

JOHN MERLO



& FAMILY



**PEOPLE
SERIES**

GIOVANNI JOHN MERLO

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Sections of the information presented is gleaned from an article by Hazel Merlo, that appeared in the 1998 issue of the Italian Historical Society Journal. Special thanks to the Italian Historical Society (Coasit) for their kind permission in allowing us to use extracts.

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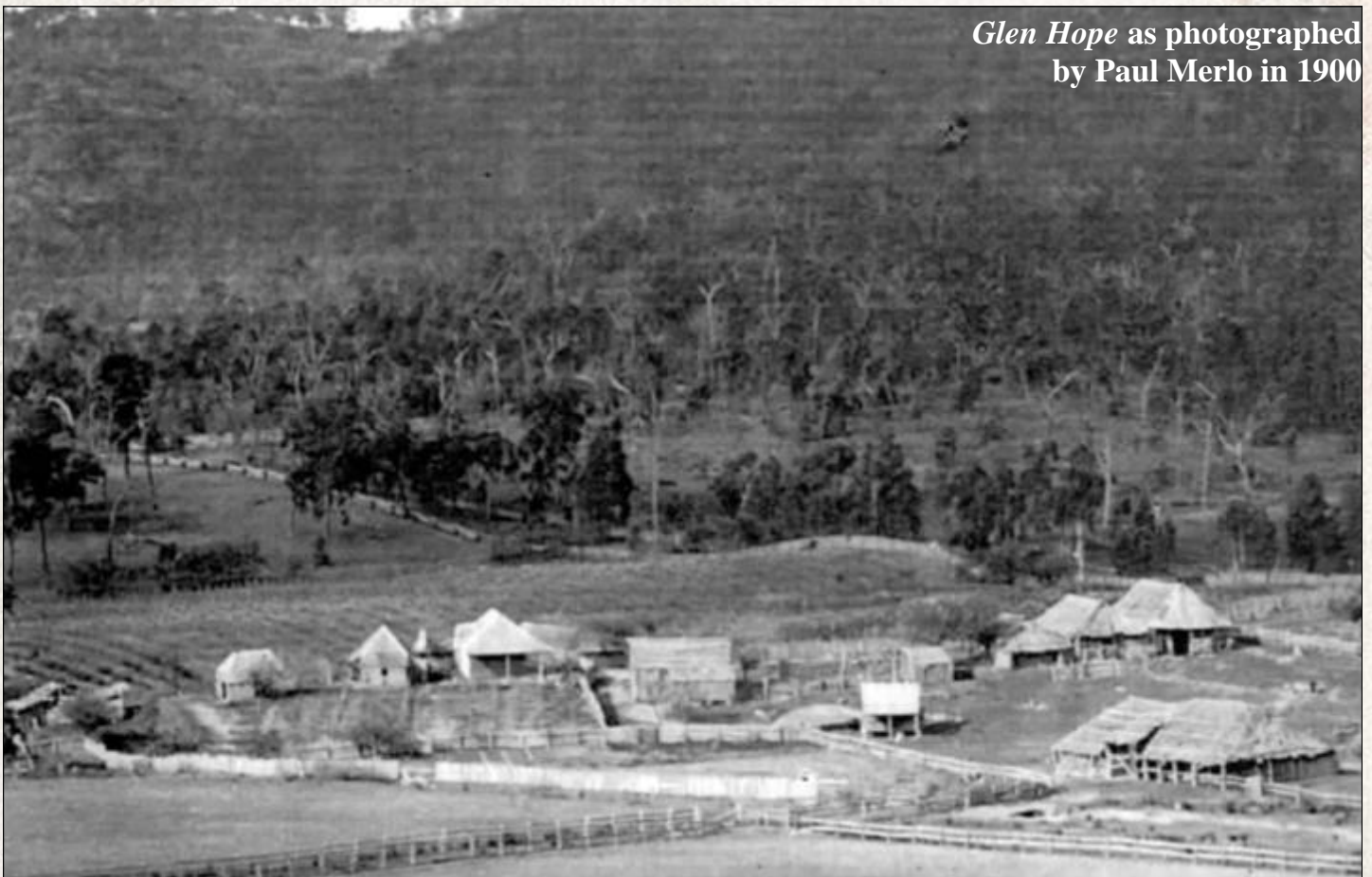
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HISTORIC FACTSHEET

INTRODUCTION

Name: Giovanni (John) Merlo
Born: 1837
Location: Vila De Torano, Lombardy, Italy
Migrated: Dec 1860, arrived Mar 1861
Ship: *Green Jacket*

John was born in Italy in 1837, travelled to Australia in 1861 and moved to the Alexandra District in 1867. Here he worked as a miner, farmer and maker of quality wine. Today his old homestead is under the water at Collier Bay, Lake Eildon.



*Glen Hope as photographed
by Paul Merlo in 1900*

John Robert Merlo (as he later became known) was born Giovanni Roberto Merlo to parents Pietro and Ursula Merlo Lena, of Tirano, in the province of Sondrio, Lombardy, Italy. He was raised in a moderately wealthy family, with his father working as a wine merchant. In December 1860 at 22 years of age (listed as 25 for legal reasons), he sailed from Le Havre in France to Melbourne, Australia aboard the ship *Green Jacket*. The vessel, which carried 150 passengers, arrived in Melbourne in March 1861. Giovanni was later naturalized John Robert Merlo.

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John first settled in Ballarat where he struggled to make ends meet. He was later a shareholder of the *All Comers Goldmine*, but made little money from the venture. While at Ballarat he became good friends with another shareholder by the name of J F Jackson, who was from the small rural township of Alexandra in Central Victoria. Also while at Ballarat, he attended local dances and it was at one dance that he met his English bride, 19 year old Mary Ann Elizabeth Tuddenham. It is said that she tripped and fell in his lap! When John was 29 they married at St Alipius Catholic Church at East Ballarat.

In 1867 when word of a new gold strike near Alexandra was spreading, they uprooted themselves and moved to Durham Gully, near Alexandra. It is possible that the move was at least partly influenced by John's friend Mr Jackson. It is possible that Mr Jackson also travelled with them, however this remains unconfirmed. Once established locally and after pegging out and registering a claim, they lived in a simple tent until John was able to build them a basic miner's hut.

Firstly John's attempts at mining were largely unsuccessful, which was the case with most miners attending the rush. But in time and with perseverance his luck changed and reports tell us that he was even able to drop some small nuggets into his wife's apron.

In 1868, Mary Ann's brother John joined them in the Alexandra District and a small



Merlo's Homestead in 1999.

Photograph © Copyright 2010 Lawrence Hood

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**Fraser National Park homestead
from the air in 1994.**

Photograph © Julie Lax 2012.



company 'Merlo and Co.' was established. The partnership went on to produce significant amounts of gold, with some crushes returning up to 35oz per ton. Over time this high yield subsided by which time they had established themselves financially.

In 1871, the Durham Gully School was established after the community worked together to create an education platform for their children. They built a simple timber hut, that was later to become too derelict for children to attend in the winter months. The school was officially gazetted by the Government in 1874, two years after the Education Act began. While the family lived at Durham Gully, Ursula, Peter, James and John Jnr all attended the school.

In 1876, it was reported that Mary Merlo had contributed a pair of fowls to the Alexandra Cottage Hospital — Bruce Auction and Carnival. It is believed that Mary had given birth to at least some of her children at this hospital. On 15 February that same

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**Fraser National Park homestead
from the air in 1994.**

Photograph © Julie Lax 2012.



year, John's Durham Gully mining lease was declared void by the Office of Mines. On 10 March 1887 John was listed in a petition in the *Alexandra Times* and he was listed as being from Spring Creek.

