Location:
STRINGYBARK CREEK ROAD and TATONG-TOLMIE ROAD ARCHERTON, BENALLA RURAL CITY

Heritage Status / Level of Significance:
Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number: H2205
Listing Authority: VHR

Heritage Overlay Number: HO66

Statement of Significance:
What is significant?

Stringybark Creek was the location where three police officers were shot and killed by Ned Kelly on 26 October 1878. Following the deaths of the Mansfield police officers Lonigan, Scanlan and Kennedy, the Kelly Gang
became the most wanted outlaws in Australia in the late 19th century. The shootings at Stringybark Creek precipitated the events of the Kelly Outbreak, which reached a climax at Glenrowan in June 1880.

The Stringybark Creek site consists of swampy ground, ferns and speargrass along Stringybark Creek, rising to a timbered woodland of gum and blackwood. The area has a rich timber harvesting and mining history, and remnant gold workings and open shafts are visible across the site. The archaeological ruins of two miner's huts are located on the west bank of the creek, between the creek and Stringybark Creek Road.

The site includes the "Kelly tree" in which the names of the three police officers were carved in the early 1930s. An iron helmet has been set into the scar of the tree, which has now been obscured by the tree's regrowth. A stone memorial with a plaque dedicated to Sergeant Michael Kennedy, Constable Michael Scanlan and Constable Thomas Lonigan was unveiled on the site on 26 October 2001.

A number of historical documents exist which provide evidence for the location of the Stringybark Creek site. The site location is shown on an 1884 surveyor's plan, marked "Scene of the Police murders by the Kelly Gang". The plan also shows a hut on the opposite (west) bank of the creek, which may correlate with the archaeological hut remains that survive. The site is depicted in a photograph taken by the police a few weeks after the shootings.

How is it significant?

The Stringybark Creek site is of historical and archaeological significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Stringybark Creek site is historically significant as the place where an encounter between the Kelly Gang and the police took place which resulted in the death of three police officers, and the gang being declared outlaws. It was for the murder of Constable Thomas Lonigan at Stringybark Creek that Ned Kelly was found guilty and hanged in November 1880. Following the events at Stringybark Creek a reward of 100 pounds was posted for the capture of Ned Kelly. The reward for the capture of the gang members rose to 8000 pounds by the time of the Glenrowan siege.

Stringybark Creek is archaeologically significant for its potential to contain archaeological artefacts and deposits that relate to the police shootings.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

a. Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history

The Stringybark Creek site is important to Victoria's cultural history as the place where the events of the exchange between the Kelly Gang and the police escalated, leading to the issuing of large rewards for the capture of the bushrangers, an extensive police hunt which culminated in the dramatic siege event at Glenrowan, and the hanging of Ned Kelly in 1880 at the Old Melbourne Gaol.

b. Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

N/A

c. Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.
The Stringybark Creek site has the potential to contain historical archaeological deposits and objects, including ballistics, that relate to the events of the shoot-out.

d. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or environments.

N/A

e. Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

N/A

f. Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

N/A

g. Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

N/A

h. Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

The Stringybark Creek site is strongly associated with the members of the Kelly Gang (Ned Kelly, Dan Kelly, Joe Byrne and Steve Hart), and with the four police officers (Thomas Lonigan, Michael Scanlan, Michael Kennedy and Thomas McIntyre) who fought the bushrangers at the site.

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*This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online*