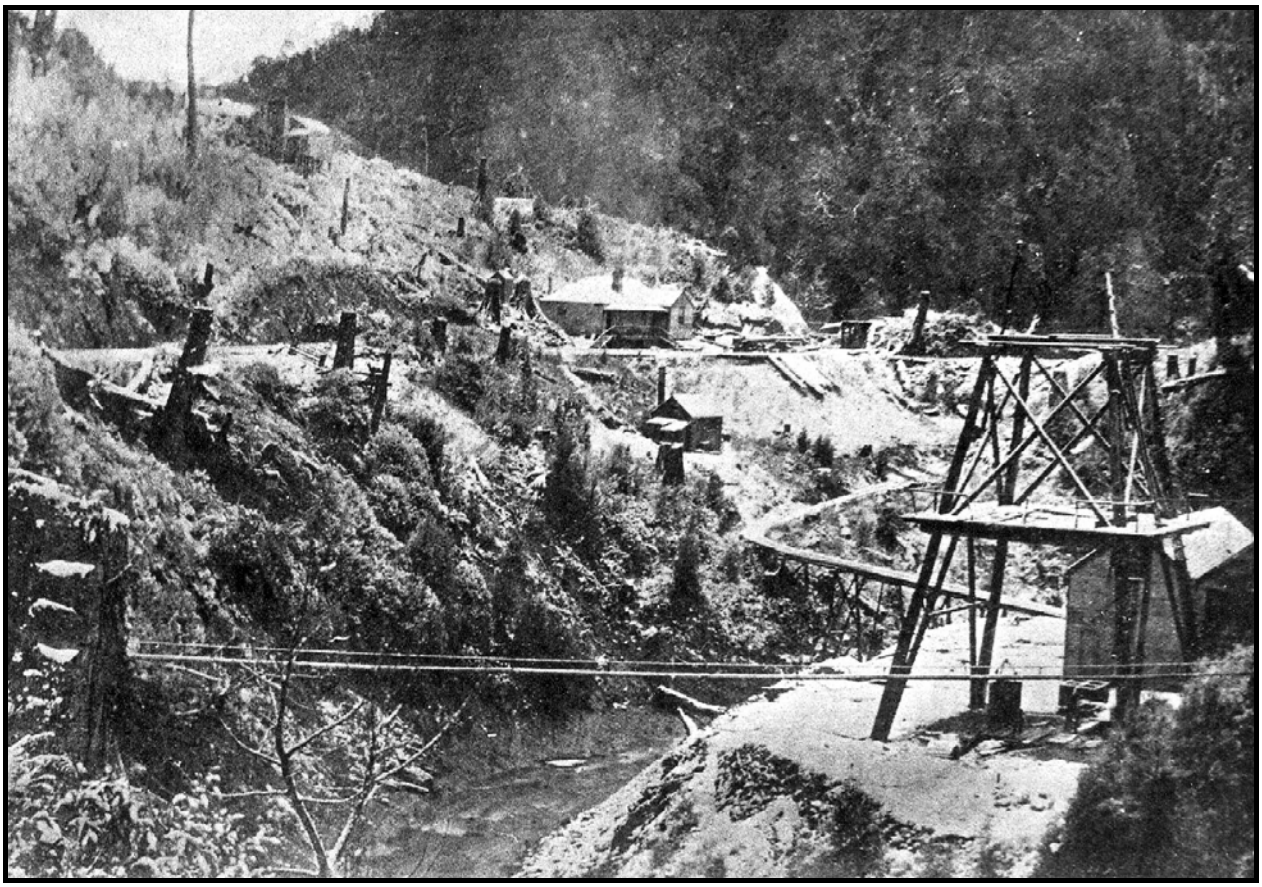
MINERAL RESOURCES TASMANIA
DEPARTMENT *of* INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY *and* RESOURCES

Archaeological Survey Report 2001/02

A site inspection of the Ring Valley and Fahlore mines

by Greg Dickens



RING VALLEY AND FAHLORE MINES
NOVEMBER 2000

Map Sheet: 3636, Dundas, 1:25 000 scale

Grid Ref:	Ring Valley (Rich P A)	374 270 mE, 5 367 520 mN
	Fahlore	374 250 mE, 5 367 620 mN

Situated one kilometre southeast of the former gold mining township of Ringville, the two mine sites were visited by Greg Dickens of Mineral Resources Tasmania (MRT) accompanied by Mr Kim Brownbill and Mr Trevor Puckey of Victoria on 24 November 2000. Trevor Puckey is the grandson of Thomas Puckey, a former manager of the Ring Valley Mine.

