

LODDON VALLEY

Gold Prospecting



INTRODUCTION

Gold was discovered in the Loddon Valley in 1852 and keen prospectors have been visiting the region ever since. There is a good reason for that. The goldfields of the Loddon Valley lay in the famous Golden Triangle, where during the last half of the 19th century, more wealth was generated than any other region in the world at the time.

The Loddon Valley still holds plenty of undiscovered gold, waiting to be found by patient detectorists and gold panners exploring its vast goldfields and historic diggings.

The 'Hand of Faith' gold nugget weighing in 875 ounces or 24.8 kilograms remains the largest nugget ever found with a metal detector, unearthed by Kevin Hillier behind the old school house at Kingower in 1980 (pictured opposite).

In 2020, a couple of lucky prospectors discovered two large nuggets near Tarnagulla weighing in at 3.5 kilograms. The gold was valued at approximately \$350,000 at the time providing additional motivation for other detectorists joining the search for the shine of yellow metal in the area.

Explore the Loddon Valley while you are visiting.



OVERVIEW

The Loddon Valley is full of rich goldfields that are open to prospectors holding Victorian Miner's Rights. Each site and nearby township offers camping areas, services, shops and attractions within a short driving distance.

Throughout this guide, you will find helpful information on prospecting locations, local visitor services, and a brief history on the different goldfields of the Loddon region.

For more information visit: www.parks.vic.gov.au

Please refer to the map (centre pages) for key prospecting locations in the Loddon Shire.

Opposite: 'Tin dish washing' (1872), S.T. Gill.

Source: State Library Victoria, H5382



MINERS RIGHTS

Prospectors require a Miner's Right to legally prospect in Victoria. There is a small cost associated with obtaining a Miner's Right, which are valid for 10 years from registration.

Scan the QR code to apply for a Miner's Right or visit www.service.vic.gov.au/services/earth-resources

Opposite: 'Cradling' (1869), S.T. Gill.
Source: State Library Victoria, H86.7/8



GOLD NUGGET HUNTER PROSPECTING TOURS

Shane and Jackie from Gold Nugget Hunters, are experienced local gold prospectors passionate about sharing their hobby. They offer customised tours for all skill levels, providing practical gold prospecting skills and gold detector use. Whether you're a beginner, seasoned prospector, or seeking tips on local hotspots, Shane and Jackie will provide a tailored experience, and can teach you to use your own detector effectively.

Bookings:

To book a tour please contact the Loddon Visitor Information Centre for more information at 03 5494 1257 or email: Loddonvisitorinformation@loddon.vic.gov.au





📍 WEDDERBURN

Gold was discovered in Wedderburn in 1852 attracting 8,000 adventurous diggers to the area in the hope of making their fortune.

One hundred years later in the early 1950s a modern day gold rush erupted after significant gold finds were discovered in the centre of town.

Today Wedderburn is a welcoming country town with a population of approximately 1,000 people. Prospectors are provided with a range of accommodation options to choose from including a caravan park, motel, hotel and camping at Hard Hill Tourist Reserve.

➡➡ Where to go:

Surrounding much of Wedderburn is the Wychitella Nature Conservation Reserve which includes a large proportion of the town's goldfields. Prospecting is permitted in several sections of the reserve including Quartz Hill and Golden Gully. (See map).

The **Hard Hill Tourist Reserve** is the site of a significant gold mine and is a popular destination for prospecting and camping. It is also the site of the annual Wedderburn Detector Jamboree held on the Labour Day long weekend in March.



📍 INGLEWOOD

The town of Inglewood echoes the golden past through its many historic buildings and streetscapes. Gold was discovered at 'Old Inglewood', a few kilometres north of the town in 1859 drawing a rush of 16,000 diggers to the area. When gold was discovered around 'New Inglewood' the following year, one of Victoria's most significant gold rushes occurred attracting over 40,000 hopeful miners from all over the world.

As the alluvial gold became harder to find in any quantity, many new companies were formed to establish deep lead and quartz mining operations around the Inglewood goldfields. This form of mining continued up until the late 19th century before slowly ceasing operations.

➡➡ Where to go:

The majority of the Inglewood goldfields are located within the Inglewood State Forest or Inglewood Nature Conservation Reserve where gold prospecting is permitted with a Victorian Miner's Right. Popular locations include Commissioners Gully to the north west of the town and around Columbian Reef and Bull Frog Gully.

The Inglewood Motel and Caravan Park is in close proximity to the goldfields and welcomes prospectors visiting the area with a range of accommodation options including powered and non-powered sites, caravan ensembles and motel rooms.



GOLD PROSPECTING IN THE LODDON SHIRE

The information provided in this guide is accurate at the time of publication. The Loddon Shire does not encourage prospecting outside current State Parks and Nature Conservation Reserves highlighted in this guide.

- Prospecting permitted
- Prospecting not permitted
- i Welcome Shop
- ? Visitor Information Centre
- A Camping
- RV Caravan Park





📍 KINGOWER

Though a quiet country village today, Kingover was once the site of a significant gold rush with enormous gold nuggets found and unearthed by delighted prospectors.

The Kingover diggings opened up on 1853 with 5,000 diggers arriving within 12 months. It became known as the Potato Diggings due to the number of large nuggets found.

One of the most famous gold nuggets at the time, the 'Blanche Barkly' was discovered at Kingover in 1857 weighing a massive 1,743 ounces or 49.4 kilograms. Of course 'The Hand of Faith' nugget discovered with a metal detector in 1980 has kept hopeful prospectors visiting the area to try their luck ever since.