While the family were living at Durham Gully, John broadened his fossicking adventures to include the Puzzle Ranges (along the Skyline road) located to the east of Durham Gully. It was here in 1880 that the next stage of his gold success was to eventuate. John found small amounts of gold there, then applied for and received a miner's lease in 1880. He sunk two shafts to develop the mining lease further and once he was happy there was sufficient gold to be found, he cut in an adit (tunnel) connecting the two shafts, to extract the gold. The official mining claim was for an area referred to as being on the upper Galatea Gully. This was part of the headwaters of Mountaineer Creek.

John called the mine the 'Solferino', after a war in his homeland which was fought near the small township of Solferino on 24 July 1859, not that many years before he travelled to Australia. The second Italian War of Independence, was also fought by over 300,000

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soldiers near the township of Solferino, and was the last war in world history where the armies were under the direct command of their country's monarchs. Casualties were high, with a combined loss of over 5,000 men and 22,000 wounded. A young Swiss social activist and businessman by the name of Jean-Henri Dunant, who witnessed the suffering of the wounded soldiers after the battle, was so emotionally taken by their plight that he started the initial moves that in part led to the creation of the 'International Red Cross' organisation and the 'Geneva Convention'.

John was a strongly patriotic character, both for Australia and for his homeland. By naming his mine the 'Solferino', he was also making a statement of support for his country of origin and a statement of his nationalistic character.

The workings at the Solferino mine were extensive, with much of the quartz being removed from the top shaft, where three basic roads converged. It is believed, but not confirmed, that a battery (also known as a crusher or stamper) may have operated on a flat area located near the top shaft. What appears to be pole holes were still visible in 2011.

In 1883, John was awarded a selection of around 100 acres in an area now known as

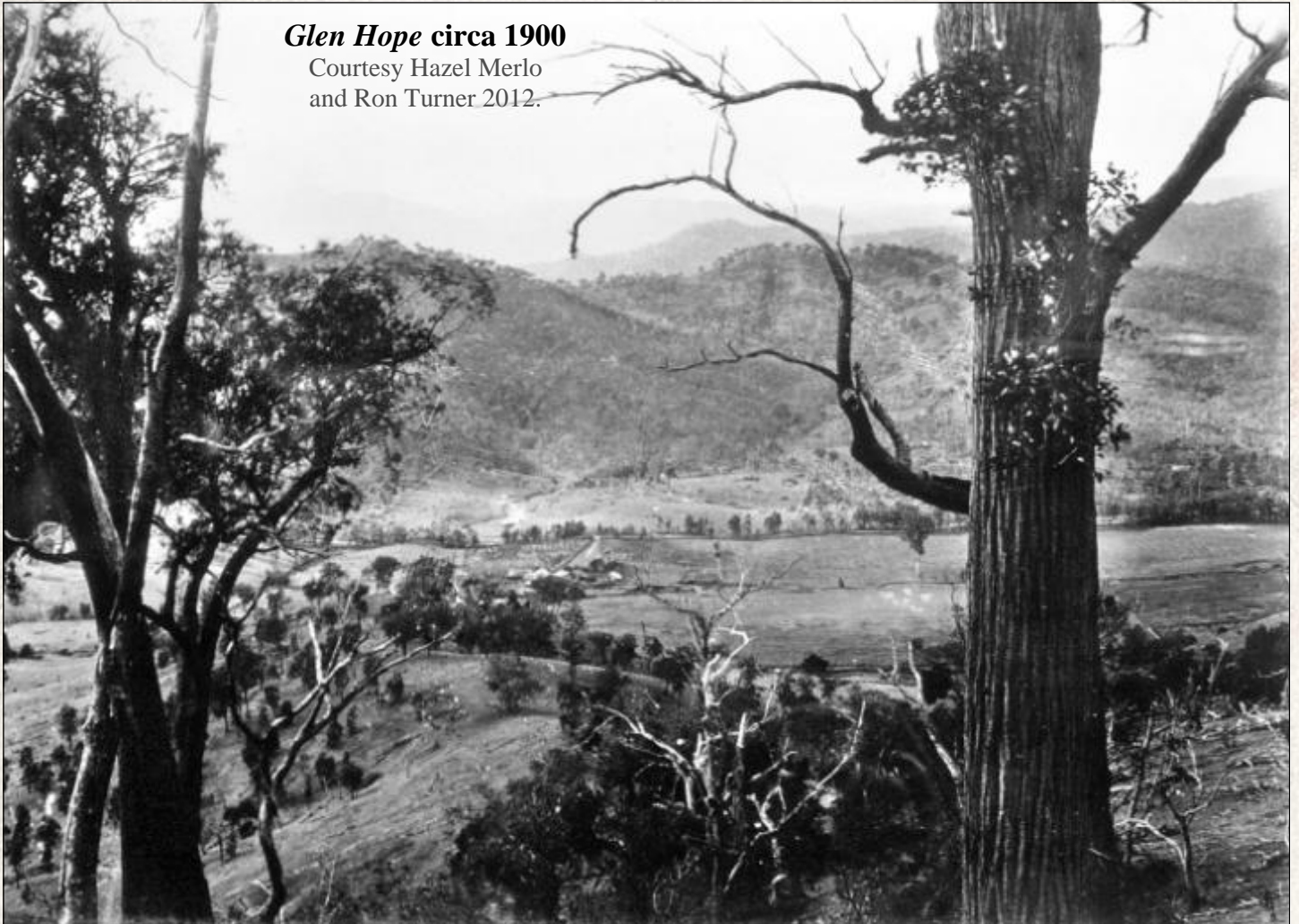


**The Merlo Homestead in 1986, along with some of the trees he planted.
The property was known for having a row of cypress pines.**

Photograph © Copyright Lawrence Hood

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Glen Hope circa 1900

Courtesy Hazel Merlo
and Ron Turner 2012.

Coller Bay. The selection application was made after newly found friend John Forsyth (of the Maintongoon Sheep Run) encouraged him to do so. Soon afterwards John commenced work on a three room house on the selection. The house was constructed with split palings, a hardwood floor and shingle roof. Hessian bags lined the walls to reduce drafts passing between the palings. Eventually the walls were lined with newspapers and fixed using a fine clay from the local Perfect Cure Creek. All wood was from local trees and John processed the lumber with his own 12 inch broad axe. The main living area of their homestead comprised a rudimentary fireplace and it was here that the cooking was done. A hand-made table was used for food preparation, eating and cleaning.

In 1884, son Peter (aged 16) left the district for New Zealand and later married. The union was to eventually produce three sons.



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In 1888 the family finally abandoned the older Puzzle Ranges' home and moved into their new homestead. This meant the family was finally all living together in one home instead of being separated. At this time the Merlo family still had eight children at home, and a new extension was added which became known as the boy's bedroom as the older two boys took this room.

By 1889 when John applied for his first 14 year lease on his property. the homestead had become a well established property and much closer to being self supporting. It included a vegetable garden, crops and livestock, with horses, pigs, sheep, cows and poultry birds. John had also established a large vineyard and over time his wine became known as a very successful brew. His wine ultimately became a record of his success as he was unable to fulfil all his yearly wine orders. A cellar was built to house the casks and bottles and his stock was often used to barter for goods and services of equal cost. It is said that John's wine would have been far more successful, if not for the inaccessibility of his property to larger markets.

During the 1890s, a further 220 acres (comprising two leases) were added to the first property. All three leases were paid off without incident, thanks to a steady flow of revenue from his gold fossicking and his wine and farming businesses.

During the late 1890s and into the 1900s, the rabbits entered plaque proportions and this created havoc for their vegetable garden, crops and vineyard. A paling fence was erected as part of an effort to stop them entering the property. The fence was patrolled daily and rabbits shot or poisoned.

In 1899 the decision was made to build a bigger home at the front of the old home. The new home was built in 1900 and the property was named *Glen Hope*. The large homestead building included two more bedrooms, a dining room, store room and attic.

