

Barossa Walks

Barossa Goldfields

2.4 km Level plots in the hill to your left are the foundations of miners' huts.

Cross the creek to reach Menzies Barossa Mine, comprising ruins of the Steam Winding House and the fenced off Main Shaft. It is anticipated that a winding winch, manufactured by Martin's of Gawler, will be installed here.

At the foot of the slope opposite is the Phoenix Tunnel, which was taken in about 85 m to investigate the same quartz reef as the North Tunnel. Again only traces of gold were found. The Main Shaft was dug also to intersect this reef which extended to the Lady Pearce Tunnel (located 400m further south above the South Para River).

Details are given on the information panels.

2.2 km The walking trail joins the tramway, near a digging. The tramway was used to cart gold-bearing quartz in skips from the mine to the stamp battery. You pass the end of a 30m tunnel, cut to maintain an even grade for ponies pulling the skips.

Checkpoint G3 is a level area at the southern end of the tunnel; cross the road and continue along the level tramway.

2.0 km The tramway curves around and you leave it at a point overlooking the Battery site, gradually winding your way downhill to the Engine and Boilerhouse foundations (just beyond the 1.8km mark) where there is a good overview of the battery site. The 40-head battery, the largest in South Australia, operated only once in 1898 and following liquidation of the Menzies Barossa Mining Co. was sold and dismantled. Details on the panel.

Checkpoint G4, at the battery site, is the junction with the Lady Pearce circuit.

1.6 km The main trail takes you back to Checkpoint G3 on the tramway. Follow the tramway, noticing the gorge of the South Para River below with an unusual River Red Gum forest on its slopes, a forest of Grass Trees, and the Devil's Nose rock outcrop.

1.4 km The tramway continues as far as the Transverse Tunnel, which again follows the reef from Lady Pearce, but at a higher level.

As you walk up the hill large Blue Gums have several trunks which have almost certainly regrown following cutting for fuel to power the steam battery. Fortunately for the trees, that the battery operated only once!

1.0 – 0.8 km Various views to the north-east include the Wirra Wirra Peaks and Mt Crawford Firetower on the Warren Tower walk. Eventually you pass the Barossa Junction Mine (1896), an opencut with a shaft at the end of the digging – another failed prospect.

From here return to Bowden Cottage passing the Victoria Hill diggings area, and Checkpoints G7 and G5, through a heathy woodland of Pink Gum, Blue Gum and Southern Cypress-pine.

Return to Bowden Cottage car park.

COMMON BIRDS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Adelaide Rosella	Grey Shrike Thrush
Musk Lorikeet	Brown Treecreeper
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	Red-browed Finch
Superb Blue Wren	Diamond Firetail
Grey Fantail	



Musk Lorikeet



Red-browed Finch

Walk is in Para Wirra Recreation Park managed by the Department for Environment and Heritage. It is presented here by the Walking Trails Support Group.
www.walkingtrailssupportgroup.org.au

Interpretation is based on the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia's guidebook Exploring the Barossa available from the Tanunda Visitor Information Centre.

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Tramway tunnel for ponies

Gold was found here in both river (alluvial) deposits and in quartz reefs. Alluvial gold was found first in 1868 in shallow river deposits, but more ancient and deeper ones were also exploited. In both cases the gold particles were washed out of the riverine sands. The Victoria Hill area was the most important site and many shafts were sunk to gain access to the old river beds, but by 1871 the area was largely worked out.

Interest was later shown in quartz reefs and a number of mines were sunk in the 1890s to find gold-bearing lodes.

While some speculators showed off promising gold specimens, many thousands of £s were wasted in fruitless endeavours by the Belle of the Barossa and Menzies Barossa (previously Royal Phoenix) mining syndicates. A stamp battery near the South Para River (at G4) was used to pulverise ore to release gold from the quartz, but it was used only once.

The gold story is told well by the information panels installed by the Department of Mines and Energy. The fever of exploitation can still be appreciated from the remains of shafts, tunnels and the concrete foundations built for expensive equipment.

The area continued to support small farm and fossicking interests during depression years, up to the mid-1930s, and became a Recreation Park in 1962.

Distance and time:

There are three circuit walks

Victoria Hill circuit 1.4 km;

allow 1 hour to take in the signs

Phoenix circuit 4.2 km; allow 2 hours.

Lady Pearce circuit 6.0 km; allow 2.5 hrs.

Marked distances decrease as you return to Bowden cottage.

Access: From Bowden Cottage Trailhead on Para Wirra Road. Nearest towns are Sandy Creek (approx 7km) and Williamstown (approx 8km).

Notes are written for an anticlockwise walk of the Phoenix Circuit, including most of the Victoria Hill Circuit. (The Lady Pearce Circuit is not described.)

Track

Generally an AS2156 Class 3 track in a natural area

For your safety

- This is a walk in a natural area; beware of inherent hazards
- Walk in a party of four, advise a reliable person of where you are going and when you expect to return
- Wear strong comfortable boots and take adequate food and clothing
- Take at least 2 litres of water per person, more if it is hot
- Protect yourself from the sun and carry a First Aid Kit

Seasons come and go, and plants and animals mentioned in the notes may not always be there.

