



HERITAGE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY - EUCALYPTUS OIL DISTILLERY, TIDBINBILLA NATURE RESERVE ACT



Prepared by
Mark Butz - *Learnsapes*
for the
Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association Inc.



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Heritage interpretation strategy: eucalyptus oil distillery, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve ACT
Prepared by Mark Butz for the Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association. September 2020. Learnscapes, Canberra

Acknowledgements

The strategy builds on years of dedicated work by the Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association, in collaboration with the ACT Parks & Conservation Service (ACTPCS), to research Tidbinbilla valley history and to develop the concept and form of a cultural heritage precinct adjoining the Black Flats car park in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

Geoff Puleston, Vice-President of the TPA, has provided a great deal of energy, guidance, background knowledge and other vital support.

The **Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association** was formed in 1983 by descendants of European families who lived around the Tidbinbilla and Tharwa area from the mid 1800s. They have a strong and passionate connection to Tidbinbilla and heritage sites such as the 'Rock Valley' and 'Nil Desperandum' homesteads.

Association members provide colourful accounts of Tidbinbilla's past, the joys and hardships faced by pioneers living in rammed earth buildings, farming the land and supporting eucalyptus oil distilleries.

Members provide crucial local knowledge and assist Rangers in maintaining this valuable heritage.

For more information:

Web: tidbinbilla-pioneers.azurewebsites.net/

email: tidbinbillapioneers@bigpond.com

phone: 0417-220-916

Mark Butz is a consultant, facilitator and writer, who has been based in Canberra since 1980. Under the banner of *Learnscapes* he specialises in works that cast a different light on the world we live in, seeking to:

- ◆ build 'environmental literacy' by helping readers to appreciate the symbolic language of the environment as an integrated whole and as a web of dynamic connections and flows
- ◆ heighten the value placed on the environment as both natural and cultural landscape, by generating new understanding and meaning; and
- ◆ encourage readers to accept their role in creating the future and their responsibility to make choices that benefit the environment and society.

For more information:

Web: markbutz.com/learnscapes/

email: mark.butz@bigpond.com

phone: 0418-417-635

HERITAGE INTERPRETATION STRATEGY

- EUCALYPTUS OIL DISTILLERY, TIDBINBILLA NATURE RESERVE ACT

BACKGROUND

This strategy responds to the Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association **2019/20 Heritage Grant**:

Create interpretive area for historical eucalyptus oil distilling at Tidbinbilla

- relocate and install original distillery tanks as a static display at Black Flats in their original 1940s location
- provide two interpretive signs
- develop site as a location for ongoing interpretive public programs.

Reconstruction of the distillery is a longstanding idea, referenced in Bulbeck & Boot (1991).

The content of the strategy is consistent with, and is seen as a contribution to, the key desired outcomes and policies in the **Tidbinbilla plan of management** (ACT Government 2012), in particular:

- better recognition, conservation and interpretation of cultural heritage values
- a more comprehensive approach to interpretation of Aboriginal and European cultural heritage
- development and promotion of a cultural heritage interpretation program to enrich visitor experience and understanding
- improved accessibility of cultural heritage places to visitors, while protecting values
- achievement of a well recognised role in environment education, and natural and cultural heritage conservation that attracts involvement of people from the region and beyond
- active involvement of the community and corporate sectors in management programs
- involvement of people and organisations with a special interest in protection and conservation of cultural heritage
- recognition of community attachment to heritage places
- encouragement of research into cultural occupation, heritage places, and ongoing connection
- encouragement of community participation in heritage management and interpretation
- training for rangers and volunteer interpreters for a high professional standard in cultural heritage interpretation
- practical connection with the Australian Alps Co-operative Management Program

Specific provision is made in the plan of management for:

- eucalyptus oil distilling as a theme for cultural heritage interpretation
- display or re-creation of the eucalyptus oil distillery, as an opportunity for wider interpretation of European cultural heritage
- development of a 'heritage trail' (primarily walk/cycle) with Rock Valley homestead as a focal point for interpretation of European cultural heritage

HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

Cultural heritage is about valuing culture and traditions and being able to pass these on, contributing to shared sense of identity and belonging.

Interpretation is about translation, communication, education, sensations, and meaning (both cognitive and affective domains).