The boys all became strong farm hands with proficiency in blacksmithing and woodwork. Paul learnt to repair watches and was possibly the best at working with wood, building machinery and repairing many of the farm items that fell into disrepair. John Jnr and Paul were self taught photographers, with John Jnr building his first camera. Few of these photographic works survive. The girls would often work on the larger homesteads found around the district. These included Wappan Estate and the Maintongoon Homestead.



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In 1905, 19 year old Joseph became ill and was taken to Alexandra Hospital before being transported to Mrs Maddern's Private Hospital in Nicholson Street, Fitzroy via train. He died a short time later. His remains were returned to the district and interred at the Alexandra Cemetery. This was the first catastrophe for the Merlo family in Australia.

In 1910, John became ill and Paul returned to the farm to help his mother keep the property. In March 1911, tests in Melbourne revealed John had a liver condition and kidney complaint. This was likely causing his severe hypertension and itchy rash that is reported to have covered much of his body. By April he was in St Vincent's Hospital seriously ill. Upon his return from hospital, he and Mary moved into Alexandra to live with their daughter Mary and son-in-law William Meyers.

This gave them an advantage of being close to the Alexandra Cottage Hospital and able to receive better care and attention. Paul moved back to Melbourne soon afterwards and worked with the Board of Works. John passed away on 14 November 1912 at the residence of his daughter and her husband William. John was aged 75 years and was buried with his son Joseph at the Alexandra Cemetery. Mary eventually sold *Glen Hope* to Herbert Coller in 1924. He turned the farm into a stud, sheep and merino farm and bred Corriedale sheep, a dual purpose breed that were used in the production of both meat and wool.

In 1956 Lake Eildon was flooded as part of the establishment of the Big Eildon irrigation dam. This inundation saw *Glen Hope* lost under the waters of Lake Eildon. In the mid 1900s as Victoria and parts of New South Wales sank into drought, no one would have anticipated that it would last for nearly 15 years. The lack of water in the lake left many local tourism based businesses struggling to make ends meet and the township of Eildon suffered as a result. However tourist numbers to Coller Bay were impacted in a positive way as people travelled to see the historic remnants of the Merlo Homestead (*Glen Hope*). The drought finally turned in 2010 when the district was gifted with the wettest year on record and by 2011 the lake was at 85 percent capacity. It is likely that the next time the water of Lake Eildon recedes enough to expose *Glen Hope*, it may no longer be standing, since exposure to air and sunlight will have accelerated its deterioration.

TIMELINE

BASIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS



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TIMELINE

- 1839** John Robert Merlo (as he later became known) was born Giovanni Roberto Merlo, to parents Pietro and Ursula Merlo Lena, of Tirano, in the province of Sondrio, Lombardy, Italy.
- 24 July 1859** The second Italian War of Independence was fought near the Township of Solferino, Italy.
- December 1860** Giovanni John Merlo left Le Havre, France, aboard the ship *Green Jacket* with 150 other passengers.
- March 1861** Giovanni John Merlo arrived at Melbourne Australia. John was 22 years of age at the time (though it was reported that he was 25 for legal reasons).
- 30 April 1867** John married 19 year old spinster Mary Ann Elizabeth Tuddenham at East Ballarat. John was aged 29.
- Early 1867** John and his family moved from Ballarat to Alexandra District, settling first in Durham Gully and living in a tent.
- Late 1867** First child Ursula was born at Alexandra.
- 1868** John Tuddenham, Mary's brother joined them, and together they became Merlo & Co.
- Around 1868** Peter, the oldest son was born.
- 1871** The Durham Gully School began, after the community worked together to create an education platform for their children. It was officially gazetted by the Government of the day in 1874, two years after the Education act began.
- 1876** Mrs Merlo contributed a pair of fowls to the Alexandra Cottage Hospital - Bruce Auction and Carnival.
- 15 February 1876** John's Durham Gully mining lease was declared void by the



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Office of Mines.

April 1871

John Tuddenham married Julia Clarke, a local miner's daughter, in Alexandra, with 50 guests.

1880

John lodged a claim for an area of land in the Puzzle Ranges. The area was in the headwaters of the Mountaineer Creek, along Galatea Gully. The mine was called the 'Solferino' mine.

1880

The older Merlo children began attending Doon public school, which had opened in September of 1878. They travelled 10 km to the part-time school.

Late 1880

John Tuddenham and his wife left the district, settling in Urana N.S.W.

1882

John applied for a selection of land, after receiving advice from pastoralist John Forsyth of the Maintongoon Run.

March 1883

John was granted a selection of land in Collier Bay, to build upon. Registration of the selection cost one pound. A house was built within a month, with the help of his older children (Peter James and John Jnr).

10 March 1887

John Merlo's name was listed in a petition in the Alexandra Times as being from Spring Creek.

Unknown

John Merlo purchased a 300 acre block of land on the Goulburn River, and called it *Glen Hope*. They raised their 11 children there.

2 July 1894

Certificate of Naturalisation granted to John Merlo (certificate number 5954). John was aged 58.

11 October 1895

John wrote to the Alexandra *Standard* over a complaint with a mining neighbour, who was allegedly not complying with



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the lands regulations of the time in regards to vermin control.

1900

A larger house was built at *Glen Hope*. By now the property included a vineyard, pigsty, vegetable garden and a pan toilet.

October 1903

John Merlo and neighbour James Stone brought friend and neighbour Peter Ferrier Ross to the Alexandra hospital where he died. John Merlo always had an open door for Peter, and suggested he was a 'walking inquire within' with a great memory.

14 November 1912

At age 75 John Merlo died and was buried at Alexandra Cemetery with his son Joseph.

1911

John attended a Melbourne Specialist for a rash complaint.

1914

The *Glen Hope* property was leased for grazing, as the property could no longer be maintained.

1919

Hazel Merlo (Paul's daughter) was born at *Glen Hope*.

1924

The *Glen Hope* property was sold to the Coller family who had been looking to buy locally, after their own property further downstream from the Goulburn River was to be flooded by the Water Commissions Sugarloaf Dam Project of the 1920.

April 1931

Mary Ann Elizabeth Merlo passed away.

1968

Merlo Homestead exposed during a drought period.

