

7. Newall Creek



Key facts about this geosite:

- **Historic gold mines and old pack track**
- **The area contains an unconformity between the Middle Cambrian Mount Read Volcanics and the overlying Ordovician Pioneer Beds**
- **The Pioneer Sandstone contains gastropods (snails) and rhynchonellid brachiopod fossils**

How to get there: The site is located almost 12 kilometres south of Queenstown along the sealed Mt Jukes Road (Figure 1), where the road crosses Newall Creek (with a viewing platform and information boards) (Figure 2). Newall Creek flows through lush rainforest with King Billy, Celery top and Huon pines, and includes a viewing platform and walking track. The track can be found on the eastern side of the creek, but the approach is inconspicuous and steep. It is a very pleasant walk that can be followed back to the Geosite and carpark at John Butters Power Station (about 20 mins), via the old Harris Reward gold mine. Take care when following the track, as parts are rough and slippery, with old, sharp railings and stakes on the steps leading down to the creek, and also take care around old pits and shafts. The Newall Creek area is a popular place for gold panning, but the creek is rocky and slippery, so again take care.

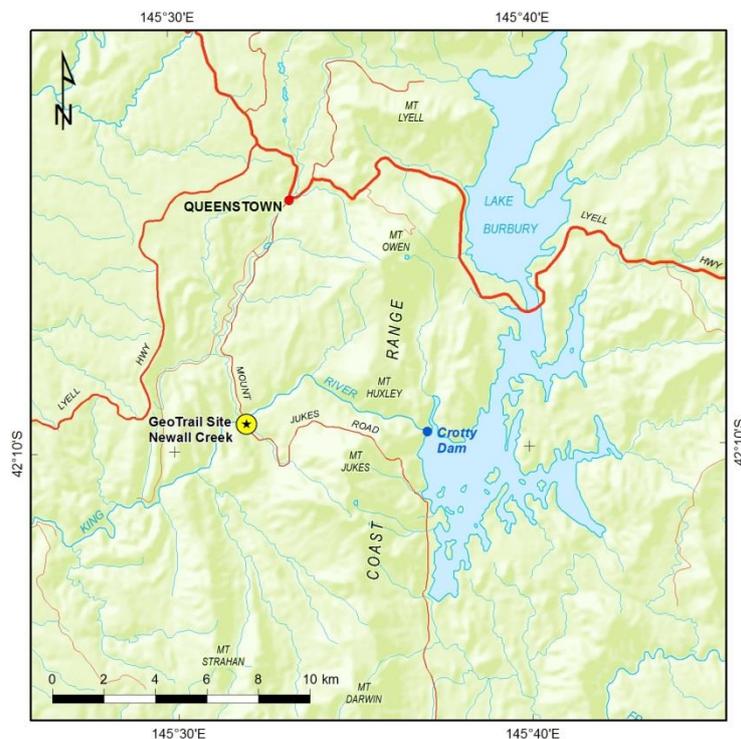


Figure 1: Location of the Newall Creek Geosite.