The sites are easily accessed by following the abandoned North East Dundas tramway formation, west from the old Williamsford terminus. For most of the three kilometre journey, the tramway formation follows the southern bank of the picturesque Ring River.

The destination point is marked by a substantial house site located alongside the tramway formation on the western side.

Immediately to the east, and located on the opposite (eastern) bank of the Ring River, are the Ring Valley and Fahlore mine sites.

BRIEF HISTORY

Prospecting activity in the Ring River Valley led to the discovery of substantial alluvial gold deposits at Bookers Creek (500 metres southwest of Williamsford) during June 1891[(1).]

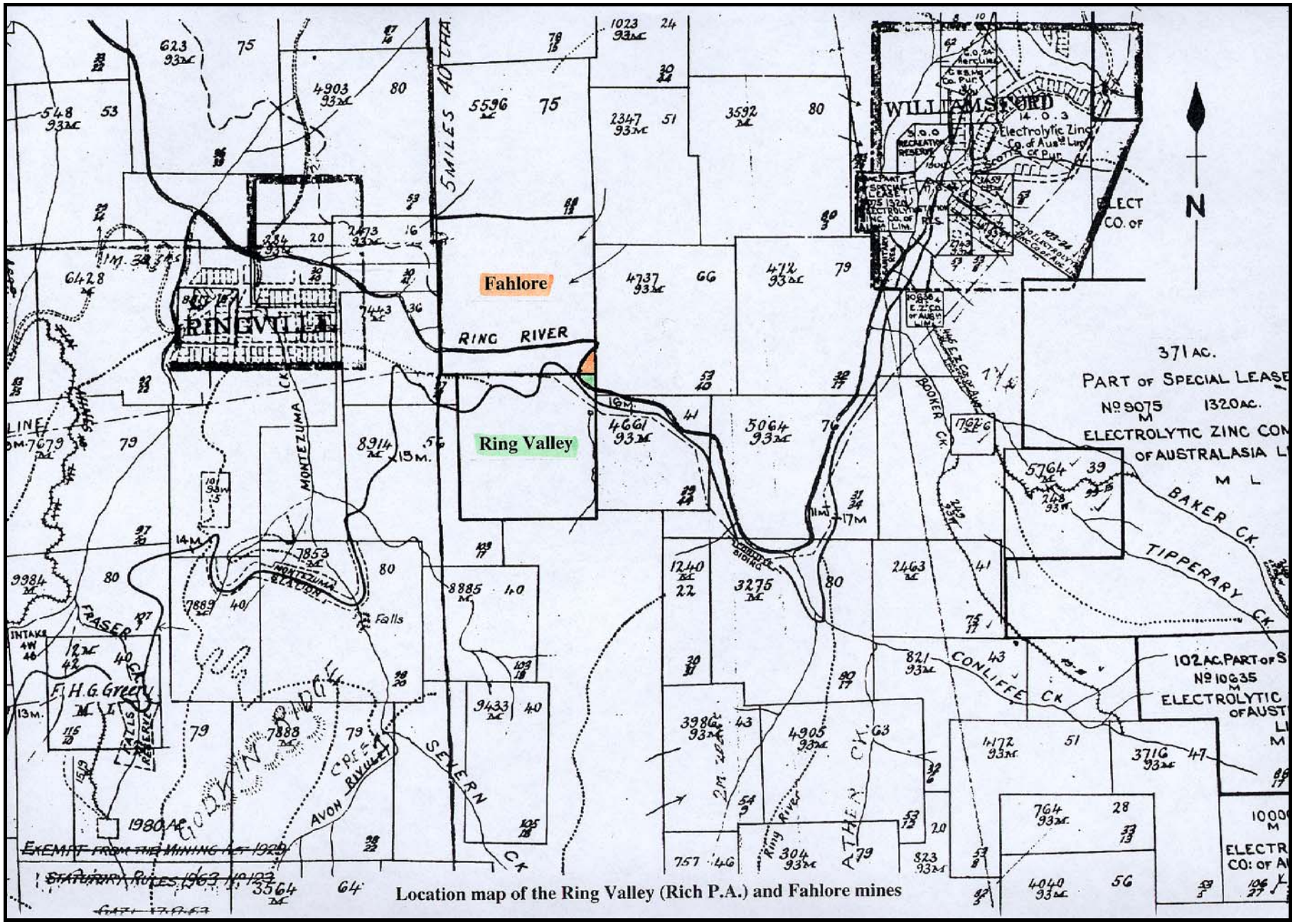
It was about the same time that Cecil (Tom) McDonald, who later discovered the rich Rosebery orebody in 1893, found deposits of fahlore in the Ring River Valley and subsequently worked a lease for two brief periods[(2)].

