

## THE MONSTER MEETING SITE - GOLDEN POINT ROAD



*Image 1 (Courtesy Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts, Hobart):* This sketch done by David Tulloch and engraved by Thomas Ham shows the great meeting of diggers at Golden Point on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1851. The sketch was executed near the junction of Forest Creek and Wattle Creek looking in an easterly direction up towards the base of Ammans Hill (see field of view A, Image 6). It shows the crowd of 14,000 - 15,000 diggers who met to protest against the Government's intention to double the Gold Licence from 30 shillings to 3 pounds a month. The gold rush in this area had only commenced two months earlier, and to attract so large a crowd illustrates the outrage of the diggers towards the proposed licence increase. As a result of the opposition by the diggers, Governor La Trobe was eventually forced to back down, and the licence fee renewal remained unchanged. Most of the diggers are shown clustered around flags flying on the hill in the background, while a few are still working away in the foreground.



While the diggers were relatively new to the scene, the outstation workers had been here well before the gold rush and had made some improvements. The shepherd's hut in the left middle ground was of a slab and bark construction with a stone chimney. To the right and rear of the hut they had also built a post and rail fence which is just visible.

*Image 2:* This photo was taken on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2008 before the crowd of approximately 80 people arrived to celebrate the 157<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Monster Meeting with a re-enactment. It was taken at the footbridge on the walking path at the junction of Forest and Wattle Creeks. The hill in the middle of the photo (a spur of Ammans Hill) was near the centre of the earlier meeting. The flags would have been

raised to the rear of the shed near Golden Point Road that crosses the scene from left to right (see Image 6).

The meeting crowd would have covered the area in the centre of the photo, and would most likely have spread to the eastern side of Golden Point Road as well. The stone and plaques that document the historical events that occurred here can be seen to the right of the tin shed (circled). There appears to be little, if any, archeological evidence of the shepherd's hut, although photographic evidence suggests that there was a building on this site as late as 1859. The lack of archeological evidence is not surprising because of the disruption and upheaval during the gold rushes, and the later dredging of the area. In addition, on

early maps, Shepherds Street and a water pipeline and reserve are shown traversing the area in the vicinity of the hut (see Image 6). The fenced area with the tin shed in this photo is private property, as is the area immediately to the east of Golden Point Road.

*Image 3:* This line drawing is based on the earlier engraved drawing (Image 1) but incorporates features from the past and present. It shows the area where the diggers once crowded around the flags at the top of the hill. In modern times a tin shed has been built on the same hill.

The shepherd's hut is located on a small spur close to where the stone and plaques are now located. The post and rail fence visible to the right and rear of the hut appears to be located on the same line as the current Golden Point Road. Perhaps the location of this fence had some influence on the future delineation of Golden Point Road.

*Image 4 (Courtesy Glenn Braybrook):* This is a pen and ink sketch of a section of the Monster Meeting drawn by an unknown person who obviously attended the meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1851. The sketch was drawn in close



proximity to the action and shows the three speakers on the dray addressing the crowd. While the foreground of this sketch is important, it is the arrangement of the hills in the background (which have been highlighted) that gives a vital clue to the location of the Monster Meeting.



*Image 5:* This photo was taken in January 2009 from the top of the embankment cutting on the eastern side of Golden Point Road and shows the modern day version of the previous sketch. Looking at the hills in the background (also highlighted) it is possible to see there is a very strong correlation or similarity with the hills shown in the previous sketch. Both this photo and the previous sketch are facing in a westerly direction (see field of view B on Image 6). It is likely that the approximate centre of the Monster Meeting would have been on or near the present Golden Point Road in the foreground of the photo, with the dray facing south.

