

Wheeler and party continue to work their claim in the Idaburn, and prospecting has also been carried on in the Wedderburn district, but no valuable discoveries have been reported.

At Blackstone Hill, Rose's claim, which has been successfully worked for many years, still continues to yield profitable returns, and other parties of men are also engaged in this locality, and are fairly successful.

Welshman's Gully.

The Shamrock Elevating Company (Simmonds, Hesson, and Company) occupy 60 acres, on the working of which Mr. Simmonds gives the following account: "Welshman's Gully is situated about five miles from St. Bathans, on the Blackstone Hill side, commencing about one mile above the footbridge on the Manuhierikia River, on the main road to Naseby. The gully appears to have been at one time one of the outlets of the Manuhierikia, as the wash is of a similar nature, and the gold is of the same class. The gully runs nearly parallel with the Manuhierikia, about two miles in length, varying but little in depth throughout, the mean depth being about 14 ft. The wash is waterworn, and of a coarse nature, with a great number of yellow boulders, varying in size from 9 in. to 18 in. in diameter. The gold appears to be distributed through the wash more or less throughout the gully. The bottom, where we commenced operations, is composed of a hard blue reef, running east and west, which, after exposure, becomes soft and crumbles away. The surrounding deposits are of a granite formation, with the exception of the Manuhierikia River and this said gully. We have 30 acres in this place, and we have also 30 acres on the granite formation, in a gully known as Dip or Station Gully. We have done a good deal of prospecting, and in most places obtained a little fine gold from the surface to a depth of 12 ft., the gold running in layers. It is our intention in the near future to place an elevating plant in the gully, but before doing so we have to construct two miles of sludge-channel, and also to erect 14 chains of 15 in. iron fluming across a gully to bring water to the ground. We have a water-race from the Manuhierikia River about twelve miles in length, with a carrying-capacity of eighteen heads of water. We have just erected a plant, on the Welshman's Gully Claim, consisting of 3,000 ft. of iron pipes, varying from 9 in. to 15 in. diameter, for the main line leading to the elevator. The branch pipes for breaking-down purposes are 7 in. Our working-pressure does not exceed 250 ft., which will do the work with satisfactory results, as we do not lift over 25 ft. vertical. We have a tail-race running on the main bottom which conveys the drainage, working water, and silt into the Manuhierikia, a distance of 700 yards. Half of this tail-race has been cut through solid rock on an average of 9 ft. in depth. The boxes used are our own invention, and have been in use for over five years in the Last Chance Elevating Company's claim, Bald Hill Flat, and we find they are very little the worse for wear. The run is 60 ft. in length, made of 16-gauge sheet steel 6 ft. by 3 ft. turned up 1 ft. on each end to form the sides of the boxes, making a 4 ft. box 3 ft. long. The head-box, or elevator-box, is made in the form of a case with the running end open, 5 ft. high, made in sections. The elevator-pipe passes through the bottom of the head-box about 6 in. from the back end, and projects 4 in. to 6 in. above the ripple-bars on the top, inside the head-box, directly over the elevator-pipe, and allowing for curve of water a striking-plate is placed to break the force of pressure and to prevent wear-and-tear. The dirt and stone strike this, preventing injury to the head-box. We use cross-bar ripples in frames of five bars, each bar being $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $\frac{1}{2}$ in., the angle piece underneath being made of 16-gauge steel riveted to the top bars. These ripples are found very effective. We also use a second set of boxes, 24 ft. in length by 2 ft. 6 in. wide, made similar to the top boxes. These are placed in an excavation on a level with the inlet to the elevator, with a fall of 10 in. to the 12 ft. In these boxes we can always depend on getting 90 per cent. of the gold. We have 12 ft. of matting at the tail. The lower boxes are very effective, in that they obviate the necessity of the gold passing through the elevator, and can be readily cleaned up. We can put through the elevator on an average in the twenty-four hours about 170 yards. Three shifts are worked when water is available, and, on an average, ten men are employed."

St. Bathans's.

Mr. John Ewing still continues to work his claim at Kildare Hill. During my visit in November last the claim was idle, in consequence of a breakdown in the water-race. The depth from which the elevators raise the drift was said to be 135 ft., and I was informed it was intended to continue to a further depth.

M. and E. Company (Area, 50 acres).—This claim is owned by the United M. and E. Water-race Company (Registered). The work carried on has been stripping off the top drift and removing stones to enable the quartz wash and drift to be worked by elevating. Fifteen heads of water are used for sluicing, the pressure being 300 ft. Upwards of 10,000 yards of material were washed, the yield from the gold-bearing leads averaging 3s. 10d., and in the top drifts from 4d. to 6d. per cubic yard. Nine men are employed by the company, and work was carried on in the claim 290 days during the year.

Eagle and Gray's claim was idle at the time of my visit, owing to want of water.

Several small parties and individual miners earn a livelihood in working the old ground.

Surface Hill.—The Scandinavian Water-race Company (Registered) own a claim of 36 acres. The drifts are worked by elevating, and 28,000 cubic yards were sluiced away during the year, for a yield of 180 oz. of gold. The claim has been worked during eleven weeks of the year, as the company sell all the water they can, the surplus only being used for their own claim. Upwards of £2,000 has been expended on the race to secure a larger supply of water. Fifteen men are employed, mostly on the head-race. The water-race has now a capacity of ten sluice-heads, with a pressure of 300 ft.

The St. Bathans's Water-race Company also own and work a claim of 55 acres at Surface Hill. The method in use is hydraulic sluicing, by which 24,200 cubic yards of drifts and wash were dealt with, for a yield of 3d. per yard. Four shareholders and one wages-man were employed.