

379 tons of quartz crushed yielded 599 oz. 19 dwt. melted gold, valued at £1,629 14s. 2d. During the year the shaft has been repaired, and is now in good order down to the bottom, No. 4 level (474 ft.). This level has also been cleaned up and repaired to the Big Pump shaft. The drive on the course of No. 1 reef is also being cleaned out, and it is intended to push this drive on and connect with the Moanataiari new shaft. This will give splendid ventilation, and allow works to be carried on to more advantage. The most of the quartz crushed was won from No. 1 level, on reefs known as Darby's, Cross reef, and Kelly's. The battery consists of twenty heads of stampers driven by a Pelton wheel 6 ft. in diameter. Seventy men are employed in the mine and battery.

*Moanataiari Mine.*—This mine is one of the oldest on the Thames Goldfield. It was opened in 1868, and has been worked continuously ever since. At the time the mine was first opened the area of ground held was only a few acres in extent, but as time went on all the small adjacent claims were purchased by the proprietors of this mine, until the area now held is 95 acres, the whole of which is on the richest belt of this goldfield. A large amount of gold has been obtained from this mine, and dividends amounting to nearly £200,000 have been paid to the shareholders; but this gives a very faint idea of the value of the property, inasmuch as that if the assay-value of the whole of the ore treated from this mine—some of it was opened twenty-nine years ago—had been ascertained it would be found that, owing to the primitive appliances used in the early days, not more than 40 per cent. of the value of the gold the ore contained had been recovered. Although rich bonanzas of auriferous ore have been found from time to time in this mine, a very large amount of dead-work had to be undertaken in the construction of adits, levels, shafts, and winzes to open it up and get the workings properly ventilated, and when rich shoots of ore were worked, the shares rose on many occasions to high prices, and rapidly exchanged hands. The principal object in working the mine was to keep all hands working on the rich shoots, so that large dividends could be paid. A reserve fund was never thought of, to undertake fresh dead-work to open out fresh blocks of ore calls had to be made, and new shareholders, who had purchased shares at high prices with the expectation that the mine would steadily continue a large dividend-paying concern, were not in a position to meet the calls, and this has led to the company being reorganized at three different periods. The last reorganization of the company took place in November, 1896, when the mine and plant were purchased by an English company, with a working capital of £30,000, and which has since been increased to £50,000. This company's head office is in London, and is represented in the colony by its attorney, Mr. Henry A. Gordon, general manager of the Anglo-Continental Gold Syndicate (Limited), the late Inspecting Engineer of the Mines Department. The mine is being well opened up, a large amount of development having been done during the year. No. 2 shaft has been sunk a further depth of 246 ft., making the total depth from the surface 400 ft. The main adit, or Moanataiari Tunnel, was extended, and has now reached a distance of 3,170 ft. from the entrance. In driving the various cross-cuts 950 ft. has been completed, and 2,084 ft. of driving on reefs and leaders; in rising and sinking on reefs 550 ft. has been done. The total quantity of quartz crushed during the year was: For the owners, 5,073 tons, value £1 1s. per ton; and for tributers, 375 tons, value £1 11s. per ton: total value, £5,907 18s. The whole of the crushing plant has been dismantled, in order that a new and improved plant may be substituted. The mine will be so well opened that on completion the new battery can be fully employed. The prospects of the mine are very favourable. The extent of reefs explored and ready for stopping out will, when worked, yield profitable returns, as pockets of rich quartz similar in character to the bonanzas taken out in the past are almost certain to be met with. The increased quantity of quartz that in future will be required to supply the new mill will necessitate taking out blocks of reef that were left because apparently not payable. The average value of the whole when rich pockets are included will give a satisfactory yield. It is highly probable that exploration of greater depths near the Main Slide and under where the heavy deposits of gold were obtained from No. 9 reef will result in the discovery of a continuation of rich patches. The extension of the main tunnel will also enable the well-known rich reefs and leaders to be opened at greater depth than could have been undertaken in the past, and add in a great measure to the extent available for working. The return of gold for next year cannot (unless a very rich pocket is met with) be expected to come up to the yield for 1896, as during the greater part of 1897, until the new mill is ready, no quartz can be treated. Eighty-five wages-men and twelve tributers were employed. The following account of the mine, the new works carried out, and the improved crushing-mill has been furnished by Mr. H. A. Gordon, the resident general manager, and gives a correct description of the whole:—

At the time the present company took over the property the mine was in a very bad condition. All the known shoots of payable ore on the upper levels had been taken out, and the levels, adits, and shafts allowed to fall into a very bad state of repair. The main adit, known as the Moanataiari Tunnel, which was constructed for a distance of 3,070 ft., had to be retimbered and new roadways laid down before workings could be proceeded with in other portions of the mine, this adit being the main highway to get the ore conveyed from all portions of the mine to the crushing-battery. The main adit has been extended for a distance of 100 ft., and a cross-cut constructed from it for 150 ft., where it cut the Reuben Parr reef. This reef has now been driven on for a distance of 110 ft., and will require a further extension of the level of 550 ft. to get under the rich shoot of ore which was found in opening up the level 200 ft. above this, which is termed the 100 ft. level. The total distance to drive on this reef from the present face on the main-adit level to the eastward boundary of the property is 1,200 ft. The whole of this reef where the rich shoot of ore was cut through on the 100 ft. level is intact to the surface, the main-adit level at this point being 550 ft. under the outcrop. This lode has been opened up for a distance of 700 ft. on the 100 ft. level, and also for the same distance on the Point Russell level, ready for stopping as soon as the new mill, which is at present in course of construction, is completed. Among other important works undertaken is the development of the Golden Age reef, one of the principal lodes which traverses the whole of the property. This has been opened out