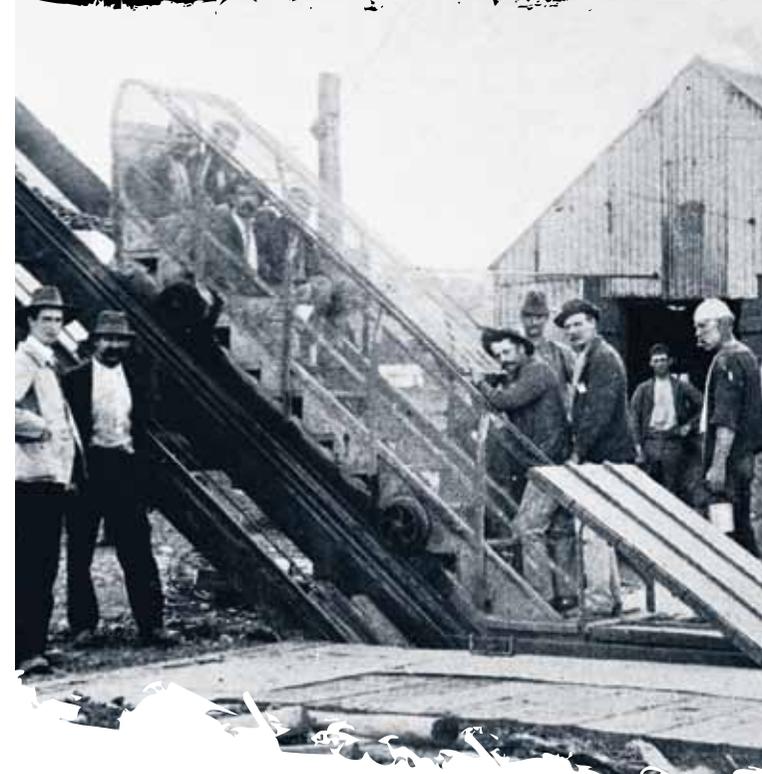


Wentworth Main Mine

Self Guided Walking Tour



Rules

Warning: Use of the facility may be hazardous. Please take responsible care for your safety.

- » Visitors must obey all signs and instructions
- » Visitors must stay on the designated pathways
- » Children must be supervised at all times
- » Visitors must not climb or touch equipment
- » Visitors must report all incidents
- » Beware of snakes in warm weather
- » The removal of objects or artefacts from this site is prohibited



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UNEVEN GROUND



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After gold was discovered at Ophir in 1851, William Charles Wentworth allowed miners to work the field for free, provided the gold that was recovered was sold to him. Wentworth formed a joint stock company, the Wentworth Gold Field Company, the first gold company to be registered in Australia. Mining in Lucknow was carried out for over one hundred years.

1. The **Pay Office** was built in the 1930s. By 1935 there were 150 men employed as part of the Bismark Company.



The entrance to Wentworth Main mine in 1935, with the office and pay office on the left and the equipment store on the right.

Photo courtesy Nita Wasson

2. The **Equipment Store** built in c1934 when an injection of funds was put into the Wentworth (Lucknow) Co. Ltd. The shed is divided into three portions. Evidence suggests that the most southern section was an extension. Whilst shelving still exists on the eastern wall of the main equipment store the third portion to the left was used as a first aid room.

3. The **Blacksmith's Shop** is in two portions with the first portion having a concrete base at the northern end, most likely to support a power source for the line shaft and other machinery. Remains of the line shaft to drive the machines in the larger portion of the Blacksmiths shop are still evident on the northern end of the building, as is another larger concrete anvil. The timber stump was used to support a blacksmith's anvil.

4. The **Workers Room** and change rooms were a necessity with the plant running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with three shifts, 8am – 4pm; 4pm – 12 midnight and 12 midnight – 8 am.

In 1902 when Henry Newman was the Mine Superintendent he allowed half an hour for crib, those doing surface labour worked from 8am – 5pm daily and were allocated an hour allowance for dinner (12-1).

5. It is most likely that the **Machinery Shed** housed a boiler, steam driven air compressor and pumps. A large compressor is essential to this form of mining operation.

6. The **Poppet Head** was constructed in 1935, and is supported by 8 concrete piers of various sizes. Evidence suggests that this poppet head was mainly built for bailing water, as there would have been tramlines to transport the ore for dumping on the northern end.

The Shaft allowed the dewatering bucket to descend the shaft, on hitting water it sinks with water entering through two flaps. When full it is raised with the water pressure sealing the flaps shut. As the buckets come out of the shaft the door is released and water gushes from the open door into a trough.

By 1959 the water level was lowered to 335 foot, which was able to be kept at that level pumping 36 hours a week. It is said that the New Main Shaft (Wentworth) could be as deep as 800 ft.

7. The **Stamper Battery Shed** was erected in c1935 to house the two 5 head stampers which were manufactured in Newtown, NSW. The ore was fed into the stampers; water was sprayed onto the stamper heads to float the fine crushed material onto the amalgamating tables. These would have been clad with copper on which a thin film of mercury was placed. The gold particles would then amalgamate with the mercury. This was then scraped off and heated, leaving the gold ready for smelting.

8. This **Shaft** may be one formed by The Wentworth Extension Mines Company between the main road and Fredericks Valley Creek. This was the only mine-shaft on this narrow corridor other than the Wentworth Main itself.

It was reported to have reached 250m in 1898 and employed 26 men.

9. Mine Manager's Cottage

The corrugated iron house on the lower lying ground of the site is said to be the Mine Manager's house. It is present in some 1930s photos of the site and was remodelled in the 1960s for the final phase of mining.

10. The **Winding Engine** is made up of two single cylinder, double acting horizontal steam engines. Each engine bore is approximately 350mm. These drive the twin winding drums with hand and foot braking mechanisms. This machine lowered and raised the dewatering buckets down the shaft.

The driver controlled the steam regulator, foot operated band brakes, and hand operated drum brake and the reversing lever.

11. **Boiler** - In the 1960s there was external interest in the mining heritage of Lucknow. A census of 'abandoned machinery' on the various Lucknow leases was completed by the Department of Mines in 1965. Inspector Reid found a Cornish boiler, 6 feet by 25 feet, weighing 18 tonnes.

The Wentworth Mine site has a comprehensive array of built heritage, archaeology and relics. The site represents an important and integral part of the gold mining history of Lucknow and the wider region. Orange City Council is developing the site as an educational facility and tourism attraction.



Lucknow mines in early days.