

8 MINE SHAFT 1

This fenced mine-shaft is one of several associated with the mine. This one has Oregon timber facing.

9 MINE SHAFT 2

This second shaft is faced with local coolibah timber. This is the highest point on the walk. The conical hill, called Copper Top, is obvious on the southeastern horizon.

10 DEAD FINISH WATTLE

Most of the wattles (*Acacia tetragonophylla*) across the ridge are growing in the middle of small rock outcrops. Cracks in the rocks provide ideal spots for the seeds to lodge and water run-off from the rocks creates a microclimate promoting germination and growth.

11 PASTORAL PHOTO-POINT

The small peg and marked disc is one of several thousand photo-points established by South Australia's Pastoral Board to monitor land and vegetation condition across the pastoral lands of the outback. Photographs are repeated every few years to measure changes in condition due to grazing pressure or seasonal conditions such as drought or rain. There is a good view of the smelting site.

12 SPRING VIEWS

From here you get a fine view over Freeling Springs. The springs are marked by clumps of reeds that may be up to three metres high. At this point you are walking on the old bullock and donkey dray track used to access the mine and smelt site. The ruins of the Hammer and Gad eating house are visible to the north.

From here the walking track takes you down the hill to the ruins and on to the car-park.

Creek and Cemetery Walk

13 GOAT YARD

Early European settlements in the outback rarely had access to dairy cows so goats were a common alternative supply of milk. Because of dingo predation the goats would be shepherded by day (usually by Aboriginal women and children) and returned to a secure yard at night. The dark coloured mound here represents the accumulated dung of one of these overnight goat folds.

14 GIDGEE

The greyish-green spreading trees here are gidgee, *Acacia cambagei*. Gidgee is common along many creek-lines in the region. Its flowers and foliage can have a distinctive pungent smell, especially after rain.

15 CEMETERY VIEW

From here you can look across to the small cemetery on the hill-slope over the creek, marked by a stone cross. Take a walk for a closer look and return here to continue the walk.

16 RIVER RED GUM

The eucalypts here with the smooth bark are river red gum, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*. River red gums occur along creeks, rivers and drainage lines over much of Australia. This northern form is compact and drought-tolerant, and is found along many inland drainage lines, sometimes in association with coolibah.

17 RIVERINE WATTLES

A cove of Broughton willow (*Acacia salicina*) occurs here, a long way north of its main South Australian occurrence. This drainage line feeds into Peake Creek, which in turn links with the Neales River, a major watercourse that flows into Lake Eyre North after heavy rains.

18 SPRING OVERFLOW

This modest flowing stream is the overflow tail from one of the mound springs nearby. Most mound springs have an overflow tail that usually peters out a short distance from the main spring outlet. These permanent spring overflows support sedges and rushes, in contrast to the creeks and rivers that flow only after heavy local rainfall. The spiny blue-green shrub here is elegant wattle, *Acacia victoriae*.

*From here, the walk returns to the starting point at the car-park, where another wattle occurs. This is the river cooba (*Acacia stenophylla*), far from its main occurrence in South Australia, eight hundred kilometres south on the River Murray.*

Settlement Walk

There is no defined walk around the main area of ruins of the repeater station, but all the buildings are identified and more detail is provided on the interpretive signs.

Take care – the ruins are fragile and the loose masonry is dangerous.

Acknowledgements

The Peake is located on the Peake Pastoral Lease managed by S Kidman and Co. The Company has worked closely with the community group Friends of Mound Springs and a number of State Government agencies to help protect and manage the site. These walks have been developed by Friends of Mound Springs in partnership with S Kidman and Co and the Walking Trails Support Group. The work was funded by a Natural Resources Management grant from the South Australian Government.

Further Information

More detailed information about mound springs is provided in a separate brochure available at this site; www.friendsofmoundsprings.org.au



Government
of South Australia



The Peake Walks

*Three self-guided walks taking in the natural
and cultural features of this nationally
significant heritage site*



Photo: Anne Jensen

Welcome to the Peake

The mound springs at this location:

- provided for many thousands of years a sure supply of food and water for Aboriginal people and still have cultural importance for the Arabana community
- became focal points for European explorers and pastoral settlement and helped determine the route of the Overland Telegraph.

The Peake historic site is of national importance and is protected under national and state legislation. It combines a group of mound springs (Freeling Springs) with the ruins of the Peake Overland Telegraph Repeater Station and the Copper Top Mine and Smelter.

Initially, the site was a base for pastoral activities and the oldest of the buildings date from the mid 1860s.

The Peake Overland Telegraph Repeater Station was built in 1872 and was one of 11 repeater stations located at around three hundred kilometre intervals along the route between Adelaide and Darwin.

It closed in 1891 when telegraphic operations were transferred to nearby Oodnadatta on the newly constructed narrow gauge (Ghan) railway. Nearby Peake Creek was named in 1859 by explorer John McDouall Stuart for parliamentarian E.J. Peake, a name later applied to the station and telegraph settlement.

In 1900 the site saw a renewal of activity through the mining and smelting of copper. At that time there was an increasing demand for copper wire needed for the new technology of telegraph and electricity lines. The Amalgamated Copper Top Proprietary Company operated from 1900-04, but the poor quantity and quality of ore could not sustain the elaborate and expensive smelting works.