1983

Merlo Homestead became fully exposed during a drought period. Even the chook house was exposed. Many relics were removed at this time, increasing the decline of the properties condition.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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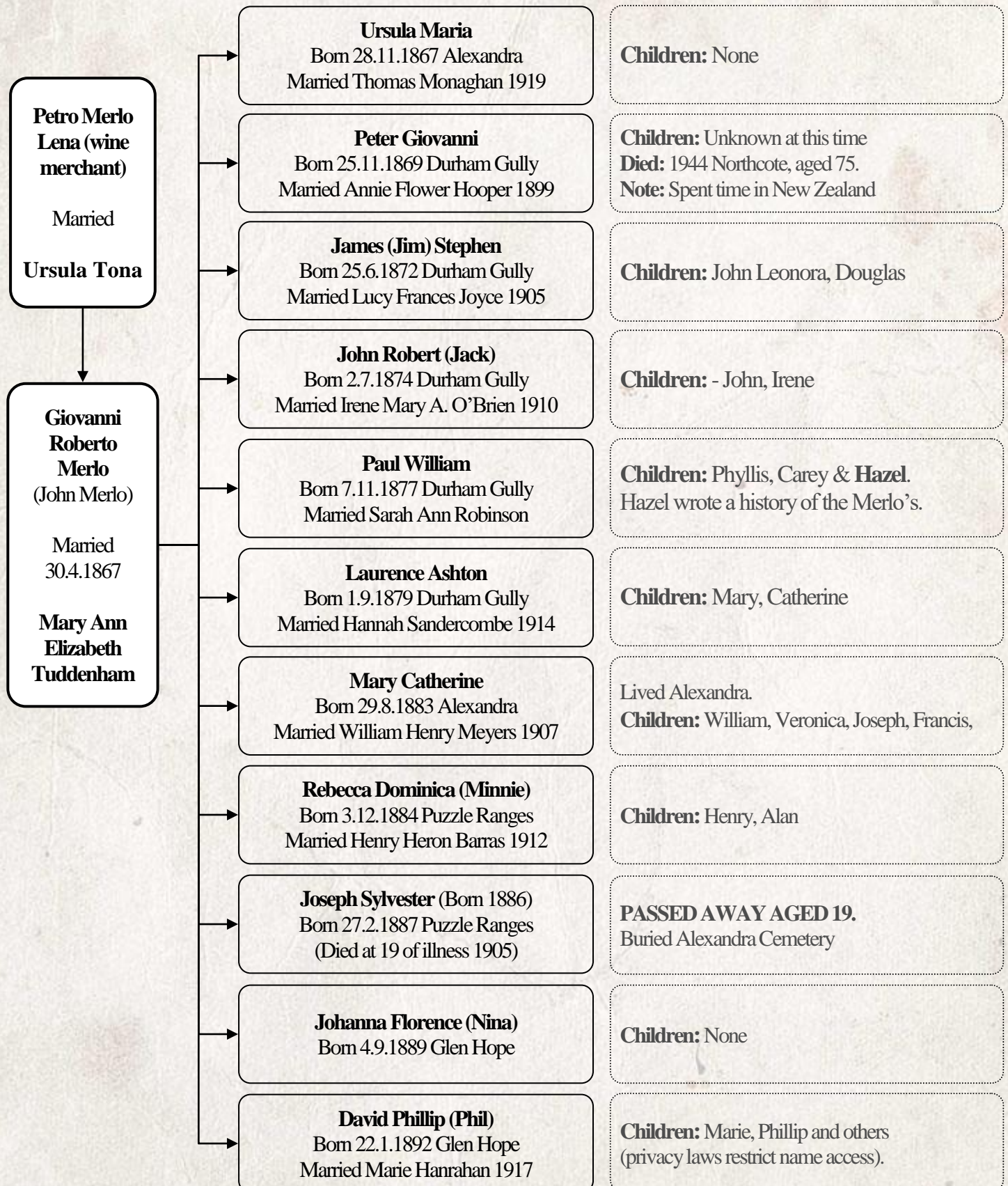
- 1983** A helicopter crashed while taking photographs of the exposed Merlo Homestead. All on board survived the crash.
- 1994** The homestead was again exposed during the early years of the drought.
- 1998** Hazel Merlo wrote an article on her family history for the Italian Historical Society Journal (Volume 2). She credits Ron Turner, first park ranger of the Fraser National Park, near Alexandra and Eildon with being instrumental in helping her to write it.
- 16 May 2007** The Alexandra and Yea Standard ran an article on the Merlo Homestead being uncovered by the record low rainfall and low level of the lake.
- 2011** Artworkz start their John Merlo educational factsheet.
- They correspond with Emma Turner (Meyers), who is also researching the family. She had recently discovered that John and Mary Merlo were her great Grandparents.
 - David Hibbert performed a professional photoshoot of the *Solferino Goldmine* and surrounding area for the factsheet.
 - We seek and gain permission for use of the written piece by Hazel Merlo, which appeared in the Italian Historical Society Journal in 1998. Dr Paolo Baracchi, the Coordinator at the Italian Historical Society & Museo Italiano, Coasit, help us with this and also with other factsheet improvements.

FAMILY CHART

BASIC FAMILY CHART

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

FAMILY CHART



GALLERY

RELATED IMAGES

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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Merlo's Homestead in the early 1900s

The Merlo Homestead comprised of around eight buildings, with all except the main house appearing to have bark roofing. In that area, stringybark trees were often used for roofing. Most of the smaller buildings had bark shingles.

Information from Ron Turner — first Park Ranger at Lake Eildon National Park

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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**Giovanni Roberto (John) and
Mary Ann Merlo circa 1900**

Photograph from Hazel Merlo article in the Italian
Historical Society (Coasit).



**Phillip and Joseph Merlo with their catch
at *Glen Hope* in c1900 photograph by
their older brother Paul**

Photograph from Hazel Merlo article in the Italian Historical
Society (Coasit).

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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John Merlo and Mary Ann Merlo (née) Tuddenham with their children Mary, Paul, John Jnr, James, Usula, Lawrence, Joseph and Dominica at *Glen Hope* in 1888.

Photograph from Hazel Merlo article in the Italian Historical Society (Coasit).

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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***Glen Hope* photographed by Paul Merlo in 1900**

From far left:

Pig sty, pan toilet, and boys' bedroom, first old house and the home built in 1900. The vineyard on rise behind house and the vegetable gardens in front.

Photograph from Hazel Merlo article in the Italian Historical Society (Coasit).



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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**Paul Merlo's children
wearing patterned socks
given to them by their
aunt Ursula in 1924**

**Hazel Merlo is third
from left**

Photograph from Hazel Merlo
article in the Italian Historical
Society (Coasit)

**The home made broderie anglaise on the bodice of the
christening robe made by Mary Ann Merlo in 1867 and
worn by her 11 children.**

Image from Hazel Merlo article in the Italian Historical Society (Coasit).



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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**John Merlo Jnr took this photo of grape harvesting at *Glen Hope* circa 1900.
His mother Mary Ann, brother Paul and father John Merlo are featured.**

Photograph from Hazel Merlo article in the Italian Historical Society (Coasit).

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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Phillip Merlo, on buggy with neighbour Harry Pearce loading rabbits at *Glen Hope* circa 1909

Photograph by Paul Merlo
Photograph from Hazel Merlo article in the Italian Historical Society (Coasit)

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Paul Merlo took this self portrait circa 1908

Photograph by Paul Merlo
Photograph from Hazel Merlo article in the Italian Historical Society (Coasit).

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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**Barns at *Glen Hope* photographed by Paul Merlo in 1909.
The wagon pictured on the right was made by John Merlo Senior years earlier.**

Photograph from Hazel Merlo article in the Italian Historical Society (Coasit).

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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(Above) John Merlo and family in 1887 (Below) Merlo's Homestead in 1983
Photographs courtesy Emma Turner 2011



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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***Glen Hope* in 1968 when it emerged from the waters of
Lake Eildon during the drought**

Photograph from Hazel Merlo article in the Italian Historical Society (Coasit)