Information...	Interpretation...	
<i>...stimulates contact and interest</i>	<i>...works directly at levels of learning and experience...</i>	<i>...and may work indirectly to generate levels of response</i>
Learning ABOUT the place gets people started	Learning IN the place gets people more informed & motivated	Learning FOR the place gets people active
Connecting / Engaging	→	Valuing
Awareness ↓	→	Appreciation ↓
Attraction	→	Attunement ↓
		Attachment
		→
		Finding agency
		Activation ↓
		Advocacy
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Broad guiding Objectives/Principles

- Sharing a cultural asset
- Enriching experience, appreciation and learning (these together = valuing)
- Valuing a place to affect people’s behaviours in, and towards, that place
- Building connections and relationships between people and place, between community and heritage values
- Focusing on visitor accessibility and experience for different audiences (different levels of experience, knowledge and understanding, and different preferences for participation and learning)
- Being integral in management of site and setting (for education, recreation, building value)
- Linking natural and cultural heritage in landscapes – recognising both history and belonging
- Linking across landscape to illustrate patterns in historical and social context, and to facilitate thematic visitor itineraries
- Expanding the number and quality of linked and interpreted heritage places and precincts available for visitor experience, serving to diversify attractions and broaden appeal
- Strengthening the interest and ability of managers and stakeholders to continue to ‘grow’ cultural heritage opportunities (places and experiences) well into the future – demonstrating themes of ‘continuity in change’

STRATEGY

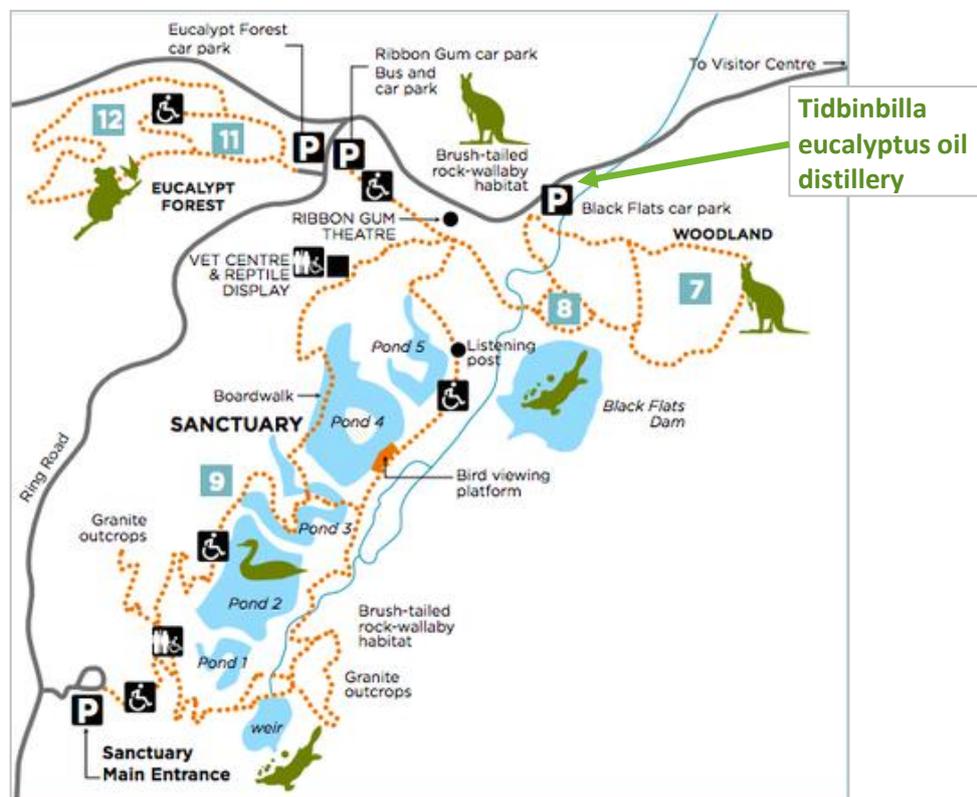
Physical	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access • Fabric • Works and materials • People management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Themes and stories • Audiences • Meanings & associations • Participation of associated people
↔	
→ Presentation of the place (works, programs/events, media)	

Information base

- The background information base assembled by the Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association is extensive and comprehensive, and is not reiterated here.
- Physical reconstruction works are to be guided by a separate report from heritage architect Pip Giovanelli (Feb 2020).

Access and ambience/physical context

- The place is located next to an established sealed car park accessible from the sealed Ring Road.
- This car park has much greater capacity than is presently utilised.
- The place is likely to receive curious visitors who notice the reconstructed still from the car park (used by visitors to the Bushland Meander [Woodland] or to Black Flats Dam) or from the primary road (clearly visible).
- The car park is also likely to receive visits as a safe and sealed stopping point, one of the first encountered in a densely timbered environment after leaving more open areas of the ‘valley floor’.
- This location in a sheltered gully environment encourages a pause to appreciate river, forest and large granitic outcrops, encouraged here as a viewing point for Southern brush-tailed rock-wallaby. The rocks to which visitors’ attention is directed are visible in a 1948 image of the distillery.