➡➡ Where to go:

Kingover is close to the Kooyoora State Park with prospecting permitted in a section of forest to the north of the town around Levers Gully.

Opposite: 'Puddling' (1852), S.T. Gill.
Source: State Library Victoria, H5318



📍 WEHLA

A short drive west from Kingover is the Wehla Nature Conservation Reserve with a large area of bushland open to gold prospecting and many sites revealing the workings of the busy gold rush years.

➡➡ Where to go:

While visiting, be sure to stop at the site of the old Wehla township where you'll discover ruins and remnants of the town's original buildings. This location, just off the Logan-Kingover Road is a great starting point for exploring and prospecting around the Wehla goldfields.



📍 RHEOLA

Gold was discovered in the Rheola area as early as 1856, but it wasn't until Alexander Cleland struck upon the precious metal there in 1868 that a significant rush occurred. Originally known as the Berlin diggings, Rheola once boasted 11 hotels, and attracted fame for large nuggets found in the area including 'The Precious' weighing 1,717 ounces, and the 'Viscount Canterbury' coming in at 1,115 ounces.

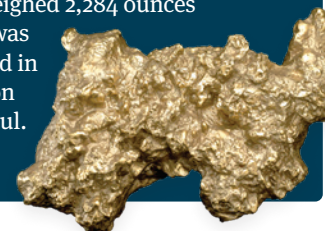
➡➡ Where to go:

Visitors are permitted to prospect on a small area known as Rheola Hill west of Wedderburn-Dunolly Rd close to the centre of the village.

DID YOU KNOW?

Since the significant 1850s gold rush, 80% of the world's largest golden nuggets have been unearthed in central Victoria within the golden triangle.

The world's largest alluvial gold nugget the 'Welcome Stranger', which weighed 2,284 ounces or 71kg, was unearthed in this region at Moliagul.



Opposite: 'Welcome Stranger' gold nugget replica.
Photographer: Rodney Start.
Source: Museums Victoria [M 20314]



Above: Commercial Road, Tarnagulla, looking north from the Post Office, 1915.

📍 TARNAGULLA - LLANELLY - WAANYAARA

The Tarnagulla region including Llanelly and Waanyaara, has a rich gold rush history with the precious metal first being found in the area in 1853. Gold mining continued up until the early 20th century with the famous Poseidon Lead and Poverty Reef goldfields producing large amounts of wealth for investors.

Llanelly was settled by a group of Welsh Miners and their families, and at one point, it is believed up to 20,000 people lived and worked here at the height of the alluvial gold rush in the 1860s.

Waanyaara, often described today as a ghost town, was the site of substantial gold mining in the last half of the 19th century and today still contains ruins and historical sites that hark back to its golden heyday.

➡➡ Where to go:

Most of the bush in the area is State Forest which is suitable for prospecting. Locations include Growler's Gully to the east of Tarnagulla and Jones Creek in Waanyaara.

There are a number of camping areas within a short distance of these goldfields including the Tarnagulla Recreation Reserve, the Waanyaara Camp Ground, and the Newbridge Recreation Reserve. Powered sites and self contained accommodation can be found at the nearby Laanecoorie Lakeside Caravan Park or the Bridgewater Caravan Park.

LOCAL SERVICES

Petrol

Ampol Bridgewater

Cnr Calder Hwy and Kerang Road,
Bridgewater
Phone: 03 5437 3549

Mobil Inglewood

4562 Calder Highway, Inglewood
Phone: 03 5438 3542

Caltex Wedderburn

117 High Street, Wedderburn
Phone: 03 5494 3079

Supermarkets

Champions IGA Inglewood

36 Brooke Street, Inglewood
Phone: 03 5431 7300

FoodWorks Wedderburn

15 Kerr Street, Wedderburn
Phone: 03 5494 3100

Emergency

Fire, Ambulance and Police

Phone: 000

Medical Services and Pharmacies

Inglewood District Health Service

3 Hospital Street, Inglewood
Phone: 03 5431 7000

Marong Medical Centre (Inglewood)

8 Hospital Street, Inglewood
Phone: 03 5438 3088

Wedderburn Health Clinic

25 Wilson Street, Wedderburn
Phone: 03 5494 3511

Inglewood Pharmacy

30-36 Brooke Street, Inglewood
Phone: 03 5438 3021

Wedderburn Pharmacy

71 High Street, Wedderburn
Phone: 03 5494 3309

Fire Warnings and Safety

North Central Fire District
Warnings and Restrictions





VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES IN THE LODDON VALLEY

There are eight conveniently located Tourist Information outlets across the Loddon Valley that stock tourism publications, all with staff who provide valuable insights on local experiences and attractions.

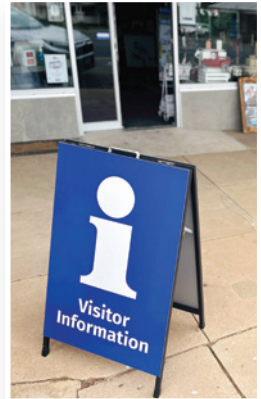
The **Loddon Valley Visitor Information Centre** in Wedderburn is open seven days (closed Christmas Day) a week and provides a full library of tourism information along with local products and prospecting maps.



Welcome Shops

Welcome Shops are local businesses in prominent locations throughout the Loddon Valley that stock valuable tourism information. Passionate hosts in these venues assist visitors with local insights of the attractions and experiences within the region.

Check the map (middle pages) for visitor information locations across the Loddon Valley or scan the QR code for more information:



Wedderburn Visitor Information Centre

24 Wilson Street, Wedderburn VIC 3518

Phone: 03 5494 1257

visitloddonvalley.com.au