



### ONE OF TASMANIA'S GREAT SHORT WALKS

The Coal Mines Historic Site is a great place to discover on foot. Learn the history of this place as you walk the paths and tracks around the Site and read the stories of some of the people who lived and worked here. Explore the settlement ruins which once included stone prisoners' barracks and punishment cells, a chapel, bakehouse and store as well as quarters for the commanding officer, surgeon and soldiers.

The area is rich in native flora and fauna, with many species of native plants and birds complementing the quiet coastal setting.

Walk options range from a few minutes to several hours.



### VISITOR GUIDE

A printed guide to the Coal Mines, including its short walks and historical notes, is available at the Port Arthur Historic Site Visitor Centre, or for download from our website.

### HOW TO GET THERE

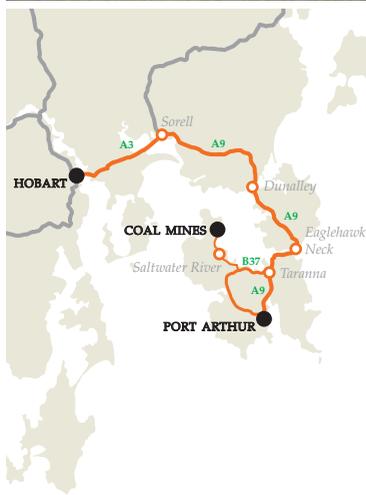
The Coal Mines Historic Site is 25 minutes' drive from Port Arthur, near Saltwater River on the north-western tip of the Tasman Peninsula. It is approximately one and a half hours' drive from Hobart.

#### From Port Arthur

Travel north along the Arthur Highway to Taranna; turn left onto the B37, then continue as above. Alternatively, continue past Port Arthur to Nubeena and Premaydena, then turn left onto the C341 at the Premaydena shop and continue as above.

#### From Hobart

Travel down the Arthur Highway to the Tasman Peninsula; turn right at Taranna onto the B37. At the Premaydena shop, turn right and take road C341 for approximately 13 kilometres and turn right onto the sealed road to the Coal Mines Historic Site.



### ENTRY AND FACILITIES

The Coal Mines Historic Site is open daily. No bookings are required and entry is free. There are basic toilet facilities and bringing your own drinking water is recommended.

### DISABLED ACCESS

While the main settlement and Plunkett Point are accessible, the Inclined Plane and the track up to the Main Shaft are not recommended for those with mobility issues. The Main Shaft is accessible via the nearby car park.

### SAFETY ON SITE

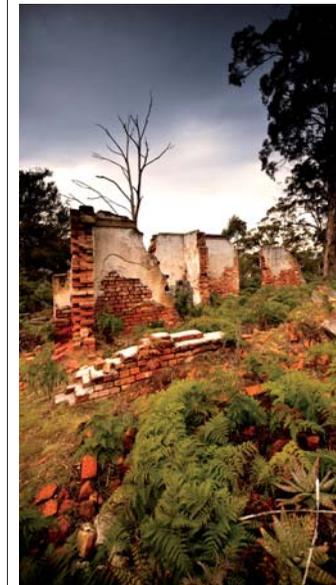
The ruins are fragile, so please do not climb on them and take care as you explore the site. Watch out for snakes in the warmer months. The weather in the area is changeable and there are no shelters. Carry sun protection, warm clothing and a raincoat or umbrella.

