96/13/04

KAPUNDA MINE (National Register designation - Mines and Copper Mine Chimney - Morton Street Kapunda).

Significance: As gold-mining is to Victoria, so copper-mining is to South Australia. In 1842 when copper was discovered at Kapunda, South Australia was effectively bankrupt. The exploitation of the Kapunda Copper Mine ensured the colony's economic recovery. Kapunda was not the richest copper mine in South Australia, but it was the first one to be commercially viable - and this five years before the discovery of gold in the eastern colonies. Indeed Kapunda was Australia's first commercially successful metal mine.

See attachments - extract from J.B. Austin, The Mines of South Australia... (Adelaide, 1863), Pp.13-17.

- extract from South Australian Museum, Establishing Conservation Priorities for the Built Environment. Kapunda : A Case Study, unpublished report - 1977.

KAPUNDA MINES, Kapunda

The discovery in 1842 of copper at Kapunda, forty-two miles north of Adelaide, and at Burra Burra three years later, rescued the colony from economic stagnation.

Large numbers of cattle were overlanded from New South Wales for transport, immigrants were assured of employment, and land sales boomed. Increased population, which had risen to 63,700 by 1851, also gave a purpose to agricultural development.

The following description of the Kapunda mines appeared in *The South Australian Gazetteer* of 1869:

"It is the oldest copper mine in the colony. The mine workings are on hilly ground of moderate elevation, and which was originally lightly timbered with peppermint gum, but the settlement of the adjoining township, the working of the mine, and above all the carrying on of smelting operations, have denuded the country of almost every stick of timber for miles around.

"The first ore was raised at the Kapunda mine on the 8th January 1844, and on the 23rd of the same month five dray loads were despatched to Adelaide. With reference to the statistics of the Kapunda mine, a concise and valuable little work by Mr. Frederick Sinnett, called 'An account of the colony of South Australia, prepared for distribution at the International Exhibition of 1862,' says:

" 'On 4th March, 1845, the first horse-whim commenced work drawing water, and kept the mine dry to the 15-fathom level for some time; but as the works were extended it was soon found that it would be indispensable to procure engine-power, and during 1847 a 30-inch cylinder double action engine, with a supply of pumps, was obtained from England, and erected on the mine, commencing work on 1st July, 1848. Shortly afterwards machinery was added for crushing ore, and for drawing or hauling; and this engine, with a brief interruption, caused by the breaking of the main shaft in June, 1850, has been at work ever since. As the extent of working increased so did the water, and in 1850 a larger engine was purchased and erected—commencing work in January, 1851. Both engines were employed in pumping for some years, but latterly all the water has been brought to one shaft, now sunk a depth of 60 fathoms, to which level the mine is kept in fork by the last-mentioned engine, which is of 36-inch cylinder, single direct action. The other engine is used in hauling and crushing. In December, 1849, the first smelting furnace commenced work, and was shortly followed by a second; and for some time a large portion of the ores were

reduced to regulus before shipment. The great attractions presented by the goldfields of Victoria during the year 1852 induced most of the men to leave. The smelting works ceased altogether on 17th March, and were not resumed till March, 1855.

" 'Nearly all the miners also left, and it was with considerable difficulty the engine was kept going, and the mine kept dry—at one time there were but four miners. During 1854, however, and especially in the early part of 1855, large numbers returned or came to work, and since then there has not been any material interruption.

" 'A large and very substantial erection of stone, with slate roofing, just completed—and comprising engine-house, boiler-house, crusher, and mine stores. This is intended for the reception of the present drawing engine, as the ground around it is sinking. There is one metal foundry or cupola, one brass foundry, smiths' shops, and iron store, carpenter's shop and timber yard, and saw pits, weighbridge and office, and a counting-house, with manager's residence attached, a commodious and handsome building. There are also residences for the accountant, clerk, agents, and engineer—and about 30 other cottages occupied by the workmen and miners; also houses for the pitmen, timbermen, sumpmen, and a range of barracks, or changing rooms, for the miners; also a magazine for powder, store for candles, stores for mine materials, stables, etc. At the smelting works there are five ore-reducing furnaces, one copper roaster, one refinery, copper store and ore shed, all substantially roofed; also superintendent's residence and office, smith's forge; brick-kiln, and brick shed for fire bricks which are made on the mine, of very superior quality, from clay and sand obtained in the immediate neighbourhood.' "

The Kapunda mines continued to operate until 1888 when an influx of water made work impossible.

FILM 28
NO 6

MINE CHIMNEY FROM NORTH

KAPUNDA
30-1-79