



Adamsfield

Come and discover Adamsfield – once a thriving osmiridium mining settlement in Tasmania’s remote southwest. Today the quiet valley with scattered relics is gradually being reclaimed by the bush. The Adamsfield Conservation Area, as shown in the attached map, is part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Black gold!

A rush of miners to the Adams Valley began in mid 1925 where, despite the isolation, a township of more than 1,000 people quickly developed. At this time osmiridium had a value of around £30 per ounce – about seven times the value of gold.

Osmiridium, a naturally occurring alloy, was used to manufacture fountain pen nibs, poisonous gases and jewellery. It was also used for medical and dental purposes and later in the electronics industry.

Initially, mining involved labour intensive individual workings. By the late 1930s this became more capital intensive with shafts, tunnels, water races and involved substantial amounts of equipment. After the start of World War II few people lived in the town. Open cut mining was conducted for a short period in the 1960s.

A difficult journey

Access to Adamsfield was via pack tracks through the Florentine Valley. It was a difficult journey due to the rugged country and the weather conditions. Huts along the way acted as resupply points for both the hopeful miners and the packers who kept the settlement supplied with stores.

Adamsfield today

Today there is little left of this once booming town. Most of the buildings have been damaged by bushfires or reclaimed by the bush. Despite this, a visit to Adamsfield is well worthwhile. What remains gives a feeling for what once existed here and the surrounding landscape emphasises the remoteness of the settlement. In spring, daffodils and other flowers indicate where gardens once surrounded homes.

The most obvious features at the site, such as Clarks huts and the associated relics, and the open cut and mullock heaps, are actually from the 1930s -1960s period of mining.

How to get there

If you are travelling in a **2WD** vehicle you will need to access Adamsfield via the Clear Hill Road. This leaves the Gordon River Road about 3.5 kilometres west of Frodshams Pass. After approximately 17.7 kilometres the junction with the Adamsfield (Morley) track (**4WD**) is reached. There is a locked barrier at the start of this track. If you walk along the Adamsfield track for approximately 4 kilometres you will reach the township site (**4 on the map**). Allow about two hours for the return walk plus time to explore the relics.

If you have a **4WD** vehicle you can reach Adamsfield via the Clear Hill Road and Adamsfield (Morley) track (as described above).

An alternative **4WD** route is provided by the Saw Back track. People using this route must be experienced four-wheel drivers with high clearance vehicles. There is a particularly steep and slippery section on the Saw Back track just before it joins the Adamsfield track. The Saw Back track leaves the Gordon River Road 15 kilometres west of Frodshams Pass. It is closed annually from 1st June to 1st October to prevent damage to the fragile mudstone soils.

Please be aware that track closures may also occur at other times of the year due to high fire danger or for other management reasons.

What to see and do

Some of the main relics and other features of interest are detailed below and their locations are marked on the map.

(1) Clarks huts

These two huts are located approximately one kilometre along the Adamsfield track east of its junction with the Clear Hill road. There is also a collection of mining relics adjacent to these huts.

The huts were built in the mid 1940s by Norm Clark who was mining here at that time. They have been used and maintained by subsequent mining lessees. These huts are not open to the public; please respect them and the privacy of the occupants.

(2) Water race

Approximately 250 m west of the wooden routed sign that points to the township (4) you can see a water race running parallel to the northern edge of the Adamsfield track. This is an example of the network of races that were built to channel water downhill to the alluvial osmiridium workings in Moore's Gully. This network represents a huge investment of time and energy. It has been estimated that it would take about 750 work days (one person working for one day) to dig one kilometre of race with dimensions of one metre by half a metre, and then another 150 work days per year to keep it open.

(3) Remains of Pat Roach's hut and dam

Look for a small clearing on the south side of the Adamsfield track approximately 200 metres west of the wooden township sign (4). If you walk 40 m south from the clearing you will find the remains of a hut.

