

TASMANIA GOLD MINE

Location: At Beaconsfield in northern Tasmania.

Owner: Beaconsfield Gold Joint Venture.

The plaque is located on the Grubb Shaft Engine House (now the Grubb Shaft Gold and Heritage Museum).

The Mine

As the mine developed, several shafts were sunk to increasing depths and with various pumping arrangements.

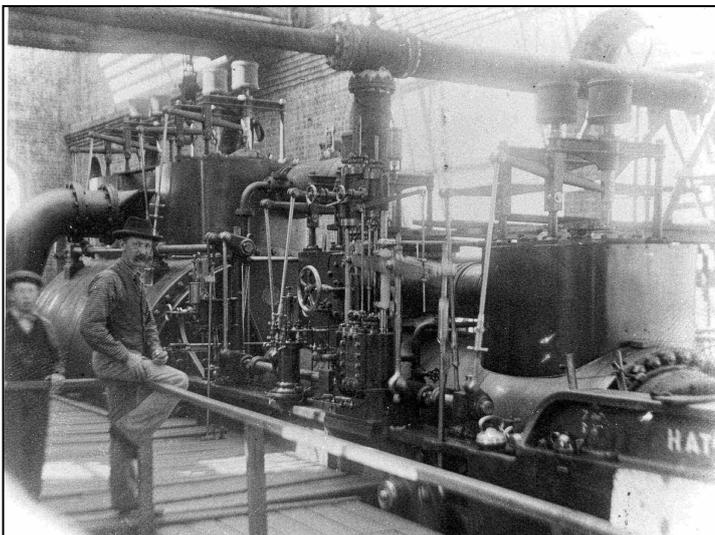
When the large engines were ordered, the Hart Shaft was enlarged and deepened to 360 m to accommodate one set of pumps, while a new Grubb Shaft was sunk to 460 m to hold two sets of pumps

The boiler house was sited between the two engine houses and contained six boilers burning NSW coal. All three buildings were elegant brick structures, much of which remain.

Each engine drove two pump rods suspended in the shafts. With three engines, there were six pump rods, six pumps per pump rod, 36 pumps in all. Each pump cylinder lifted the water 500 ft (150 m) to the next level.

Museum

When the Hart shaft was re-opened for the new mine, some of the Cornish pit work was recovered and is on display in the Grubb Shaft Gold and Heritage Museum, together with working models.



Hathorn Davey pumping engine

HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER

Tasmania Gold Mine, Beaconsfield

Underground mining began in 1878. The reef is located in an aquifer so that ever-increasing pumping capacity was required as the workings went deeper. Eventually three extremely large Hathorn Davey compound steam pumping engines were installed, with cylinder bores of 50 and 108 inches (1270 and 2740 mm) and 10 ft (3 m) stroke, pumping 6.5 mg/d (29 ML/d) from 1500 feet (460 m) depth using Cornish pit work. The mine supported a thriving town but became uneconomic and closed in 1914; it re-opened in 1999 using electric pumps.

The Institution of Engineers Australia
Beaconsfield Mine Joint Venture and West Tamar Council
2005

New Mine

The new mine extends down to 1050 m using large trucks to bring the ore up a decline to the foot of the refurbished Hart Shaft.

In April 2006 three miners were trapped in the mine by a rockfall at the 920 m level. One was killed and two miraculously survived in a tiny cage for two weeks until rescued in a complicated operation which held national and international attention.