

# Nerriga gold deposits

## Mineral Resources

The following information covers the belt of country between the Endrick River and the eastern watershed boundary of the Mongarlowe (Little) River, these being two north flowing tributaries of the Shoalhaven.

The auriferous areas about the Shoalhaven in this belt are also dealt with.

This area was covered by the Nerriga Mining Division between 1878-1902, after which it was incorporated in the Braidwood Division. The country on the north side of the Shoalhaven appears to have been part of the Goulburn Division.

## Alluvial

### 1. Shoalhaven River and Terraces

Production of alluvial gold between 1878-1901 for the Nerriga Division, per Registrars returns, was 14 177ozs. However, gold has been won from the Shoalhaven since 1851, and therefore actual production was undoubtedly considerably higher.

Activity in the early days centred on cradling the gravels and drifts in the bed of the Shoalhaven near Nerriga, Oallen Crossing and in general below the confluence with the Mongarlowe River.

These gravels appear to have been the mainstay of the gold mining throughout the chief working period. During the late 1960s, a small gravel pump worked on active gravel beds at Oallen Crossing, and produced about 15g (0.5oz)/hour (recovering approximately 3g (2dwts)/cubic metre).

Shafts sunk in 1885 on alluvial flats in the Oallen Crossing area yielded prospects going 10-37g/m<sup>3</sup> over their depths (40 shafts revealing gravel depths of 7.5 to 14 metres).

In 1890 shafts in the same locality yielded prospects up to 15g/m<sup>3</sup> from 12 metres depth. Higher level gravels worked here in 1904 yielded an average of 6g/m<sup>3</sup> from 500m<sup>3</sup>.

The high level Tertiary gravels in the Oallen-Nerriga area were recognised to be highly auriferous in parts, however their elevation above the Shoalhaven (30-120 metres) and the difficulty in race construction from other permanent streams precluded working in all but a few places. In all, there appears to be thousands of acres of Tertiary sands and gravels remaining in the area.

The gold won from the Shoalhaven gravels appears to have been chiefly very fine, although nuggets up to 7.5kg (240oz) were reported from near Nerriga.



*Relic from the Francis Hill Mine*

### 2. Corang River and Jerricknorra Creek

At Sailors Gully, in the vicinity of Jerricknorra Creek (actual location not known), an auriferous wash deposit was reported to be 70 metres wide and yielding prospects up to 1.5g/dish (159g/m<sup>3</sup>). A race 39km long was being cut in 1885 to sluice this deposit, however further reference is not made.

On the Corang River about 11km southwest of Nerriga, a deep-lead was reported by Jaquet (1898). The actual location is not known, however it is probably in Tertiary sediments.

Grades are not mentioned, but one shaft struck payable wash at 19.5 metres, implying several g/m<sup>3</sup>. Some extensive alluvial flats occur in the Corang River Valley, although there is no record of them being worked.



### 3. Nerriga-General

A sub-basaltic lead near Nerriga was reported as being prospected in 1899. A 39.5 metre shaft on this struck wash 1.5-2.5 metres thick, yielding 5g/m<sup>3</sup>, over the length of a 76 metre drive. This lead appears to be close to the Endrick River, however there is no further reference given.

Other localities mentioned include Peggy's Hill, Terrance's Hill, Ninge Nimble Creek and Spring Gully.

#### Dredging

Tewksbury Proprietary Dredges N.L. started construction of a bucket dredge on the south side of the Shoalhaven at Oallen Crossing in 1919, however, after their water supply dam on Oallen Creek was washed away, the project was abandoned.

No further attempt was made at dredging until the Haven Dredging Co. constructed a bucket dredge on lower Spring Creek, about 3.25km southwest of Oallen Crossing. The estimated recoverable grade here was thought to be 0.225g/m<sup>3</sup>, however between 1935 and 1937 only 20.5kg (661oz) was recovered from 500 000m<sup>3</sup> (0.04g/m<sup>3</sup>). Failure was apparently attributable to the fact that insufficient means of saving the fine gold was available.

Prospecting in the Spring Creek area in 1962 returned values of up to 0.08g/m<sup>3</sup> from several old cuts. In 1963 the same leaseholder stated that an amount of 3 000 000 cubic metres in the same area carried values of 30¢-50¢ per cubic metre in very fine gold.

There is no further information on the area, although Section 17 applications were lodged over 405 hectares in early 1969.

#### Reefs

Few reefs have been worked in this area. Mentioned are the Welcome Reef near Oallen Crossing and the Mt Phoenix mine. Records are rather sparse, and the only reported crushings at the former yielded 1.25kg (40oz) from 40 tonnes of quartz.

Production from reefs in the Nerriga Division to 1901 is given as 34kg (1 091oz) (after Registrars Returns).

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