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Glen Hope circa 1900

Photograph courtesy Hazel Merlo and Ron Turner 2012

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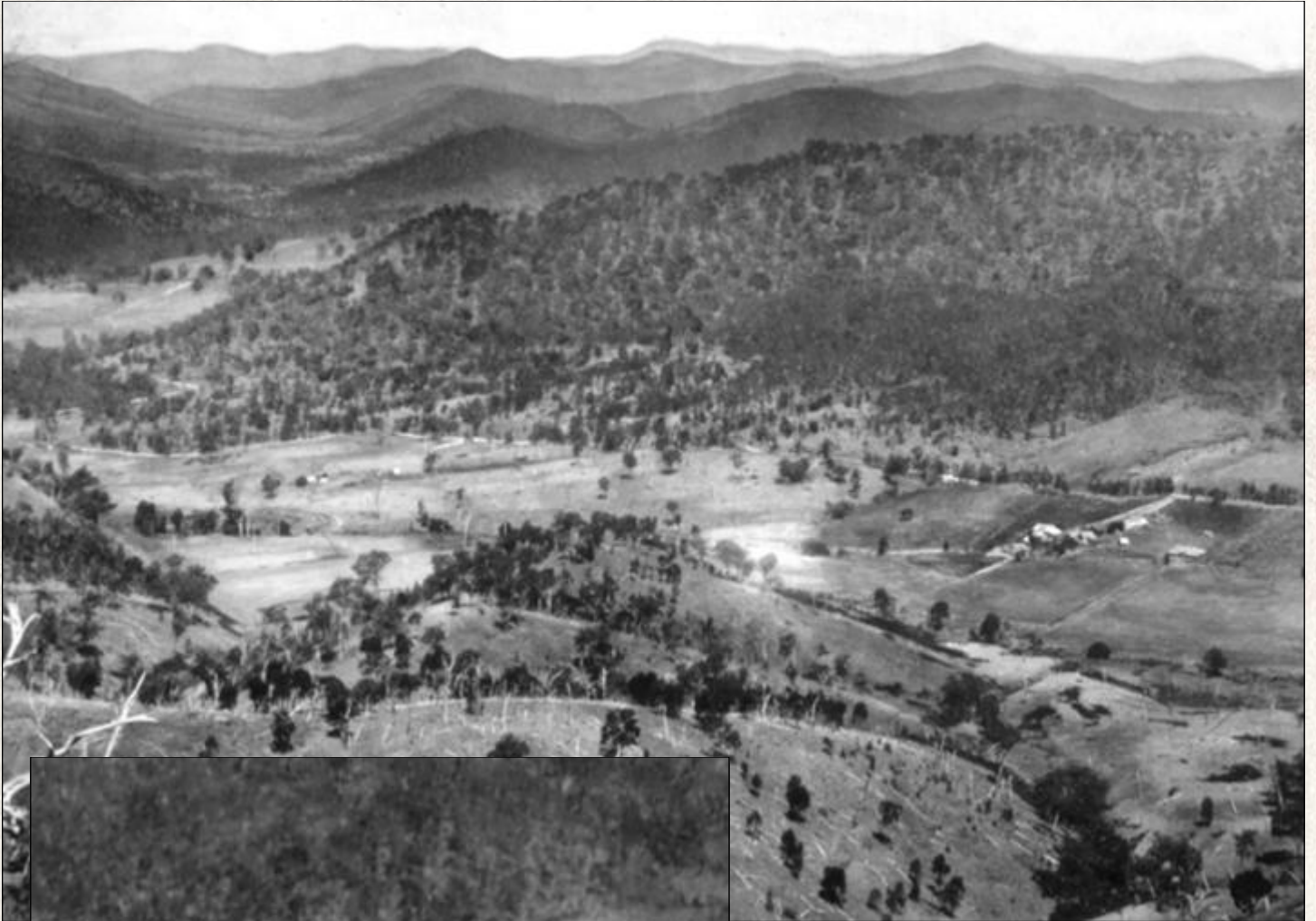


***Glen Hope* circa 1900 and
likely taken on the same day as
the photo on the next page**

Photographer possibly John or Paul Merlo
Photograph courtesy Ron Turner 2012

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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A monochrome version of a photograph hand coloured by Hazel Merlo which depicts the Merlo's Homestead circa 1900 with no trees in the driveway

Photographer possibly John or Paul Merlo
Photograph courtesy Ron Turner 2012

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

ALEXANDRA CEMETERY



Tombstone at the Alexandra Cemetery

Photographer Ron Turner - Photograph © Ron Turner 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead circa 1963

Photographer Ron Turner - Photograph © Ron Turner 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead circa 1963

Photographer Ron Turner - Photograph © Ron Turner 2017

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Merlo's Homestead circa 1983

Courtesy John & Maureen Norbury 2016

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead in March 1983

Courtesy Allan & Patricia Weeks 2012

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead circa 1983

Courtesy John & Maureen Norbury 2016

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead in 1983

Photographs courtesy Joyce Fields 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead in 1983

Photographs courtesy Joyce Fields 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead in March 1983

Courtesy Allan & Patricia Weeks 2012

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

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Merlo's Homestead in March 1983

Courtesy Allan & Patricia Weeks 2012

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead in March 1983

Courtesy Norma Miller 2016

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead in March 1983

Courtesy Norma Miller 2016

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Merlo's Homestead in March 1983

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Merlo's Homestead in March 1983

Courtesy Norma Miller 2016

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead circa 1983

Courtesy John & Maureen Norbury 2016

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead circa 1983

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Merlo's Homestead circa 1983

Courtesy John & Maureen Norbury 2016



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Merlo's Homestead circa 1983

Courtesy John & Maureen Norbury 2016



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Merlo's Homestead circa 1983

Courtesy John & Maureen Norbury 2016

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Merlo's Homestead circa 1983

Courtesy John & Maureen Norbury 2016

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GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead circa 1983

Courtesy Maurie & Marida Pawsey 2017

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead circa February 1998

Courtesy John & Maureen Norbury 2016

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Homestead circa February 1998

Courtesy John & Maureen Norbury 2016

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Merlo's Homestead circa February 1998

Courtesy John & Maureen Norbury 2016



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



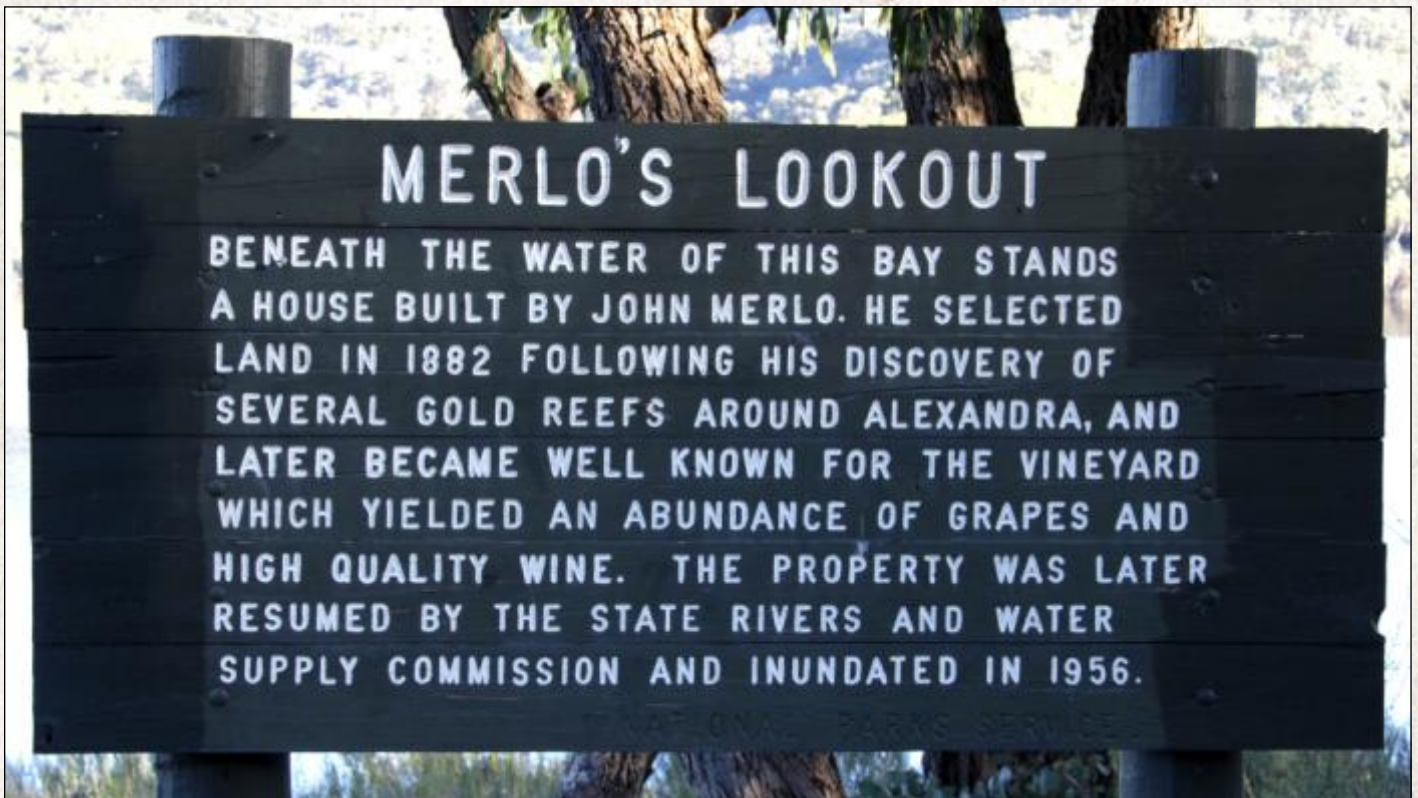
Merlo's Lookout in the late 1990s
© Copyright Lawrence Hood 2010



Merlo's Lookout in 2009

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GALLERY



Merlo's Lookout sign in September 2011

NEWSPAPERS

RELATED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

NEWSPAPERS

Death of Mr J. Merlo, Senr.