Records from 1891 indicate the presence of the Hobart-registered Rich Prospecting Association in the area[(3)].

It is, therefore, a probability that this company had established the Ring Valley mine during that year. Records confirm that both the Fahlore and Ring Valley mines operated independently from 1893 until an amalgamation of the companies in 1901.

Regarded as one silver and copper orebody, the Fahlore Silver Mining Company No Liability worked the northern section, while the Rich Prospecting Association worked the southern extension. Following the amalgamation, both mines were operated by the Ring Valley Mining Company Limited.

1901 also marked the expansion of the Ring Valley mine, which included the erection of powerful winding and pumping machinery for the main shaft. At the same time, a prospecting drive was established at the one hundred foot level of the main shaft in order to access the lode[(4)].



Location map of the Ring Valley (Rich P.A.) and Fahlore mines

During the ensuing thirteen years, the mine produced an estimated 363,000 ounces of silver and 159 tons of copper from 2,877 tons of ore. By 1907, the Fahlore lode was virtually worked out, while the Ring Valley section continued to produce until after the outbreak of war in 1914[(5)].

No mining activity has been recorded at either site since that date.

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

House site – AMG Ref: 374 200 mE, 5 367 550 mN

The former Fahlore mine manager's residence was located on level ground, west of the North East Dundas Tramway and adjacent to Fahlore station. Only chimney bricks remain of what was a substantial timber dwelling.

Ring Valley (Rich PA) mine

Main Shaft Precinct – AMG Ref: 374 270 mE, 5 367 520 mN

Located on the eastern bank and about ten metres above the Ring River is a cleared level area of about twenty square metres.

The main shaft occupies the southeast corner, while the collapsed timbers of the headframe lie in a northwesterly position from the shaft collar. The century-old timbers are in remarkably good condition.

Attached to the eastern end of the shaft collar is a concrete-lined pit, one and a half metres wide and two metres deep, that heads in a northerly direction for a distance of fifteen metres. The pit was constructed to house the shaft pumping machinery.

Also fifteen metres from the collar are the remains of the steel cage used in the main shaft. Although intact, the cage had been crushed by timbers from the collapsed headframe.

Main Shaft Winder House – AMG Ref: 374 270 mE, 5 367 540 mN

Located twenty metres north of the main shaft collar is a five square metre rubble stone platform with bed logs, which provided the foundations for the main shaft winder house.

Brick Furnace – AMG Ref: 374 280 mE, 5 367 550 mN

Located thirty metres northeast of the main shaft is a furnace of solid brick construction. The structure is in excellent condition. From the base of the furnace, a one metre wide flue heads in a westerly direction for about twenty metres. Numerous fire bricks from the AR and FB Company of South Yarra (Melbourne) are scattered around the site.