Pat Roach and his family were long term residents of Adamsfield, rather than transients – this is indicated by the fact that they built structures such as the log wall dam on the adjacent creek to supply water to their home and mine workings. The hut was probably a two-roomed structure, set on a platform with a stone fireplace and tin chimney.

(4) Township site

Look for a wooden routed sign approximately three kilometres east of the boom gate on the Adamsfield track. Follow the foot track uphill for approximately 100 m.

Very little evidence of the township site remains today and much of the area is overgrown with bracken. Grassy corridors indicate the location of former roads and there is a lone telegraph pole. Remains of a stone chimney and a large pile of broken bottles can also be seen here.

(5) Open cut

Access to the open cut is provided by the Adamsfield track. Continue east from the township site, beyond the junction with the Saw Back track. Track conditions in the vicinity of the open cut require a **4WD** with good clearance and traction.

This was where the hard rock mining occurred during the 1960s. Excavations, trenches, tracks and a tramway formation are all visible here.

Warning: Take care in this area, as there are a number of old mine shafts in this area, some of which are water filled. These shafts can become unstable and there is a risk of them collapsing.

(6) Adamsfield 'Hilton'

The Hilton was destroyed by a bushfire in November 2007. It was located on the top of the hill to the north of the open cut workings. Vehicle access to the Hilton site requires a **4WD** with good clearance and traction. This hut was originally built as the site office for the open cut mine in the 1960s.

(7) Tims (Timbs) track (refer to location map)

To gain a greater appreciation of the journey to Adamsfield you may like to walk a short section of the original pack track. This track is overgrown and no longer accessible from the township end, but you can access a short length of it as part of Tims track which leaves the Gordon River Road approximately 23 km west of Maydena. The wooden cording of the original Adamsfield track and the remains of two huts can be seen just before you reach the Florentine River. Please note that the bridge has collapsed and it is no longer possible to cross the Florentine River. Allow 3 to 4 hours for the return walk from the Gordon River Road.

Permits and keys

There are barriers on both the Saw Back Range track, Adamsfield track and the Clear Hill Road, which are permanently locked. Therefore, all vehicle based visitors to Adamsfield, including those travelling by motorbike, four-wheel bike or mountain bike, require an authority and a key. You can obtain these by contacting the Mt Field National Park Visitor Centre. A \$100 refundable deposit is charged for the key. The maximum number of vehicles in each group is six. To ensure access it is recommended that you book in advance.

Visitors to Adamsfield do not require a Parks pass.