There are three easy walks to take you to points of cultural and natural history interest:

Copper Top Smelter and Mine Walk explores this abandoned industrial site (marked with posts 1 to 12): **1.5 km, allow 1.5 hours**

Creek and Cemetery Walk illustrating the plants along this typical watercourse, with the cemetery as an optional detour (posts 13 to 18): **0.6 km plus optional 0.2 km, allow 45 mins**

Settlement Walk. A settlement for pastoral workers, telegraph workers and miners (each building identified, no numbered posts): **allow 1 hour**

Copper Top Smelter and Mine Walk

1 PEAKE OVERLAND TELEGRAPH STATION

Pause at this building where the signal was relayed on to the next repeater station from 1872-91. Note the different stages (and standards) of construction of the building: the northern wing may date from the pastoral occupation in the 1860s, the southern wing was constructed for OT operations in 1872, and the lean-to rooms at the rear were probably built for workers at the Copper Top mine and smelter in 1900.

2 SETTLEMENT TOILET (NOT FOR CURRENT USE)

No water here: like many similar facilities of the time, it was a simple bucket.

3 COOLIBAH

A fine example of the coolibah (*Eucalyptus coolabah*) is hanging on to the creek bank. The coolibah is a much celebrated tree found along many creek-lines in Australia's outback. After rain, you may also see lilac flowers on the emu bush (*Eremophila freelingii*), nearby.

4 ACACIA

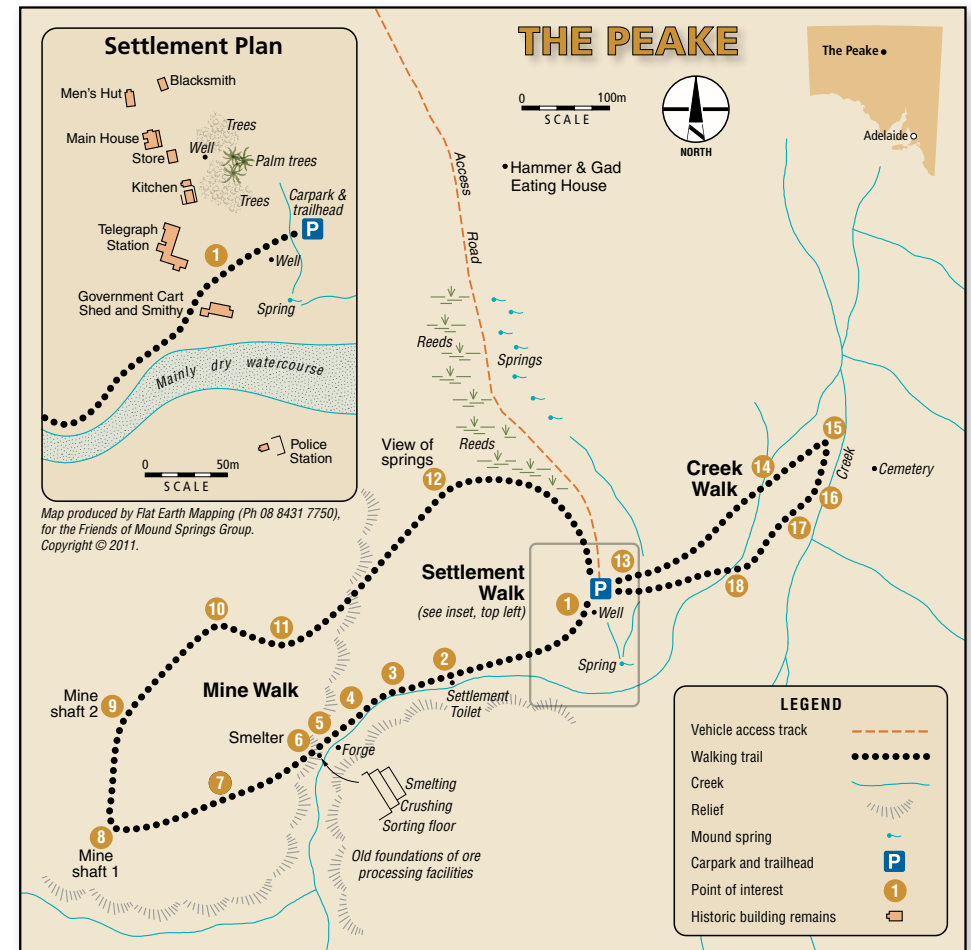
Six species of wattle (*Acacia*) grow at the Peake and two of them can be seen at this spot. One with sharp, spiny phyllodes (flattened stems that look like leaves) is dead finish, *Acacia tetragonophylla*. The other one is umbrella bush *Acacia ligulata*: this has much broader phyllodes up to about 9cm long. It is widespread across Australia. Aboriginal people used the wattle seeds for both food and medicinal purposes.

5 FORGE

While little remains of this feature on the slope opposite, forges were an important component of any industrial site, to make and mend implements and mining tools, as well as shoeing horses, bullocks and donkeys.

6 SMELTER

This is the main sorting, crushing and smelting site for the Copper Top mine. The tiers allowed the smelting process to progress down a steep slope, the ore being conveyed from the nearby shafts on the ridge top. Massive timber and iron structural members can still be seen, along



with remnants of the once start-of-art mine machinery. Slag from the smelting process is prominent in heaps at the lower level. There are remains of a wooden stairway and fire bricks for the smelter, stamped GARTCRAIG, were imported from Glasgow.

7 WOOD-HEAP

The wood-heap contains some very large old coolibah logs left behind when the mine was abandoned. Coke was railed to Warrina siding to fuel the smelter, but there was also high demand for local wood for various structural purposes and for firewood.

Follow the trail; and see the heap of ore left behind which was ready to sort and crush for the smelter. A nearby dug-out may have been a miner's dwelling. Quartz outcrops suggest the presence of gold but copper was the mineral mined. The mine promised much, but low yields and poor ore quality led to its early closure.