Underground Stoping – AMG Ref: 374 280 mE, 5 367 540 mN

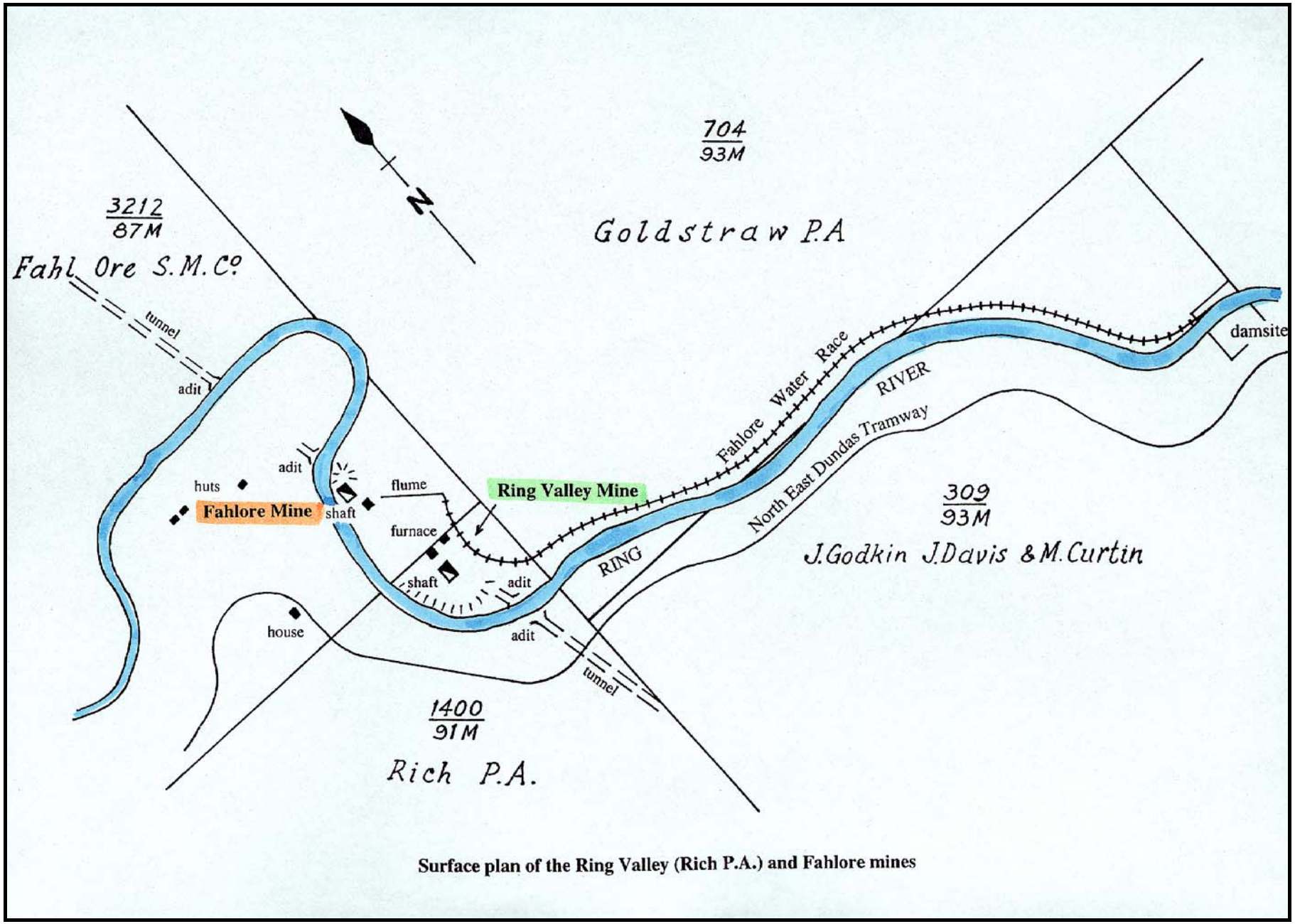
Located ten metres south of the brick furnace is a small underground stope. Surface stoping was carried out a short distance to the north of the furnace site.

South Extension of Main Shaft – AMG Ref: 374 270 mE, 5 367 500 mN

A small adit is located twenty-five metres south of the main shaft. Driven into the river bank, the adit connects with the main shaft about five metres below the collar.

Southern Adit – AMG Ref: 374 280 mE, 5 367 480 mN

Located on the western side of the Ring River and directly opposite the main shaft extension adit, the tunnel is driven into the river bank for an estimated distance of thirty metres. The adit appeared to be in excellent condition as a torch inspection revealed no floor debris for the first twenty-five metres.



Surface plan of the Ring Valley (Rich P.A.) and Fahlore mines

Fahlore Mine

Main Shaft – AMG Ref: 374 250 mE, 5 367 620 mN

Located approximately one hundred metres northwest of the Ring Valley main shaft, the shaft collar is less than ten metres from the river bank and only a few metres above water level. Apart from the shaft's timber lining, all other elements of the site have been removed.

A small excavated area ten metres south of the shaft collar marks the location of a machinery site, while to the north, two fingers of mullock cover the short distance to the river bend. There is also a smaller mullock dump located just south of the machinery site.

Water Race – AMG Ref: 374 300 mE, 5 367 610 mN

At a point 50 metres east of the main shaft is a 500 metre long water race which directed water through a steel pipe column down the hill to the machinery site. A small section of pipe was located. Water for the race was drawn from an intake on the Ring River, situated upstream from the Ring Valley mine.

Exploration Adit – AMG Ref: 374 240 mE, 5 367 650 mN

A small exploration adit was driven into the western river bank at a point directly north of the main shaft. No investigation beyond the adit portal was attempted.

Northern Adit – AMG Ref: 374 250 mE, 5 367 720 mN

Located on the northern bank of the 'big bend' of the Ring River, the adit is reported to be approximately 180 metres long. No attempt was made to locate the site.