Plan your trip

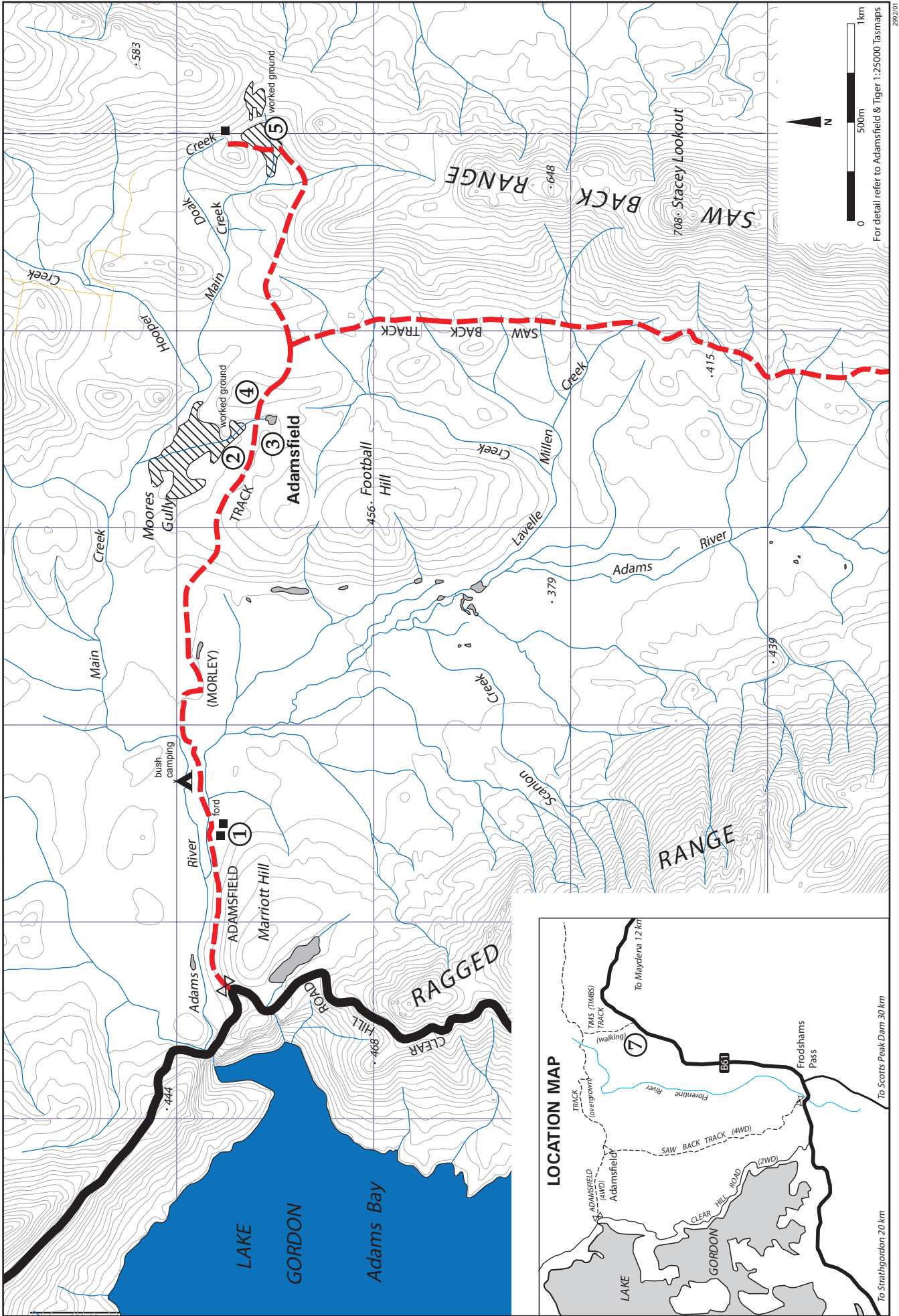
All vehicles must be free of mud before entering Adamsfield Conservation Area to prevent the spread of weeds and fungal diseases. Vehicles including motorbikes and four wheel bikes must be registered and stay on the formed tracks indicated on the map.

Mountain bike riders should be aware that a full circuit taking in the Saw Back and Adamsfield tracks and the Clear Hill Road is a long ride, which requires a full day. Riders should be well prepared especially for sudden changes in the weather.

Huts, camping and toilets

The Clark's huts are associated with mining leases and are not for public use.

There is a bush campsite approximately 200 m beyond Clark's huts on the north side of the Adamsfield Track. There is also a pit toilet here.



PARKS AND PLACES – Adamsfield

Fires

As Adamsfield is part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, it is a Fuel Stove Only Area. This means no fires may be lit in the open except in designated sites. The only designated site in this area is at the campsite.

Please take your rubbish home with you.

Respect the relics

The relics in this area provide an important link with our past. Please do not disturb them. If items are moved or removed their potential to tell us about the past is reduced, as is the enjoyment of other people who visit the site.

Further Information:

Bacon, C.A. Mineral Resources Tasmania Report 1992/20; Notes on the history of mining and exploration at Adamsfield.

Lane, H.A., 1976; I had a quid to get, Advocate Printers.

Gowlland, K; Gowlland, R; Gowlland, T; 1973. Adamsfield; The town that lived and died, C.J. Richmond and sons: Devonport.

Contact

Mt Field National Park

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Internet: www.parks.tas.gov.au May 2008 © State of Tasmania