(ACT Government n.d.)

Notes on nomenclature – ‘Black Flats’

The place is adjacent to the Black Flats car park, close to and over a rise from the area to the south now inundated by Black Flats Dam.

Archival research (TR 70/4; Clift 1982 Fig 3.14) indicates that from at least the early 1970s the name was applied to the valley floor in the Sanctuary area now occupied by waterfowl ponds (and later applied more generally to nearby areas, including the distillery site).

The name Black Flats is said to have its origins in a physical attribute, arising from dark soils found along this part of the Tidbinbilla River. The broad river flats are most likely a product of valley floor sedimentation due to constriction in the river course, in turn due to geological structure. These conditions are conducive to slower, more meandering flow and development of deep alluvial soils in valley fill.

Note that the soil on the distillery site (below the implied constriction) is not dark (‘black’) alluvial soil.

There is an additional possibility that the name is related to historical association with Aboriginal people (noting in the immediate district the names Black Hill, Black Spring Mountain, and a geographically separate Black Springs / Black Springs Creek).

It is likely that the valley floor in the Sanctuary area was a relatively rich place for Aboriginal people. It would have been an area of low relief (seasonally wet floodplain) flanked by higher, drier, fairly level ground for occupation, with expansive views over the ranges, and with mixed environments in close proximity – stream, riparian, wetland, forest, (possibly) more open grassland – offering a broad range of resources in food, fibre, timber and (possibly) stone.

This aligns with findings of Bulbeck & Boot (1991) that the area now occupied by ponds in the Sanctuary ‘had been a focus of Aboriginal occupation’ (p.29) and of Navin Officer that areas at the north end of the valley floor (not occupied by ponds) are a Potential Archaeological Deposit (Fig.7.1).

It may be worth further research to ascertain ‘when and where’ the name was first applied in the area. Even in the absence of additional information, it would be beneficial to have clarity and consistency in referring to the distillery site location - not (specifically) **at** Black Flats but (generally) **near** Black Flats.

A more appropriate name for the distillery site to use in information and interpretation might refer to either geographical location or the Czechs or both, whilst noting that this place was not the only location at which they operated. Some possibilities include:

- *‘Tidbinbilla eucalyptus oil distillery and camp’* as per Bulbeck & Boot (1991) (p.110) – may be confused with other locations such as that near ‘Nil Desperandum’ i.e. it is not the Tidbinbilla distillery
- *‘Czechs’ camp and eucalyptus distillery’* as per Quince (n.d) – more specific
- *‘Rock Valley eucalyptus oil distillery and camp’* - specific; reflects close linkages between the Rock Valley community and the Czechs, particularly Jan Jandura-Pucek and (later) his family. It reflects, to some extent, Annie Flint’s invitation to Martin Tekel to distil oil on private leased land in this valley (however it is unclear whether Flint’s was seen as part of Rock Valley - area name). At present this name may be confused with the ‘Rock Valley’ homestead, although this limitation might be overcome fairly quickly through revised interpretation and signage associated with the homestead.

Audience assumptions

Interpretation strategy recognises the following assumptions:

- There is no way of estimating the size of the potential audience
- Visitors may be regular or episodic (first-time or repeat)
- Some will chance on the place and some will make it a destination
- Some have particular associations with the place (derive personal meaning from the place)
- Visitors may be of any age group or demographic
- Some may require enhanced accessibility to enable full appreciation
- Some may extend their visit by making use of other nearby opportunities e.g. Bushland Meander, Black Flats Dam, Peppermint Trail or the Sanctuary.

Themes and stories

The key to the heritage value of the place is its use as one of several sites now in the Reserve that were used for distilling eucalyptus oil, primarily in the 1940s and 50s.

Associated interpretive themes and stories relate to:

- Use of the area's natural resources – the leaves of two peppermint eucalypt species as raw material, and river water used for the steam boiler and (possibly in-stream) to cool condenser pipes
- Mobility and resourcefulness of the distillers, shifting sites to reflect the condition of the eucalypt resource – linking the place physically to other eucalyptus distilling sites and also socially by interactions with rural families in the valley (a remote life but connected across the landscape)
- Local pioneering of the distilling process and industry during World War 2 by Czech refugees (migrant experience and contributions), linking to the first naturalised Australian 1949
- Connection to the biodiversity/habitats of the Reserve, and the Threatened Species program
- Connection to cultural heritage themes across Australian Alps National Parks and Nature Reserves

Fabric

Fabric refers to all physical material of the place (elements, fixtures, contents, objects).