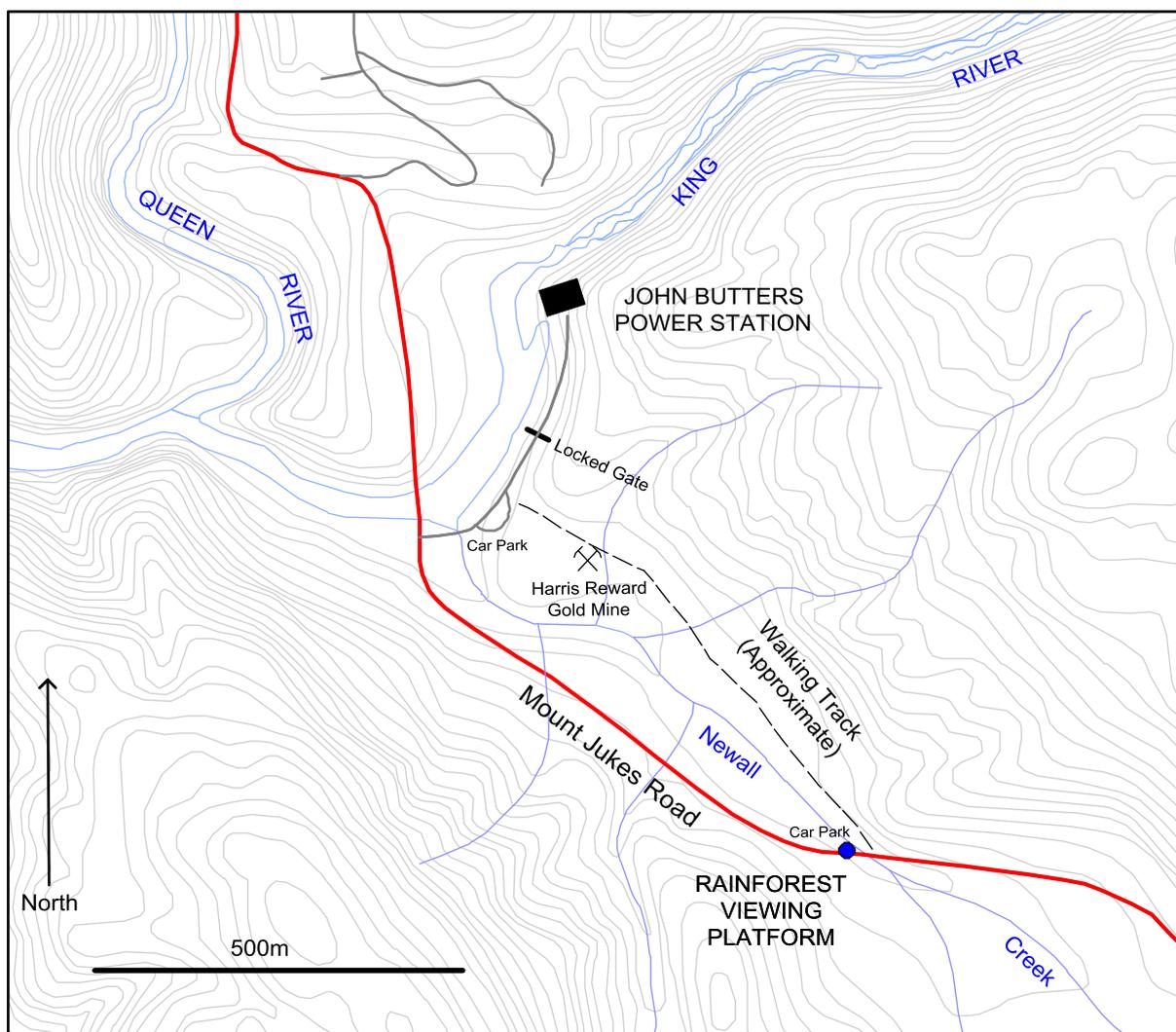


Figure 2: Map of Newall Creek and John Butters Power Station Geosite area

Geosite Description:

The Newall Creek area (Figure 3) contains many historic gold workings especially the Harris Reward gold mine (Julen, 1981), the first mine in the area, predating the Mt Lyell copper mines. Workings include pits and [shafts](#) which are largely collapsed and partly obscured by the rainforest (Figure 4) and part of a historic pack track (Figure 5). The workings exploited lode gold in quartz veins (Figure 6) in the [Cambrian](#) volcanics plus some alluvial gold weathered from the lodes into gravels and sands. White quartz scattered around the mines is a remnant of the mineralised veins. There are other workings west of the road, but people should venture into these areas only with great care.

The first report on the mine (Twelvetrees, 1900; Collins, 1974) describes two [tunnels](#) (24m and 10m long), and two shafts (12m and 11m deep). The shafts were later extended and opened out by the Coronation Gold Mining Company which took over the mine in 1902 but operations apparently ceased during 1905. Production from the mine was at

least 1.480 kg Au from 109.6 t of lode quartz. The gold occurs with galena in discontinuous quartz veins which are parallel to the strike and dip of the schistose and porphyritic country rock, and were reported to be 5-12 cm wide.