We regret having to chronicle the passing away of Mr J. Merlo, senr., a very old resident of this shire, a gentleman greatly respected by all who knew him. He was one of those men ever seeking some new world to conquer and never afraid to risk what he already had for the benefit of himself or the country in which he had made his home.

The late Mr Merlo, at the time of his demise, was one of the very few old residents left in this district. He was a native of Vila de Torano, Lombardy, Italy, and was 75 years of age, 50 years having been spent in Victoria. His parents were people in good circumstances in Italy, his father being a wine and spirit merchant. He was a young man when he first landed in this State, and resided in Ballarat for a time, where he was successful as a miner, having held shares in the All Comers' G.M. Co. The late J. F. Jackson, of Alexandra, was also a shareholder in the same claim and at the same time. Before leaving the Golden City he married Miss Mary A. Tuddenham, whose father was a well-to-do farmer in the Ballarat district. This lady is still resident in Alexandra and well and hearty.

In 1867, he came to Alexandra and opened up the well-known Italian Gully claim, at Maintongoon and the first to get gold at Growler's Gully. At about the same time he worked at the Durham Gully gold fields, which were very prosperous. He discovered and opened up the Perseverance mine, which proved exceptionally rich. Here gold was taken out from the surface to a depth of 120ft., paying handsomely the whole way. It was in this claim that he made his money, and up to a few days of his death Mr Merlo spoke of the wealth yet to be found in this identical claim and which he hoped to again see in full work. He next discovered and opened up the Sal Ferino mine on the summit of the Puzzle Rangers, and as much as 7oz per week were continuously won from this claim. He spoke recently of this claim and was emphatic in stating that it would prove a fortune to any energetic person working it properly. Here it was that Mr

Merlo drove a tunnel over 300ft. without any help and at his own expense, in the endeavor to get a reef. He succeeded and he was rewarded for his pluck and energy. He opened up a reef at the Galatear mine and again made money. He was by this time enabled to select land and the farm and vineyard, which is now known as Glenhope, is the result of his hard toil.

The late Mr Merlo reared a family of eleven, all of whom greatly assisted in making Glenhope what it is to-day, a compact property. As a vigneron, he proved, years ago, that grapes of a particularly fine quality could be successfully cultivated in the district and each year the demand for the luscious fruit grew to such dimensions that it was impossible to supply all orders received. Having been trained in his early youth to wine making, grape culture in particular, it was not surprising that he attained such success, and it was mainly through the inability to reach the market that the area cultivated was so limited. Had he seen fit to select nearer the town, there is no doubt his wine producing business would have assumed large proportions. He always had hundreds of hogsheds of wine of various grades casked and vaulted, but the drawback was the inaccessibility to any market owing to the distance from railway communication. Experts have, when visiting Glenhope, spoken highly of the quality of the product.

The deceased gentleman had been in failing health for some time and passed away at the residence of his daughter, Mrs Meyers.

Of the family of eleven, ten are alive and all are held in high esteem, viz., Orsula (single), Mary (Mrs Meyers), Dominica (Mrs H. Barras), Johanna (Mrs Wheeler), Peter John (New Zealand), James S. (Melbourne), J. R. (Warburton), Paul W. (Warburton), Laurence A. (Melbourne), and Phillip D. Joseph died a few years ago.

Friday 6th December 1912
Alexandra & Yea Standard
National Library Australia

NEWSPAPERS

CORRESPONDENCE.

]We do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our Correspondents.]

TO THE EDITOR OF THE STANDARD.

Sir,—A rumour having been circulated that I am endeavoring to injure Mr W. Freeman by prompting the Government to cause him to forfeit his selection, I shall feel obliged by your allowing me through your columns to give an emphatic denial to same. The facts are that in 1890 I wrote to the Secretary for Lands calling his attention to the fact that in consequence of Mr. Freeman not complying with the provisions of the Act, his neighbours (and myself) were being put to a great deal of inconvenience, as his selection at the time was furnishing shelter for all kinds of vermin, principally rabbits and hares. Whether Mr. Freeman has since made an effort to carry out the excuse he then made to the department for his delay in not doing what was required of him, can be best judged by the proper officer visiting his selection. I have no desire to interfere with any of my neighbours, and my only object in writing to you is to contradict the rumour that I am trying to get Mr. Freeman's land forfeited.—Yours, etc.,

JOHN MARLO.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
11th October 1895
National Library Australia



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEWSPAPERS

BITTEN BY A SNAKE.

ALEXANDRA, Tuesday.—A young man named Paul Merlo, while engaged on his fathers' farm near the Devil's River, was bitten on the right thumb by a black snake at half-past 8 this morning. He applied a ligature, and scarified the wound, and started on foot for Alexandra, about 10 miles away, where he consulted Dr. Johnson. After treatment, he was able to walk about, and is now out of danger.

The Argus

Wednesday 12 January 1910

Courtesy National Library Australia



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEWSPAPERS

This article references John's neighbours Peter Ferrier Ross and James Stone, the father of Alexandra local Bob Stone.

The old man, Peter Ferrier Ross, who died in the Alexandra Hospital on the 20th October last, at the age of 79, was a native of Glasgow and came from a well-connected family. Ross was an educated man and a carpenter and upholsterer by trade. About 20 years ago the deceased settled on the Perfect Cure Creek, near the Devil's River and about a mile from Mr. J. Merlo's farm. Here he built himself a comfortable hut in which he enjoyed many years of quietude, his time being occupied in fossicking for gold, a large quantity of which had been won in this neighborhood in bye-gone years. He always managed to make a living and made Mr. Merlo's house his first and only place of call—in fact he was always welcome—and it was here that he read the local and other papers. He was always very communicative and, as Mr Merlo says, "He was a walking 'enquire within' and had a wonderful memory." The last few years Ross exhibited a general breaking up of the system, which debarred him from leaving his tent, his hut having been burnt some time ago. The Merlo family were always very kind to him and attended to his wants until he became seriously ill. Messrs. L. Merlo and J. Stone brought Ross into the hospital where, in spite of medical skill, he died. The deceased had two married sisters living at Bairnsdale, viz., Mrs. H. Sharp, aged 82, and Mrs. Allen, aged 85.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 13th November 1903
Courtesy National Library Australia

OTHER

OTHER RELATED ITEMS



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

WRITTEN HISTORY (SOURCE UNKNOWN)

HISTORY and DEVELOPMENT of the PARK AREA

In the 1860's an Italian immigrant, named Merlow came out to Australia and married an English woman. He came to what is now the park in 1867. This was about time when gold was discovered in the Alexandra district (1866 approx) He opened up the Salfurino mine - a horizontal shaft - in the hills at the back of the park. He later came down on to the flats and built a house (normally this is under water but at the present moment the roof is visible above the water.) It is built out of bush timber with split shingles on the roof. He had about 100 acres of land including several acres of vineyards - with a 100 gallon wine vat under the house - ran cattle and grew oats. The wine was supposed to bring him out in a rash. A doctor told him to give it up but he retaliated with the reply; "If I give up the vine I will scratch and scratch and scratch." When things were quiet on the farm he would go up into the hills fossicking for gold. He used to take a keg of wine with him into the hills. One time when he was rolling it back down the hill the keg got away from him and crashed at the bottom of the hill, which is now known as Keg Spur. He was reported to have found a 5 oz nugget in Perfect Cure Creek which runs behind the old shearing shed. Merlow died in 1912 and is buried in Alexandra.