What it was:

Oral history and cultural surveys describe the Czechs' camp as including: the still; chaff shed; weatherboard and timber kitchen hut with a chimney of stone, mud and iron; living hut with timber walls lined with hessian and roofed with iron, heated centrally with a fuel stove; and a vegetable garden.

The still included a boiler tank and header tank, condenser pipes, and a gantry, with timber supports and stone foundations. While structures to make use of river water are less defined, it is recorded that the Czechs had built 'a long row of ponds', 'races out of the creek' (Tidbinbilla River), to cool the condenser pipes, terminating in a drum to collect the condensate.

What it is now:

Traces of past use have been almost completely removed through a combination of physical removal in the 1960s, passage of fires (several, some intense), and in the riparian zone perhaps also by flooding.

The large tanks were salvaged in the 1960s and hidden nearby to be used for scrap metal, and one of these has been recovered for use in reconstruction.

A steel hawser was strung across the river (upstream) to support pipes and can still be seen on each side of the river (G Puleston pers.comm.), its location described in Bulbeck & Boot (1991; p.112).

There is no trace in the field or record of a cooling race or ponds, probably filled in during the 1960s.

Natural traces of the area's use include areas of coppiced eucalypts around the place, although these are made less distinctive by post-fire regeneration.

Works and materials proposed

On-site		Off-site
<i>Current</i>	<i>Future / Foreshadowed</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Eucalyptus still reconstruction ◆ Improved accessibility ◆ Directional signage ◆ Interpretive signage ◆ On-site events (tours, demonstrations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Multi-media augmentation of signs ◆ Additional on-site reconstruction/simulation ◆ Place-based art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Interpretive leaflet ◆ Locational information ◆ Off-site display ◆ Off-site presentation ◆ Media engagement

For staging summary see **Attachment A**.

- ***Reconstruction of a eucalyptus still***

(current – part of ACT Heritage Grant + in-kind contribution)

Design as per report by Pip Giovanni (Feb 2020).

Importantly, this is a reconstruction (introducing new materials) to simulate (not demonstrate) the form and function of the still, and the eclectic nature of its parts.

The reconstructed still will make use of a mixture of both materials known to have been used in eucalyptus distilling in the place, and materials adapted for the purpose of simulation.

Use of the latter is a valid reflection of the resourcefulness of the distillers.

It needs to be made clear that it is not an ‘authentic replica’, and that while it is located close to the original still site (verified in photographs) the precise location is not certain.

This information does not need to be on the interpretive sign, but should be conveyed in presentations about, or tours of, the installation.

- ***Additional on-site reconstruction/simulation***

(foreshadowed - being considered by TPA)

Visitor interest in the place may warrant additional effort and investment in reconstruction or simulation of other aspects of the distillery to strengthen its value and use as a heritage precinct.

This might include (e.g.):

- a reconstructed slab hut (previously foreshadowed – linking to Australian Alps national parks heritage, a simulation relevant to other tablelands eucalyptus oil distillery sites in Vic and NSW)
- addition of machinery artefacts (e.g. a gantry) and additional tanks etc., as opportunity arises and as appropriate to the still reconstruction design and presentation.

Such episodic upgrading serves also to ‘freshen up’ the place and to encourage repeat visits to see ‘what’s-new’ and then to explore opportunities in expanded heritage places / precincts.

- *Improved accessibility for visitors*

(current – part of ACT Heritage Grant in-kind contribution)

The place is adjacent to a sealed car park, so vehicle access is not an issue.

Accessibility can be improved for all visitors by constructing a path that is suitable for visitors who are mobility-challenged (regardless of age).

This path would be wide, smooth (no steps), and firm in all weathers, forming a regular arc around the still installation. Initially in compacted gravel, this might in the future be a boardwalk with integrated furniture and sculptural pieces (see 'Place-based artwork' below).

Each end of the arc needs to link to the car park at-grade, leaving space on either side of the still (as per Pip Giovanni design plan):

- on the Black Flats side a level square for demonstration of the model still to tour groups
- on the other side sufficient room for mounting a gantry, should one become available.

While visitor focus is to be drawn initially to the still, the adjacent river is also part of the story. Consideration should be given to potential to reconstruct a race/ponds to show how condenser pipes were cooled.

Even without this, current encouragement of increased visitor numbers requires access to the river bank to be both safe and resilient, and may require some additional works.

