

HERITAGE PLACE

NAME OF PLACE: TANNERY (FORMER)

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE: Old Tannery Road CAVENDISH

STUDY NUMBER: 448

HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:

PRECINCT: outside

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Southern Grampians Shire

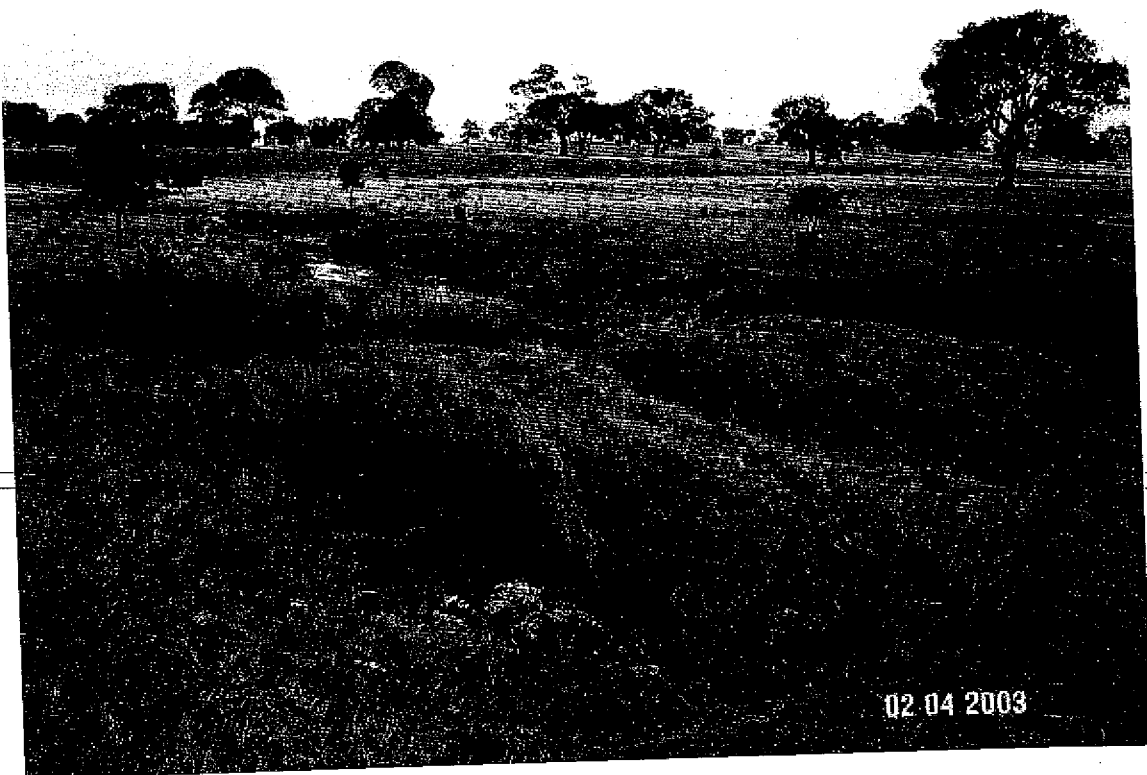
ALLOTMENT: 2,4 & 5

PARISH: PARISH OF CAVENDISH

ACCESS DESCRIPTION:

CFA 432 near 31 & 32; VicRoads 228 J9; located on the east side of Old Tannery Road about 2.5kms south of the centre of Cavendish and about 250m from the road.

SIGNIFICANCE RATING: Heritage Inventory



Former Tannery, Old Tannery Road, Cavendish

Image Date: 2/04/03

EXTENT OF LISTING:

To the extent of: 1. All the land comprising allotments 2,4 & 5 in the Parish of Cavendish

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tannery on the Glenelg River on the north side of Balmoral which Charles Wood operated until the late 1880s. It dated from as early as the 1840s but very little survives. There was a substantial fellmongery and tannery on Back Creek and the Wannan at Dunkeld, now demolished and redeveloped. Walter Birmingham establish a tannery on the beach at Portland in 1842, later taken over by the Fitzgeralds and another in the Shire of Glenelg run by Ben Davis, both of which have been demolished with no visible remains (Eslick, 1983). Otherwise, most tanning was done in Melbourne on the banks of the Yarra at Collingwood and on the banks of the Maribyrnong River at Footscray. The noxious character of the tanning process as well as improved communication by rail meant that tanneries had to be closed or relocated and modernised in the twentieth century.

THEMATIC CONTEXT:

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.2 Breeding animals

3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries

Theme 5: Working

5.8 Working on the land

CONDITION:

High archaeological potential for the tannery. Low [?] potential for the buildings and houses.

INTEGRITY:

Low level of integrity

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

What is significant?