CONCLUSIONS

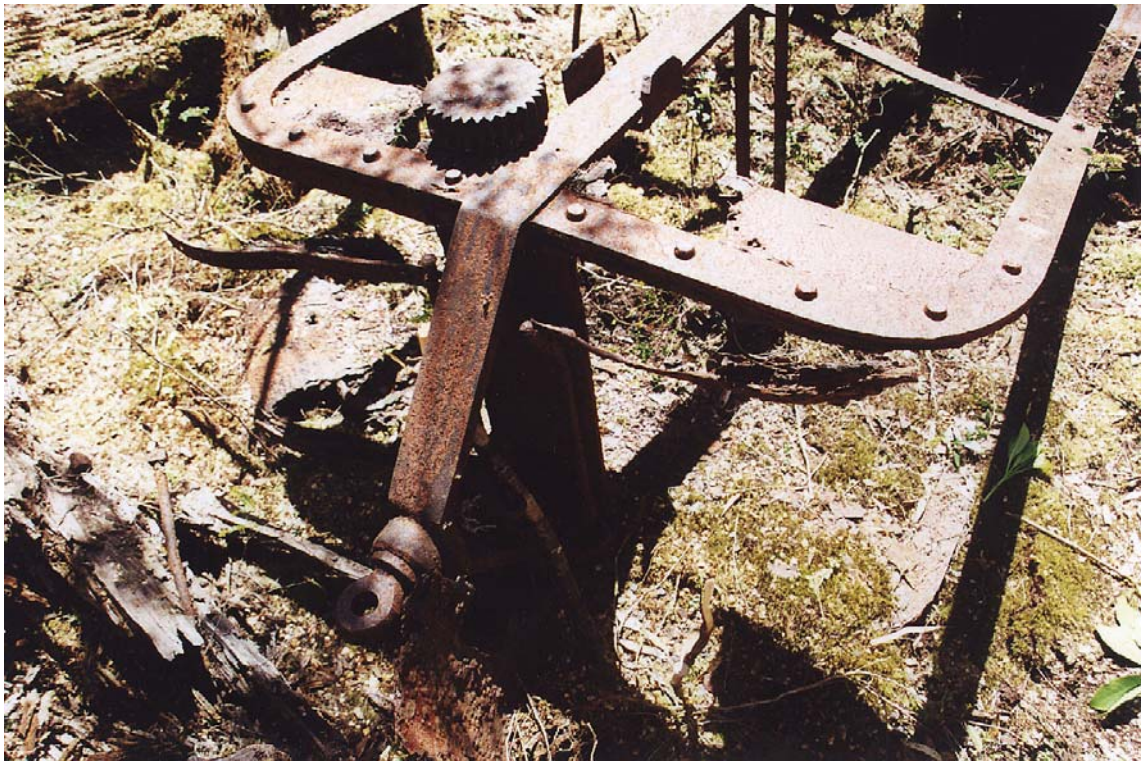
The Ring Valley and Fahlore sites are excellent examples of early West Coast mines. They are well preserved, easily accessible and certainly worthy of further investigation. Located in an area that includes the North East Dundas Tramway, Ringville townsite, Montezuma Falls, Curtin Davis mine and Williamsford, the district is rich with mining heritage and spectacular scenery.

REFERENCES

1. Tilley, W. 1891. *The Wild West of Tasmania*, Evershed Bros : Zeehan, p. 44.
2. Jay, G. 1993. *In the Shadow of Murchison*, W Geof Jay : Smithton, p. 7.
3. Tilley, W. 1891. *The Wild West of Tasmania*, Evershed Bros, Zeehan, p. 92.
4. *Progress of the Mineral Industry of Tasmania, for the Quarter Ending 31 December 1901*. Tasmania Department of Mines, p. 11.
5. Blissett, A. H. 1962. Geological Atlas 1 Mile Series, Zone 7, Sheet 50. Zeehan. *Explanatory Report Geological Survey Tasmania,* p. 233–234.

[April 2001]

Ring Valley mine, general view of main shaft precinct



Ring Valley mine, close-up view of main shaft cage

Ring Valley mine, view of concrete-lined pit used to accommodate the main shaft pumping machinery

Ring Valley mine, view of collapsed headframe from main shaft

Ring Valley mine, view of main shaft winder house foundations

Ring Valley mine, view inside southern adit, located on the western bank of the Ring River

Ring Valley mine, view of stope on south extension of main shaft

Fahlore mine, view of main shaft collar

Fahlore mine, view of main shaft mullock dump

Fahlore mine, view of portal of riverbank adit, situated on the opposite side of the Ring River and north of the main shaft