- *Interpretive signage on-site*

(current – part of ACT Heritage Grant)

Two signs have been foreshadowed, and temporary forms have already been erected on-site (creating anticipation). Final signs will be in the 'Canberra Tracks' template.

- Sign 1 addresses the theme of use of the area's natural resources and the functioning of the still (context and process)
- Sign 2 addresses the theme of the migrant workers who pioneered the industry in the area and became part of the community (people).

Revised wording and form are at **Attachment B**.

These signs will be installed on the new path arcing around the reconstructed still – Sign 1 in front of the still and Sign 2 halfway between the still and the car park (northern side).

Care should be taken to avoid facing signs fully north or west, to reduce UV deterioration.

- *Additional Interpretive signage on-site*

(foreshadowed)

During planning there has been speculation of a (future) third sign for the theme of the eucalyptus industry more broadly. However, this theme is now considered to be dealt with more appropriately in multi-media augmentation, or a leaflet, or off-site materials and activities, or a mix of these (see more below), with potential for sponsorship from the eucalyptus industry e.g. Bosisto's.

Greater potential value is seen in a future additional sign providing information on the two species of peppermints utilised for their oil here. This can provide (e.g.):

- identification assistance (e.g. distinguishing between a narrow-leaved peppermint and a ribbon gum)
- context on forest/habitat types of both species, distinguishing between dry and moist locales
- linkage with use of related environments for eucalyptus oil distilling across the Australian Alps national parks (Vic and NSW).

This provides tangible links between biodiversity of the Reserve and historical use of its natural resources, and between the Reserve and other Australian Alps national parks.

- **Multi-media augmentation**

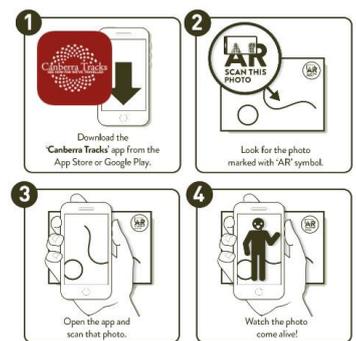
(foreshadowed - being considered by TPA)

This is entirely dependent on enhanced network coverage in the Tidbinbilla valley in the future.

The ‘Canberra Tracks’ signs can support triggering of additional audio, images or video through an augmented reality (AR) Smartphone app. This could:

- show video of a working still or still replica
- offer audio and imagery (including hologram imagery) to bring alive personal anecdotes of the distillery from the historical record
- link to Web-based off-site resources to strengthen visitor information or education

(Note: potential here for sponsorship from the eucalyptus industry)



Draft signs in **Attachment B** show the AR logo on an image. This would be added later as a decal, once network coverage supports this feature.

Instructions for downloading and using the app can be included in a future interpretive leaflet (item below).

- **Interpretive leaflet**

(foreshadowed - being considered by TPA)

A leaflet to complement the static signage would overcome the word limit for signs, in order to:

- provide additional information about the place and its context within the Reserve and local region (including other nearby distillery sites) and some information about the industry as it has evolved (Note: potential here for sponsorship from the eucalyptus industry)
- suggest linkages for walks, in particular Black Flats Dam (300m return), and potentially also Rock Valley homestead (c.3km return), with links to other cultural heritage themed trails
- provide guidance on behaviours e.g. not removing materials, watching for snakes, etc.
- provide a take-away/pass-it-on item to attract others to visit.

The Church Rock Heritage Loop leaflet is an example of this medium, funded by a previous ACT Heritage Grant to the Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association.

- **On-site events**

(foreshadowed - being considered by TPA)

A fundamental premise is that people are the best known system for heritage interpretation.

This has implications for training of staff and volunteer interpreters.

Scheduling of public events at the place would likely be in the form of guided tours, in peak visitor times or in regional events such as the ACT Heritage Festival, and may be in the style of past ‘Picnic at Rock Valley’ events. These may include:

- guided explanation of the still installation and operation of the original (and counterparts in the local region and beyond)
- demonstration of the model still to produce some oil
- short walks to identify peppermint eucalypt species, see coppiced stumps, visit Black Flats Dam.

The reconstruction of the still and inauguration of a heritage precinct warrants a launch that will generate publicity and interest and help to ‘lock in’ those who have supported/contributed up to that point. (Note: potential here for sponsorship from the eucalyptus industry)

- *Directional signage to site*

(future revision)

It is likely that visitation will be increased if directional signs on the road indicate the existence and direction of the distillery site and heritage precinct.

There is a distinction between seeing the installation from a distance and being effectively ‘invited’ to go into the car park to have a closer look at it.