The former Tannery was located at the confluence of two creeks, about 2.5km south of Cavendish. It appears to date from at least 1850 and was certainly well-established by the early 1860s. Assistant Surveyor, Henry Wade allocated some 35 town allotments in the village which had developed up stream from the tannery with blocks being sold at least by 1864. It benefited from the availability of wattle bark and the supply and demand of leather goods. The tannery may have used the bark from indigenous wattle trees growing nearby or imported bark from the forests around Wando Dale, north of Coleraine. This was such an important and promising industry that a Royal Commission was established to enquire into its potential. The nearby Kenilworth South run had 5,000 head of cattle at the height of the tannery's operations. The tannery, which is one of only two or three in the Shire, appears to have closed by the end of the nineteenth century. The site is the least disturbed and retains the archaeological highest potential.

How is it significant?

The former Cavendish Tannery is of historical and archaeological significance to the community of Cavendish and the Southern Grampians Shire as a Heritage Inventory Site.

Why is it significant?

The former Cavendish Tannery is of historical significance because it represents a very early commercial activity associated with pastoralism and a way of life and work now lost.

The tannery is of archaeological significance as one of only three or four former tanneries identified in the study area and as the least disturbed site.

COMPARISON:

no other tannery found within study area.

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

The tannery was located at the confluence of Barker's and Riley's Creeks about 3.5km south of the centre of Cavendish. It comprised several pits dug into the ground, some still lined with rough stone, which were fed with water from dams in the creeks. The dams are said to have been made with timber and hides but no physical evidence is immediately apparent. It is also said that there were substantial buildings and up to 16 houses located at or near the tannery.

HISTORY:

It is difficult to establish the exact dates of the Cavendish tannery. A tannery would have benefited from proximity to major squatting runs both for receiving skins and supplying hides. Mokanger run had 500 head of cattle and Kenilworth had 800 when first established as well as tens of thousands of sheep. By 1874, Thomas and Andrew Chirnside had 4,932 head of cattle on Kenilworth North according to Hiscock's map of the County of Dundas. It was the only one of thirty-three in the County to list cattle rather than sheep. A tannery was noted at Cavendish in the 1865 Bailliere's Gazetteer which states "There is a tannery in the neighbourhood, and no other manufactories" (Bailliere, 84). James Bonwick made no comment when he passed through the area in 1857 except to say "it is very liable to floods, is surrounded by dreary swamps and sandy wastes, and has no land sold about it; this is no loss for agriculture is impossible" (Bonwick, 153). However, the tannery seems to have been established well before then. Land in the vicinity was sold in 1864 but Assistant Surveyor, Henry Wade had probably surveyed the Parish and Township of Cavendish as early as 1850 and at least by 1857. He deliberately accommodated what appears to have been a substantial settlement upstream from the tannery with the tannery itself excluded from the street grid. Various important local people purchased the land, perhaps for speculation, such as Thomas Bromell, A Riley, A Donaldson, J Sandison and R Donelan. The first was the owner of Hensleigh Park and became an M.L.C. The last was a publican and selector who ran the Karabcal Inn at the time and who may have bought his central block to build a public house. Robert Donelan's two infant daughters are buried in the cemetery immediately to the north of the tannery, apparently the only internment's there.

~~It is not known for certain who established the tannery. One suggestion is the G Gould who bought allotment 2 of the special survey, the closest land to the confluence of the creeks. George Gould and his wife Elizabeth, nee Stewart had a son William George born in Cavendish in 1863 but no earlier record of them in the district survives (PI, Reg. No. 6928). He did describe himself as a tanner on his marriage certificate (Pers. Comm., Ron Lewis, 2/4/03). It may be that the local businessmen who bought land in the settlement were financial backers for the tannery.~~

The siting of the tannery appears to have been due to the presence of two creeks, now carrying less water than in the past, and possibly the presence of wattle trees in the vicinity. Wade's preliminary plan of the Township indicates the area to be covered in "heath". But wattle bark was produced nearby at Wando Dale homestead, north of Coleraine. This was such an important and promising industry in the 1860s and 1870s that a Royal Commission, including Government Botanist, Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, was established to enquire into its potential. The alternative source of tannin was acorns from the Valonia Oak, *Quercus macrolepis* which were imported from Turkey and, from 1893, were available from trees cultivated by George Cunnack, a tanner at Castlemaine. He also distributed the trees to the Western District and to other colonies. No such oak trees survive at the Cavendish tannery which may have closed by the end of the nineteenth century.

There were other tanneries. Robert and Thomas Aitken operated at tannery, known as Aitken and Son, in the centre of Penshurst at least from 1864 and strongly into the 1870s but they were the only tanners rated in the Shire of Mount Rouse (SMRRB, 1870, No. 1). There was a woolscour, fellmongery and probably a

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ASSESSED BY: TFH & AEN

ASSESSMENT DATE: 10/03/2004

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR **Include in RNE** **Include in Local Planning Scheme**

No Recommendations for Inclusions

REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
Christine Eslick	Historic Archaeological Sites in the Portland Area	1983	
James Bonwick	Western Victoria, Its Geography Geology and Social Condition	1858	153
		&	
		1970	
		1963	67
Shire of Dundas	Dundas Shire Centenary 1863-1963		

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COMPARISON:

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ASSESSED BY: TFH & AEN

ASSESSMENT DATE:

10-Mar-04

EXISTING LISTINGS:

HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

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