GOLDFIELDS GUIDE

EXPLORING THE VICTORIAN GOLDFIELDS

Image source: Replica - Rodney Start (photographer) - Museums Victoria - https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/3019

WELCOME STRANGER FIELD TRIP
MOLIAGUL, VICTORIA

STUDENT RESOURCE PACKAGE
FOR AGES 8 - 11

WELCOME STRANGER DISCOVERY WALK

The Welcome Stranger Discovery Walk is an easy going 850 metre (30 minute) return circuit that takes you past many fascinating examples of historic gold mining efforts.

You will see both house sites of John Deason and Richard Oates (the miners who discovered the Welcome Stranger nugget), their puddler site, an 1860s grave (believed to be that of a Chinese miner), Chinese camp, another puddler, and examples of surface mining.

Each point of interest on the walk is marked by a sign, but most of them are broken. You can still easily make out what each of them are by bringing this map along on your walk.

WELCOME STRANGER DISCOVERY, 1869

About 150 years ago two lucky miners discovered the biggest gold nugget ever found, right here in the bush outside Moliagul!

John Deason and Richard Oates discovered the “Welcome Stranger” nugget just 2.5cm underground in 1869. This discovery came just in time, as the miners were very poor at the time.

After finding the nugget on a Friday, they kept it a secret all weekend until Monday when they threw a party for all of their friends. They hid the nugget under a cloth at the end of the table, waited until the time was right and then revealed their amazing discovery to everyone!

Everyone stayed the night at John Deason’s house and then helped him bring the nugget to the bank in nearby Dunolly the next morning.

The gold nugget was so big that it had to be cut up before it would fit on the bank scales to be weighed. When they finally got it onto the scales, it weighed in at 66kg.

In all the excitement, no one thought to take a photograph of the Welcome Stranger nugget before it was smelted (melted down to get all the pure gold out).

The two miners posed with a group for a photo afterwards using a huge piece of quartz rock instead of the actual nugget.

PUDDLING MACHINES

Source: image displayed on an information sign at the Battery Dam in Maryborough, VIC

Puddling machines were used a lot on the goldfields during the 1850s and 1860s.

They were used to separate gold from dirt which contained a lot of clay. The clay usually sticks together in large clumps, trapping gold inside. This clay needs to be broken up to get the gold out of it.

Dirt containing gold was placed in a large, circular trough along with water. The clay is then broken up by a horse dragging a rake-like tool through the trough.

Gold is heavier than the clay, so it settles on the bottom of the trough while the light clay can be washed out with the water.

Today you can still see the remains of puddling machines throughout the bush of the Victorian Goldfields. They look like shallow ring shaped holes in the ground. See if you can spot any puddlers along the Welcome Stranger Discovery Walk!

WELCOME STRANGER WORKSHEET

Read the large information sign near the monument as well as pages 3 and 4 in this package. Answer the following questions:

1. What were the names of the two miners who found the Welcome Stranger?

2. How far below the surface did they find this huge nugget?

3. Why did they place the nugget in the fire?

4. How did they reveal their discovery to their friends?

5. What is a puddling machine used for?

6. What is heavier, gold or clay?

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE, 16th Feb 1869

It wasn't long before news of the discovery in Moliagul spread all over Australia. Lots of newspapers reported on the Welcome Stranger within the first two weeks!

The following article was published in a Tasmanian newspaper called the Launceston Examiner on Tuesday 16th February, 1869 – eleven days after the discovery of the Welcome Stranger.

VICTORIA - DUNOLLY

Feb 9
The largest nugget on record has been discovered by two men at Black Reef, near Wayman's Reef, Moliagul. It contained very little quartz.

It weighed 2101b. gross, and 200lb. weight of pure gold. It was found two inches beneath the surface.

The men say they found a ten-pound piece in the neighbourhood a little time ago, and that reef gold is to be found all round the spot. There are plenty of quartz lodes to be opened up. The nugget was sold to the London Chartered Bank.

Feb 10
The monster nugget found yesterday has produced 2268oz. 10dwt. 14gr. of smelted gold, besides about ten ounces given away to the friends of the lucky finders as mementos of their good fortune. The London Chartered Bank have advanced between £9000 and £10,000 on it.

There is great excitement, and people are arriving from all parts to see it christened "The Welcome Stranger".

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE - WORKSHEET

Read the newspaper article printed on the previous page and answer these questions:

1. What is the name of the reef where the Welcome Stranger nugget was discovered?

2. Who was the nugget sold to?

3. How many ounces of the nugget was given away to friends before it was sold?

4. Imagine you are a newspaper reporter in the year 1869. You have travelled to Moliagul to meet John Deason and Richard Oates so you can collect information for a short newspaper article. What questions would you ask the lucky miners?

WELCOME STRANGER WORDSEARCH

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T	D	P	F	X	V	G	G	B	L	U	L	C	V	M
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WELCOME
STRANGER
NUGGET
GOLD
DISCOVERY
DEASON
OATES
MOLIAGUL
DUNOLLY
WEIGHT
LUCKY
PUDDLER
MINING
PIONEERS
GOLDRUSH

WELCOME STRANGER CRYPTOGRAM

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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