This is a matter for Reserve managers as directional signage is upgraded from time to time.

Actual timing may need to relate to any launch of the installation/cultural heritage precinct.

Note comments above about appropriate place nomenclature.

- *Locational information*

(future revision)

This refers to off-site print and electronic media that map/indicate location of attractions and label precincts for promotion, and to assist planning of visits.

This is a matter for Reserve managers as information materials are upgraded from time to time.

Actual timing may need to relate to any launch of the reconstruction/cultural heritage precinct.

Note comments above about appropriate place nomenclature.

This relates also to third party publications such as ‘The world of Tidbinbilla’, produced under an ACT Heritage Grant by Southern ACT Catchment Group, and a myriad of private or organisational Web sites providing information on Tidbinbilla walks and attractions. While revision in these cases rests with organisations, it is advisable to keep those providers informed about new developments in attractions and interpretation e.g. by specific invitations to launches, briefings, open days, etc.

- *Off-site display*

(foreshadowed - being pursued by TPA)

There is an opportunity to include in the revamped Visitor Centre a display relating to pioneers of the valley, including the eucalyptus distillery. This might include images and artefacts, and might make use of videos and audio.

This would enable description of a broader physical and social context for the place, and it has the advantage of being accessible on occasions when the broader Reserve is closed for safety reasons.

- *Off-site presentation*

(foreshadowed)

This would entail a consistent brief visual presentation package that could be:

- offered to interested groups (e.g. in person by PowerPoint)
- used in educational settings or on the Web site for general interest
- used in orientation/training of staff and volunteer interpreters.

This would build on previous TPA experience in related presentations (e.g. to Canberra District Historical Society July 2019).

- **Media engagement**

(current – continuing)

Engagement of print and electronic media contributes at the level of promotion, in:

- initial attraction of attention and visitors and stimulus for repeat visits
- acknowledgement of contributors (information, works, maintenance, funding, sponsorship)
- stimulus for additional contributions; and
- enhancement of cultural story-telling and longevity by recognition of descendants of the distillery operators and pioneer families, partly through events (see also below).

- **Place-based art**

(foreshadowed)

Installation of place- and theme-appropriate artworks to define/emphasise the place and any future heritage precinct. These might be commissioned (potentially with sponsorship).

They are likely to be sculptural, in rusted steel, in keeping with artworks in other precincts in the Reserve. These might range from simple laser cut-out posts or panels (e.g. distinctive shapes of both types of peppermint leaves) through precinct labels to seating and other 'furniture'.



There are also opportunities here for community arts projects, seeking creative responses to the place/precinct and fostering connection and participation. There are potential grants funds available for such projects.

Some Reserve accommodation (e.g. Cinerea Cottage) has previously been utilised for artist-in-residence programs.

Seeing the distillery as part of a ‘larger picture’

A broader approach could link the distillery site and the Black Flats pond as a cultural heritage precinct that would reasonably be termed and promoted as the ‘*Black Flats heritage precinct*’, having access from the presently-under-utilised ‘Black Flats car park’.

An Aboriginal landscape use theme might be developed at the pond, as part of guided tours and possible future interpretive signage and other media. This theme would also add considerable value in content of any launch of the distillery reconstruction and heritage precinct.

In turn, a Black Flats heritage precinct would be part of a ‘larger picture’ of cultural–heritage-themed itineraries that has been envisaged over some years by the Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association. This began in at least 1998 with the TPA considering a ‘Pioneer Walking Trail’ in the southern Tidbinbilla valley. A broader vision is now emerging that takes in both Aboriginal and European heritage places and stories, and provides more diverse opportunities for walking-based itineraries via loop trails. As noted in Background above, the Tidbinbilla plan of management makes specific provision for this concept.

Due to subsequent development in the Reserve, much of this broader vision could be achieved through a process of connecting existing nodes, precincts and trails. For example:

- A ‘*central valley*’ itinerary with Rock Valley homestead as the hub of loop walks to connect with Flints’, the Church Rock Heritage Loop, Dalsetta and the Turkey Hill Trail.
This favours additional trails to separate walkers from cars on the main roads, and may include a riverside walk.
- A ‘*northern/lower valley*’ itinerary accessed from Dalsetta for walks to Mount Eliza, Eliza Saddle and Gibraltar Peak.
The Birrigai Time Trail is accessed for enthusiastic walkers from Eliza Saddle or (for most) from the Visitors Centre.
- A ‘*southern/upper valley*’ itinerary around the Sanctuary precinct via the ‘management road’ (‘the old road’) to take in sites of Ash Corner, Driver’s piggery, Green & Hatcliffe’s hut, Farrer’s hut, Kaye’s hut and Mt Domain homestead.
Optional diversions include: via Mountain Creek road for the Rayner’s Sawmill site; and from the Ring Road for Hanging Rock.