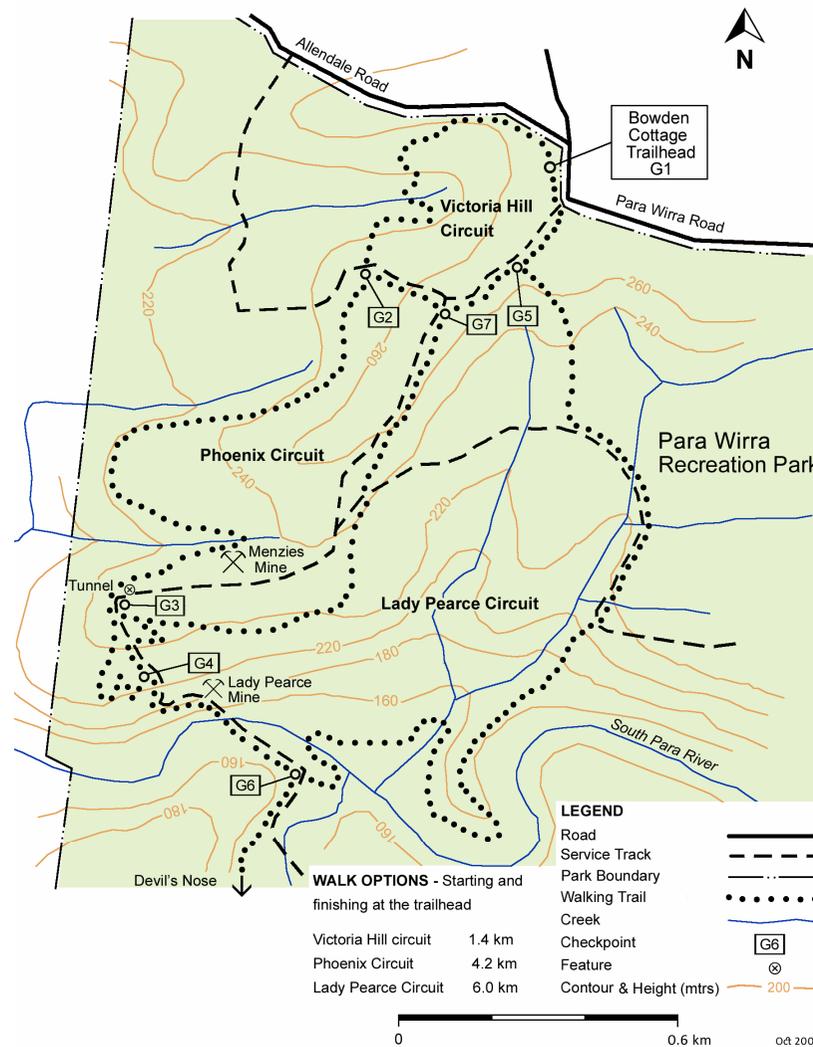
Start at Bowden Cottage Trailhead,

Checkpoint G1 Bowden Cottage is now managed as a Museum by the Barossa Goldfields Historical Society and old mining equipment is on display in the garden. A little house was built in 1907 as a labourer's cottage, which the Bowden family extended in the 1930s.

4.0 km The foundations of Sarah and Henry Woodfield's house have been overgrown by the old Pepper-tree.

They lived here between 1873 and 1901 during the

BAROSSA GOLDFIELDS WALK



declining years of the goldfield. Henry was a teamster from Gawler, using his oxen to take logs to the timber mill in Williamstown.

Read the sign about the goldfield before continuing the walk. Many of the diggings lie north of here in Spike Gully, now on private land.

This section of the walk takes you past some of the deep shafts of the alluvial Victoria Hill diggings and it is interesting how vegetation has recolonised this area which must have been just about bare in 1870.

3.8 km Gold that was deposited in deeply buried sediments became cemented by lime-rich material. As the information panel explains this 'Barossa Cement' had to be crushed to free the gold.

The Edwards family lived in the Walkervale Gully area between 1929 and 1932, eking out a living as described on the panel. Vacant unoccupied Crown Lands, as this area then was, would have provided haven for many penniless families during depressions.

3.6 – 3.4 km This is the location of one of the quartz reef mines, 'Belle of the Barossa'. Several shafts were put down, one to 80 feet (24m), but with little outcome.

3.4 km Checkpoint G2 To return to Bowden Cottage now, turn left and after about 200m, left again, passing Checkpoints G7 and G5, to return to the gate and the cottage a short distance beyond.

Continue on for the Phoenix Circuit.

3.2 km These grassy hills of Blue Gum woodland reflect a change in the underlying rocks and are the location of quartz reefs eagerly sought by miners.

3.0 km At the foot of the slope below you is the elongated spoil heap from the North Tunnel, which was driven into the hill by the Menzies Barossa syndicate. It gave access to a deep quartz reef, about 60m from the entrance. Only traces of gold were found.

2.8 km Just beyond this point on the hillside there is young regrowth of Blue Gum and Drooping Sheoak and you pass a fenced-off exploratory shaft and costean (or trench following the reef).

2.6 km On the opposite slope is an old track supported by stone walling, which went to the Phoenix Tunnel (below you now). The almost level horse tramway to the Menzies Mine is also visible.