The main bay in the park - Collier Bay - is named after Collier who bought the property from Merlow. Collier bought it for \$4-90 an acre and sold it to the State Rivers for \$36-20. He had done little to the property during this time and had only put an iron roof on the house, which was known as Glenhope.

A little further around to the North is Brier Cove, named after a hermit who lived in the area for about 70 years from about the 1870's. He came at an age of about 20 and was about 90 when he died in 1953. He probably arrived at the area during the gold rush period which was quite strong in this area. The largest mine, the O.K., which at one stage, employed about 100 men at the turn of the century is located in the west of the park area.

Bob Brier fossicked about for gold and used it to pay for a lot of his food. He had a large wheelbarrow which he used periodically pushing it over the hill to Alexandra. The shafts of this wheelbarrow were 7'-6" in length and the wheel and axle were carved out of one solid piece of wood. A newspaper says he pushed a bag of flour in from Bonnie Doon. He also took it with him to visit relatives in Lillydale (about 50 miles) every 18 months or so. Apparently he was a quite patient and adaptable man. He used copper needles to tease up the stringy bark from which he made a shopping bag and a suit of clothing, consisting of coat, vest and trousers. He was a very big man of about 6'-4" to 6'-8" in height. Previously, it seems that he was a painter of fancy writing on coaches, because he could paint quite well when provided with paper and paint. The actual reason for him becoming a hermit, according to newspapers, was that a girl jilted him! (NO COMMENT)

The area was proclaimed a park in 1957 and was named after the then Minister for State Development, Mr. Fraser



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

WRITTEN HISTORY (SOURCE UNKNOWN)

Page 2. HISTORY and DEVELOPMENT of the PARK AREA.

Cont:

Since that time about \$300,000 has been spent on development - mainly on the roads and amenities blocks, most of this sum being spent in the last 3 or 4 years. The area is fairly clear of timber as a result of the land clearing policies of the former land owners. However there is still a good deal of natural bush timber on the hills. The area is noted for fishing and boating facilities on Lake Eildon, excellent camp sites and scenic bush walks. In addition there is quite a few mine shafts - most of them filled in - within the park boundary although most of the gold activity was located on the U.T. Creek which has its source on the western boundary of the Park at the location of the O.K. mine, which possibly was the source of most of the gold found along the creek.

The full time labour force at the park is only two - the Park Ranger and an assistant. Casual labour is employed at holiday times which is very hectic. At the moment a large number of men are employed on drought relief work and are helping to implement various facilities.

In Nov. 1967 a Nature Trail was developed in the area of Candlebark Gully or Lick Creek as it was formally known because of the occurrence of a natural salt lick in its banks. This Trail is still in the process of development and it still lacks a number of noticeboards explaining the many and varied features to be found along its 2000 yard length.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

MIGRATION

Family Name ^	First Name ^	Age ^	Month ^	Year ^	Ship ^	Port ^	Fiche	Page
MERLO	---- CHILD WITH	6	OCT	1910	ARMAND BEHIC	F	423	001
MERLO	---- CHILD WITH	7	OCT	1910	ARMAND BEHIC	F	423	001
MERLO	---- MR	30	OCT	1910	ARMAND BEHIC	F	423	001
MERLO	---- MRS	25	OCT	1910	ARMAND BEHIC	F	423	001
MERLO	AGOITO	20	JUN	1861	DAVID G FLEMING	B	190	004
MERLO	ANTONIO	43	FEB	1869	SOMERSETSHIRE	B	280	005
MERLO	ANTONIO	20	MAR	1887	HOHENSTAUFEN	F	232	003
MERLO	ANTONIO	26	MAR	1887	HOHENSTAUFEN	F	232	003
MERLO	ANTONIO	32	FEB	1891	ORIENT	B	541	003
MERLO	FRANCESCO	30	FEB	1862	SUFFOLK	B	199	004
MERLO	GIOV	20	APR	1860	RED JACKET	B	176	004
MERLO	GIOVANI	19	FEB	1862	SUFFOLK	B	199	004
MERLO	GIOVANNI	25	MAR	1861	GREEN JACKET	B	188	004
MERLO	GIOVANNI	41	JAN	1897	CUZCO	B	618	003
MERLO	GIOVANNI	31	JUL	1889	BRAUNSCHWEIG	F	252	007
MERLO	GIOVANNI	-	FEB	1889	LIGURIA	B	510	013
MERLO	L	A	AUG	1873	FRANCOIS	F	145	1
MERLO	LUIGI	27	SEP	1911	SCHARNHORST	B	830	011
MERLO	LUIGO	11	FEB	1862	SUFFOLK	B	199	004
MERLO	PIETRO	41	JUL	1862	SURREY	B	204	006
MERLO	PIETRO	47	FEB	1869	SOMERSETSHIRE	B	280	005
MERLO	PIETRO	17	JUL	1891	HOHENSTAUFEN	F	269	002
MERLO	STEFANO	54	FEB	1910	ORONTES	B	798	008

The Public Records Office records show that Giovanni John Merlo travelled to Australia on the ship *Green Jacket*, in March 1861, aged 25.

Courtesy Public Records Office 2011



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NOTE FROM EMMA TURNER

Several years ago I volunteered to help with a local paper along with some others. There was one lass who knew all about computers where I only knew how to type (not very fast at that), so I typed and she put the paper together.

One day we got talking and I told her I had always wanted a computer, the next thing she and her sister had one for me to buy. I took a beginner's course and my friend taught me a lot more. Then she suggested I do my Family Tree which they now call Family History.

I had a lot of photos of my Mother's family but knew nothing of my Father's; my parents separated when I was very young. I joined an Historical Society which had a Family History Branch. [You need lots of time for the research and plenty of patience. If only families wrote all there information down].

They start you off with yourself, your name and birth date as your certificate gives your Parents' names, you look them up and their birth parents are shown (these are your Grandparents). My grandparents were William Meyers and Mary Merlo. My Great Grandparents were Giovanni John Merlo and Mary Tuddenham.

Up to this point they were just names then one day I decided to go to Seymour after some information for my husband's family tree. While there I looked up a family named Merlo. Are you Cousins if you have the same Great Grandparents? Well we found our Grandparents were brother and sister; Mary and Phillip Merlo. They were the children of John and Mary Merlo of *Glen Hope*.

This started to make the names real and I wanted to know more. So I rang the Alexandra Historical Society. There, a very kind gentleman named Rex Tate passed my name on and my thanks go to a lot of wonderful people who have sent me copies of fact sheets, photos, etc., especially the Eildon Park Ranger and the garage proprietor who helped out when I first arrived at Alexandra.

From knowing nothing on my father's family I have found a great grandfather from Italy who found a wife, was a gold prospector, farmer, grew grapes, made and sold wine had his children taught a trade and supplied vegies to the Town of Eildon. I also found that in the past the Merlo Family held reunions in Fraser National Park overlooking where the Homestead was and which is now part of Lake Eildon. I wish I had found my family earlier and attended these gatherings.

Emma Turner (nee Meyers) June 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GOLD MINING

In 1867, John moved to Alexandra and started mining in the Italian Gully, amongst others. His mines included the successful *Solferino Mine*, at the head of the Mountaineer and Italian Creeks. He was the first individual to find gold at Growler's Gully, and worked at the Durham Gully gold fields at the same time. He founded the *Perseverance Goldmine*, which produced rich gold from the surface right through to a depth of 120 feet. John made most of his money at this mine, and with wise management, he was able to live without want, up to his death.


He continued his mining, and opened up *Solferino Mine* in the Puzzle Ranges. John then dug a tunnel to 300 feet entirely on his own, seeking a reef. He was successful and the mine paid him handsomely. He then opened up a reef at the *Galatea Mine*. It was around this time that he purchased the *Glen Hope* homestead property.