An expansion of cultural–heritage-themed itineraries would take some years to come to fruition. In the first instance, the ‘central valley’ suite of opportunities will be further developed in the forthcoming Heritage Interpretation Strategy for Rock Valley Homestead.

It is suggested that these itineraries be developed as part of the Canberra Tracks system, under the unifying banner of ‘Tidbinbilla Heritage’ (noting that this has been included in the two current signs). This would enable promotion of the heritage trail by Canberra Tracks as a complement to those already developed for Belconnen, Gungahlin, Woden and Tuggeranong.

(<https://www.canberratracks.act.gov.au/heritage-trails>)

Any proposed additional access, node or walking trail developments:

- would be consistent with the Tidbinbilla plan of management i.e. located in Zone 3 ‘Developed Recreation and Education’
- would likely require close collaboration between the Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association and the Friends of Tidbinbilla in construction and maintenance.

Participation of associated people

It is vital to recognise associations with the place that may be held by (e.g.) descendants of the Czech distillery operators and of pioneer families, each group deriving their own meaning from the place. There are also individuals that have taken a keen interest in documentation of the valley's history.

There are opportunities to involve these interest groups in landmark events such as launch/opening of development stages, ideas generation for future stages, and so on.

Some have previously contributed to oral histories and there may be opportunities to use some of this material in mixed media and augmented reality. Others who attend may be inspired to make their own oral history contributions.

The overall message in enabling participation of these interested groups and individuals is that their histories and contributions are valued along with the place, and help to bring the place alive with a human face/voice.

Sixty years ago, the prevailing mood was to erase traces of European heritage from the landscape of Tidbinbilla and other conservation areas, in an attempt to bury cultural history in favour of Nature. Now we are engaged in re-storying such landscapes as an enriched legacy for future generations (both history and belonging).

GOVERNANCE

Heritage interpretation at the place and development of a related heritage precinct will need to use a cooperative management model, allocating clear responsibility between the owners/managers (ACTPCS) and the community of interest (Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association).

The agreement needs to be independent of personalities (who come and go over time), and needs to describe:

- a mechanism for *shared decision-making* about, and *collaborative sourcing* of finance for, implementation, running, and conservation needs
- *respective responsibilities* for access, presentation, education, and maintenance.

EVALUATION

Any significant investment of human or financial resources needs to be evaluated for effectiveness from time to time. A framework for the place and associated programs needs to address processes for:

- *observation* of behaviours and impacts, physical condition
- *gathering feedback* to gauge awareness (and sources used to obtain information), and user satisfaction (including access, experience); social media may play a major role in this aspect.

ATTACHMENT A - STAGING SUMMARY OF WORKS AND ACTIONS PROPOSED

Current	Next Priority	Future
Reconstruction of a eucalyptus still	Additional on-site reconstruction/simulation e.g. slab hut replica, gantry, cooling race/ponds	→
Improved accessibility of distillery site for visitors		? Boardwalk/seating at distillery site
Interpretive signage on-site at distillery (two signs)	Multi-media (AR)augmentation [dependent on network access]	
	Interpretive leaflet for distillery	
	→ On-site events	→
	Updated directional signage to distillery site	
	Updated locational information for distillery site	
	Off-site display e.g. Visitors Centre	
	→ Off-site presentation	→
	→ Media engagement	→
		Place-based art
	Additional research on 'Black Flats' nomenclature	
	Development of Black Flats heritage precinct	
Development of a 'central valley' themed itinerary (with Rock Valley as hub) - 'Tidbinbilla heritage' [current Heritage Grant project]	Development of a 'southern/upper valley' themed itinerary - 'Tidbinbilla heritage'	Development of a 'northern/lower valley' themed itinerary - 'Tidbinbilla heritage'
	→ Participation of associated people	→
	Cooperative management model/agreement between TPA and ACTPCS	
	Framework for evaluation of effectiveness	

ATTACHMENT B - INTERPRETIVE SIGNS

SIGN 1 (AR logo decal to be added later)

The Good Oil

TIDBINBILLA EUCALYPTUS OIL DISTILLERY

During the early 1940s a local bush industry was established in the Tidbinbilla Valley on this site – extracting eucalyptus oil.

Aboriginal people have been using eucalyptus oil and vapour for many thousands of years as part of their continuing culture, for relief of sinus, colds, fevers and body pains, and for ceremonial purposes, infusing crushed leaves or inhaling smoke from leaves.