The area also has important geological significance as in the lower Newall Creek valley an [unconformity](#) exists between the Middle Cambrian [Mount Read Volcanics](#) and the directly overlying Ordovician [Pioneer Sandstone](#), with no intervening units (Calver, 1997). The Pioneer Sandstone contain important fossils: [gastropods](#) (snails) and [rhyntonellid brachiopods](#), though these are difficult to locate (Laurie, 1995).

If you drive up the road a few km further you cross the West Coast Range and encounter another Geosite at the Mt Jukes lookout. Be sure to also stop at a nearby lookout to the left (384717mE/ 5330452mN) which shows incredible views north towards Mt Huxley and the ranges beyond. The drive down to the Darwin dam will reveal another geosite, with information about the nearby Darwin meteorite crater.

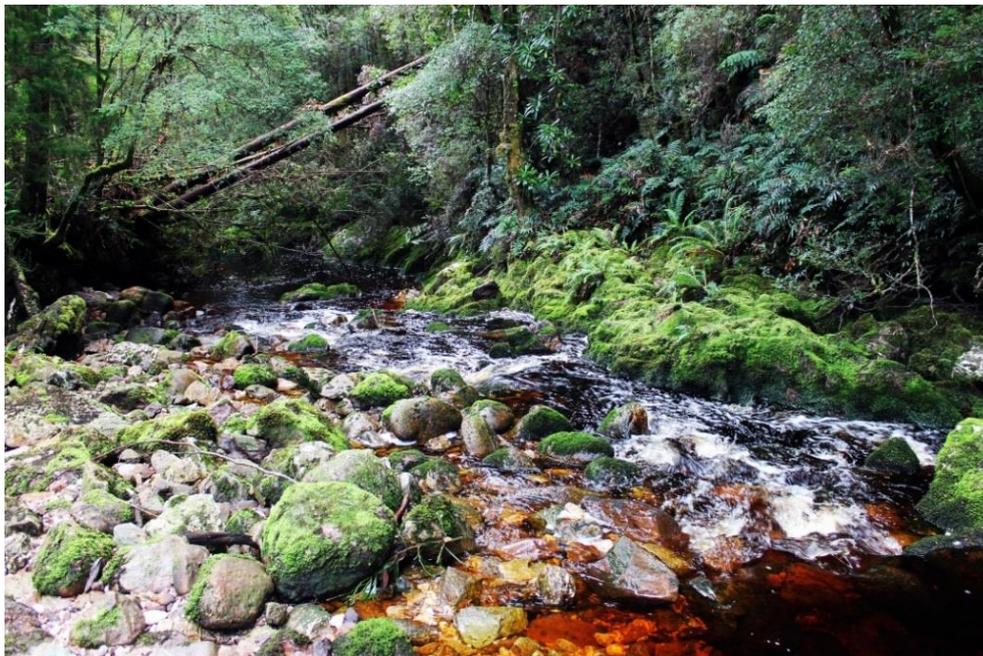


Figure 3: Newall Creek (image courtesy of Danielle Fairfield).



Figure 4. Collapsed shaft at the Harris Reward gold mine.



Figure 5: Historic pack track along Newall Creek to Harris Rewards Gold Mine (image courtesy of Danielle Fairfield).



Figure 6. Gold in quartz from near Queenstown (25mm)

References:

CALVER, C.R. 1997. Bedrock Geological National Estate Values of the West Coast Range, Record [1997/08](#), Tasmanian Geological Survey, Mineral Resources Tasmania

COLLINS, P.L.F.C. 1974. [MRT Document TR19_26_33: A review of the mineral resources and mining potential of the storage areas of the proposed Lower Gordon and King-Franklin hydro-electric power schemes](#)

JULEN, H. 1981. A History of Goldmining on the Tasmanian West Coast. Regal Press. Launceston

LAURIE, J.R. 1995. Examination of macrofossils from the Pioneer beds from near Queenstown, Tasmania, AGSO Prof. Opinion 1995/018

TWELVETREES, W.H. 1900. [MRT Document OS_164: Report on the mineral districts of Mounts Huxley, Jukes and Darwin](#)