



## Recalling my visit to Ravenswood QLD

I first visited Ravenswood back in 2011 and thoroughly enjoyed soaking up the history of the place. Earlier this year as I was passing through Charters Towers, I decided I should head a little further east and have another look at this lovely historic old town.



By way of background, gold was discovered in the area in 1868 and in 1869 about 140 prospectors and fossickers arrived to exploit the new fields. When three men, Jessop, Buchanan and Crane, found good alluvial gold near the present site of Ravenswood the news led to a gold rush.

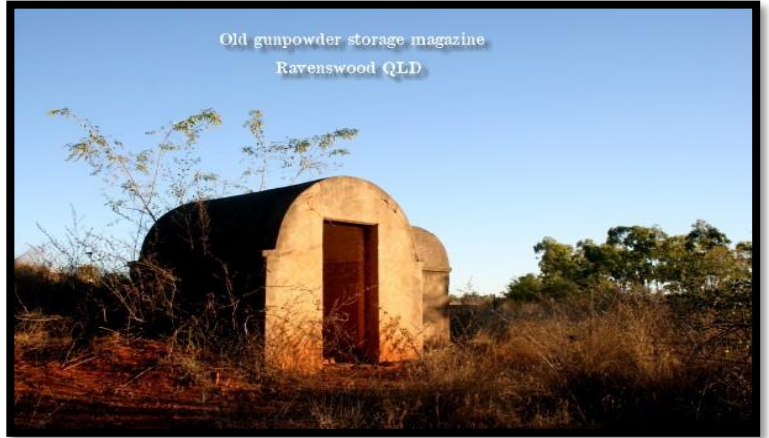


In 1870 the Government built a five head battery crushing mill at Burnt Point and the results from the first batch of crushed ore were so good that they prompted a further rush on the area and the establishment of five more crushing works. By 1871 the Bank of New South Wales had opened, a court house had been built and a local newspaper, the Ravenswood Miner, was opened.

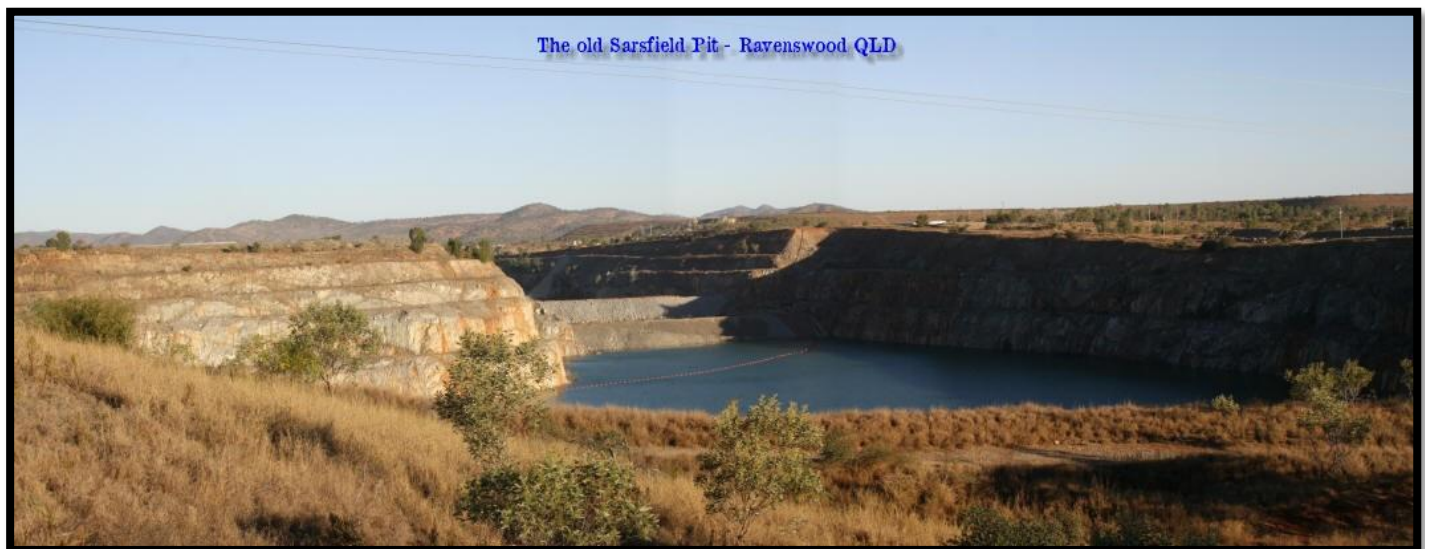
The success of the mine was short lived. By 1872 it had become extremely difficult to extract the ore and many of the miners had moved on to Charters Towers. Some persistent miners stayed on extracting about 300 kg of gold each year from the area.

In 1873 a government school opened and the district population grew to around 2,000 in 1876. The continuing operation of the gold mines, plus the discovery of silver, led to the construction of a railway from Cunningham to Ravenswood. By the early 1890s the mines were once again nearly idle.

A mine manager, Archibald Lawrence Wilson, took up an option and managed to interest English investors in the field. So successful was Wilson in finding backers for the mines that it was during the period 1900-1912 that the town prospered and Wilson became known as 'the uncrowned king of Ravenswood'. During this period the population of the Ravenswood area reached about 5,000 and about 12,500 kg of gold extracted.



Mining continues today and has recently been extended to continue until 2032. The now closed old Sarsfield pit is one of the many sights to see of the old mining efforts.



## Butler's Cottage.

This lovingly restored cottage offers a peek into the living conditions of the past on the goldfields. 19 people are said to have lived here together in the late 1800s and into the 1900s. This cottage was a home to members of the Butler family until as recently as 1988.



A few kilometres out of Ravenswood is a feature called the White Blow which is a large quartz outcrop (or blow). It stands 15 m high and 45 m wide and is the largest of several irregular masses of quartz in the area. Bodies of quartz like White Blow form where tension during earth movements opens fractures, allowing mineral-bearing fluid to pass through. With a lowering of pressure or temperature, the minerals (in this case silica), settle out of the solution and eventually fill the fracture. The quartz blow here may have formed at the intersection of two fracture zones, allowing a larger opening to form.



I stayed at the showground camping area with power and water available in a number of locations around the oval. There is both mobile phone coverage (Telstra) and TV reception. Caretaker lives on site and collects fees which are \$15/night or \$75/week. It is an excellent base to tour around the area and visit all the historic aspects of the town.

The pubs put on good food and at very reasonable prices. Ravenswood is one of those old places that is a pleasure to visit and soak up the history of our country.

Cheers – John  
(rockylizard)

