed forces, particularly the navy.

A company, Central Otago Preserves Ltd was formed, and some of the brewery buildings were replaced by a large concrete structure which still serves the Holiday Camp as a recreation



hall (Simpson's Block.) The 'Rabbit factory' as it was known, closed down in 1921 and the buildings lay idle until purchased in 1939 by G. H. Fox to form the basis of his well-known motor camp.

14 VALLANCE COTTAGE. (Restoration project 1994-1996.) View & visit.



Built approximately 1900 by early settler William Vallance using sun-dried mud bricks. He worked first on the gold dredges and later worked his own claim across the Manuherikia River. One of his daughters lived in the cottage until the 1970's. The cottage then deteriorated over the years. Restoration work started in 1994. The cottage is now fully restored and furnished. If the cottage is closed, ask for the key at Crafters or from the Alexandra Museum.

15 ROYAL TERRACE AND THE WATER RACES. Drive along the Terrace.

The wide Royal Terrace was formed in the mid-1960's from a water race reserve. Two large water races were bought into Alexandra from Chatto Creek in 1864. One supplied the Manuherikia Ground Sluicing Company's claim on the site of the present Holiday Camp. The other, owned by the Ovens Water Race Company, supplied Bedford Butler's claim at Golden Point (later renamed Butlers Point) near the mouth of the Manuherikia River.

In 1865 both companies extended their races along the edge of the terrace to the river bank where the water was used by the companies own claims and sold the surplus to other miners. The races along the terrace ran parallel and within a few metres of each other. The Alexandra Borough Council bought the assets of the Ovens Water Race Company in 1873 and the race became

known as the 'Borough Race' and the extension across the flat to the main street as the 'Town Race'. It served as the main town supply until 1903 and then later as an irrigation race. It was sold to the Government in 1922 and most of the race still exists as part of the Manuherikia Irrigation Scheme.

16 DREDGING - ALEXANDRA TO CLYDE. View & walk.

During the height of the gold dredging activity around 1900, ten to twelve steam dredges were working between Alexandra and Clyde. (More dredges worked the lower Manuherikia River as well as down in the Molyneux (Roxburgh) gorge.) At first, the early dredges were confined to the river and then to the low terraces but with the invention of the tailing elevators in 1894, they were then able to dredge into the higher terraces. Most of these early dredging claims were each of about 100 acres in extent, and some 10 acres could be worked each year. When a dredge had worked out its claim, it was dismantled and either re-erected on another claim or disposed of for scrap or just abandoned. Large ponds in these dredge tailings still indicate the places where dredges turned around or finally finished working. The Ngapara Ponds off Highway 8, just beyond the town boundary, were formed by the dredge owned by the Ngapara Gold Dredging Co which worked in this area from 1895 until 1919. Some three kilometres along the highway from Boundary Road, is an old dredging pond which still contains the remains of an abandoned dredge. It can be viewed from the edge of the terrace some 100 metres from the highway. The Dunstan Lead Gold Dredging Company held a claim of 98 acres here and their dredge which began work 1901, was one of the largest on the river. It was taken over by the Earnsclough Gold Dredging Co in 1907 as their Earnsclough No 5 and was converted to electricity in 1908. It dredged the lower terraces between Muttontown Gully and to the spot where it lies. It was abandoned when the Earnsclough company went into liquidation in 1924.