It was a small group of men from the former Czechoslovakia, who brought a commercial distillery to this valley during World War II, making use of Tidbinbilla's forests and streams.

Steam was piped from a wood-fired boiler into a tank full of leaves, cut mainly from broad-leaved peppermint (*Eucalyptus dives*) and narrow-leaved peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata* subsp. *robertsonii*). The heated leaves gave off oil into the steam, which was condensed in pipes cooled by river or creek water and the oil collected.



The distillery in about 1948, looking to the granite rocks.

Fondly known as "The Czechs" by the local community, they assembled stills from whatever they could find, acquire and make, and cut leaves with special knives made from crosscut saws. Each batch required 400kg of leaves, so they cut from dawn to dusk Monday to Friday.

During distilling they had to work in shifts around the clock to keep the fires going and the water topped up to create steam. It took two to three weeks of distilling to fill a 44-gallon drum with unrefined oil.



Using a bush gantry to load leaves into the still.

When four drums were filled, they were sent to Melbourne. The oil was highly valued for medicinal, germicidal, antibacterial, aromatic and industrial applications.

While the cutters earned a good income, they lived very simply on-site in slab huts. This reconstruction has been created as a tribute to their enterprise, resourcefulness and labour to build a bush industry.



This site, 'The Czechs' camp', was used until 1962 when the initial fauna reserve was established.

"The men would cut peppermint leaves during the week, then draw them in by horse and dray on Friday evenings. Saturday was distilling day – Rock Valley was always filled with the distinct aroma of eucalyptus on Saturday night as the men steamed the leaves to extract the oil, using large steel vats as containers."

Eddie Green in *To green the memory* Monica Flint (1983)







THIS PROJECT WAS SUPPORTED WITH FUNDING FROM AVAILABLE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UNDER THE ACT'S HERITAGE GRANTS PROGRAM

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[Captions:] The distillery in about 1948, looking to the granite rocks

Using a bush gantry to load leaves into the still

This site, 'The Czechs' camp', was used until 1962 when the initial fauna reserve was established

All images: Archives of Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association

SIGN 2 (Note: AR logo decal to be added later)

By the labour of their hands

THE PEOPLE WHO WORKED THE LAND

One of the distinctive characteristics of this eucalyptus oil distillery was its establishment and operation during World War II by men from the former Czechoslovakia. Hard-working and resourceful, they were well regarded by the Tidbinbilla community who fondly referred to them as “The Czechs”.

One of them – Martin Tekel - had been extracting eucalyptus oil in the Canberra district since 1938, and operated from this site from 1940 and throughout the War years with two fellow countrymen – Steve Lacjin and Martin’s son-in-law Jan Jandura Pucek (later called Jan Jandura, then John Jandura).

“The Czechs” went years without any news of their families, and no doubt welcomed opportunities to visit with local families to buy supplies or find transport to town, and for social contact, with the card game 500 a popular weekly activity.

After the War, only Jan stayed on permanently in Australia. In February 1949, having come from the part of Czechoslovakia that is now known as Slovakia, he was the first person born outside the Commonwealth to become a naturalised Australian under a new Act, declaring his address as ‘Rock Valley’, Tidbinbilla. Later that year, his family arrived – the first time Jan had seen his son – and they stayed with the Green family at ‘Rock Valley’ until the distillery camp was made more habitable.



Steve Lacjin, Jan Jandura Pucek and Martin Tekel outside their fodder shed.



Jan Jandura Pucek taking the oath at the naturalisation ceremony at Canberra's Albert Hall on 3 February 1949.



The three Czechs with Edie Blewitt at ‘Rock Valley’ accepting a lift into town.

The Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association plays an active role in keeping alive the rich history of this valley and surrounding areas.

This site is a reminder of the many different ways that people of different backgrounds have made a living in this valley – in pastoral, agricultural, forestry and eucalyptus oil production, leaving behind stories of enterprise, ingenuity, hard work and resilience.



Jan and Steve on drums filled with eucalyptus oil.




THIS PROJECT WAS SUPPORTED WITH FUNDING MADE AVAILABLE BY THE ACT GOVERNMENT UNDER THE ACT HERITAGE GRANTS PROGRAM.






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[Captions:]

Top: Steve Lacjin, Jan Jandura Pucek and Martin Tekel outside their fodder shed

Bottom left: ‘The three Czechs’ with Edie Blewitt at ‘Rock Valley’ accepting a lift into town.

Bottom right: Jan and Steve on drums filled with eucalyptus oil

All images: Archives of Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association

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