The *Solferino Mine* was one of his larger mines, and consisted of a log hut, battery stamper, two vertical shafts, a 55 metre auid (tunnel) and a mullock heap. There is also evidence of a building wall, near one of the shafts, that may be the remains of John's first house in the district.

Later, after John's death in 1912, a hermit like character by the name of Bob Briers, fossicked many of the mines in the Italian Gully, including the *Solferino Mine*. While there is no evidence of him finding any substantial amounts of Gold, he stayed in the area a hermit, living in old run down huts, from around 1930 until his death in 1953.

TO LET,
ON TRIBUTE, Solferino Reef, situated
at head of Italian Creek, for term of
three years. Applications to be addressed to
JAMES MERLO,
Post Office, Alexandra.

Alexandra & Yea Standard
Friday 28 February 1896
National Library Australia


MINING LEASE DECLARED VOID.
ATTENTION is directed to the *Government*
Gazette of the 11th February, 1876, page
302, in which it is notified that the under-
mentioned Lease has been declared void:—
Beechworth District, Goulburn (Alexandra)
Division.
No. 1458, dated 28th October, 1872; J. Merlo,
4a 3r 21p; Durham Gully.
THOS. COUCHMAN,
For the Secretary for Mines.
Office of Mines,
Melbourne, 15th February, 1876.

18th February 1876
Alexandra Times
National Library Australia

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

THE GLEN HOPE CABIN IN 2011



Once located at the
Candlebark camping area at
Lake Eildon National Park
(Fraser Block) was a set
of cabins.

One of these cabins was
named *Glen Hope* after
the *Glen Hope* property
built and occupied by John
Merlo and his family from
1883 to his death in 1912.

The cabins were
removed in 2015.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

SOLFERINO MINE - UPPER SHAFT



Upper mine shaft. From the bottom you can access parts of the adit. It is near here that we believe a battery stamper may have been located.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

SOLFERINO MINE - ADIT (TUNNEL)



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

SOLFERINO MINE - ROCK FORMATIONS



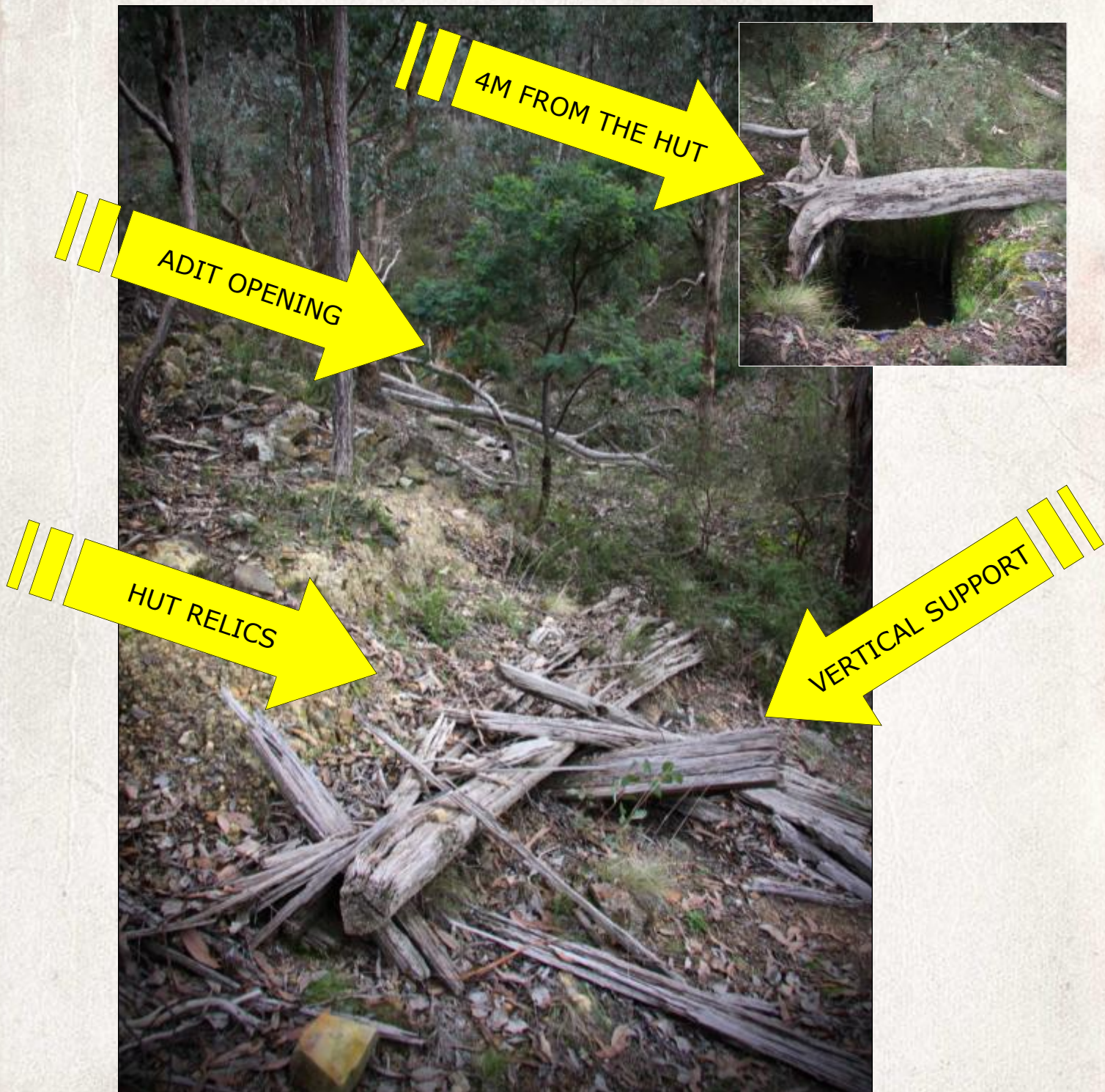
**This amazing rock formation above, is just south of the
Solferino Mine, nestled in a steep gully.**



**Rumour has it that this tree, just metres from the mine,
held captive a 4 ounce nugget, until a few years ago.**

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

SOLFERINO MINE RUINS



The main mine adit opening in the background, and building remnants, most likely from a wall, in the foreground. An old fireplace is also visible. The vertical support has fallen over, though is still buried in the ground. There is evidence of two vertical supports holding up this side wall.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

NEAR THE SOLFERINO MINE



Possibly one of the longest local gold adits left in our district in this condition. This tunnel is part of a very large and complex series of shafts and adits, all working together. This mine is very close to the *Solferino Mine* workings, where John Merlo worked for many years.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

SOLFERINO MINE RELICS



This old candle is believed to be from the late 1800s and was found at the *Solferino Mine* in the 1960s.

Photograph © Copyright Ron Turner 2011



This old soda bottle, complete with cork, is also believed to be from the late 1800s, and was found at the *Solferino Mine* in the 1960s.

Photograph © Copyright Ron Turner 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GLADSTONE CLAY TOBACCO PIPE



The Gladstone clay pipe, was an import from the 'Gladstone Pottery' factory in England, the only manufacturer of the Gladstone clay pipes in the world. These early Gladstone clay pipes were not designed with a filter, rather just a small drawing hole. As early tobacco was quick to extinguish itself, the pipe had to be constantly relit by the smoker. When the smoker was finished the pipe, he would tap its end against something hard, to remove the burnt tobacco from the tobacco chamber. The Gladstone Pipe Factory continues to operate to his day.

The pipe was found near where John Merlo is believed to have mined.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

GLADSTONE CLAY TOBACCO PIPE



A Tobacco Gladstone clay pipe found at a local mine. Of note is the small size of the air hole, possibly designed to help stop the user sucking tobacco through into his mouth.

Photograph © Copyright Kelly Petersen 2011



Artworkz

Serving the Community