### MORE INFORMATION

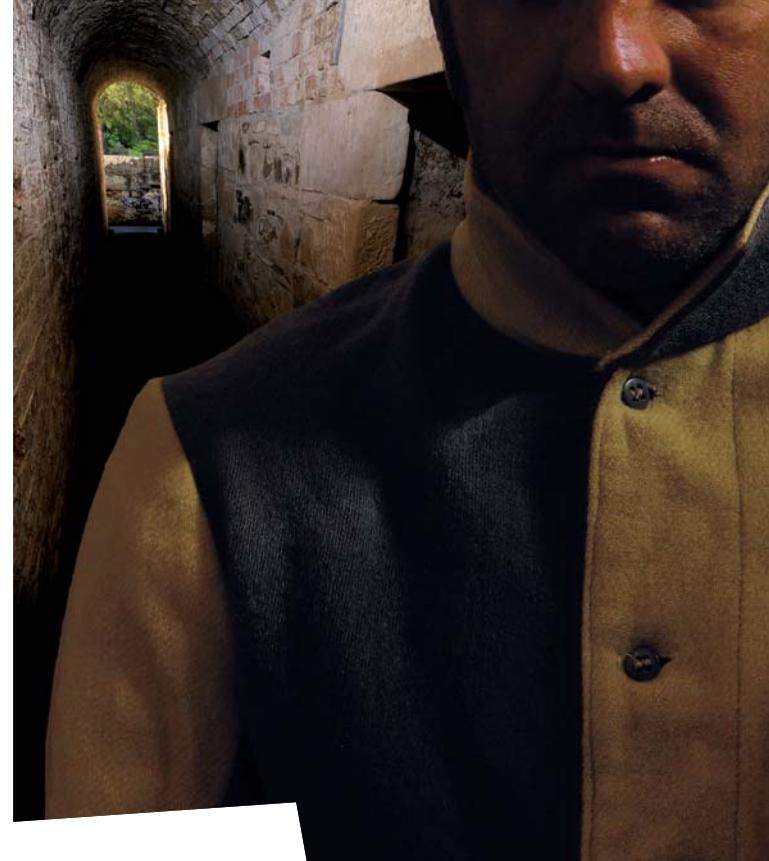
The Site is managed by the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority.  
FREE CALL – 1800 659 101  
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Tel: +61 (0)3 6251 2310  
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Port Arthur Historic Site  
Port Arthur, Tasmania 7182  
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#### Tours

Guided tours can be organised by prior arrangement. Contact the Port Arthur Historic Site or see website for details.



# COAL MINES *Historic Site*



World Heritage Site



Ongoing support for conservation is provided by the Tasmanian Government



PORT ARTHUR HISTORIC SITES

## THE COAL MINES HISTORIC SITE

*When you visit this now peaceful bush landscape, you will experience first-hand a little-known element of the the great experiment in the punishment of crime on which the Australian nation was founded. As you explore the ruins of houses, barracks, offices and cells of those who once lived and worked here, remember that this was where the 'worst of the worst' convicts were sent for punishment. While you walk among the mining tramways and convict roads, spare a thought for those who faced the danger of working in unstable mine shafts, or those held in solitary confinement in dark, damp cold underground cells that can be visited to this day.*

## AN AMBITIOUS EXPERIMENT

The Coal Mines attempted to combine convict discipline with industrial productivity, but the experiment was destined to be short-lived.

During its busiest years almost 600 prisoners, civil and military officers and their families lived and worked at the Mines. By the late 1830s, the majority of coal used in Van Diemen's Land was produced here.

But the Mines were beset by constant problems including maintaining discipline and the poor quality of the coal, so the settlement struggled with continual financial losses.

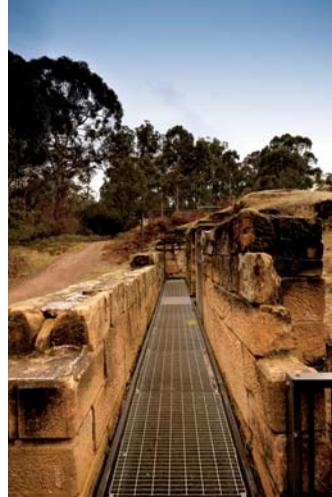
## A PLACE TO BE FEARED?

The Coal Mines was a dreaded destination for the Colony's 'worst class' of convicts. While Port Arthur was regarded as a harsh place of punishment, the Coal Mines was said to be even more dreadful. But was the settlement's fearsome reputation really justified?

Gruelling labour and punishments that included the long, cold quiet of a solitary cell struck fear into the hearts of many men. But not every man was destined for misery here, nor for the long black descent to the coal seams.

## GARDENS, TIMBERYARDS, AND DEEP, DARK TUNNELS

Most prisoners spent their days tending gardens, labouring, building, quarrying, burning lime and charcoal, or splitting timber. Other skilled convicts – carpenters, blacksmiths, shoemakers, tailors and tanners – were set to work at their trades.



But the success of the Mines largely depended on skilled convict miners who descended into the stifling darkness to dig an average of three tons of coal by hand every day.

Their efforts could not redeem the Mines' inherent problems and after 15 years, the operation was handed to private enterprise. Mining was eventually abandoned in 1901.

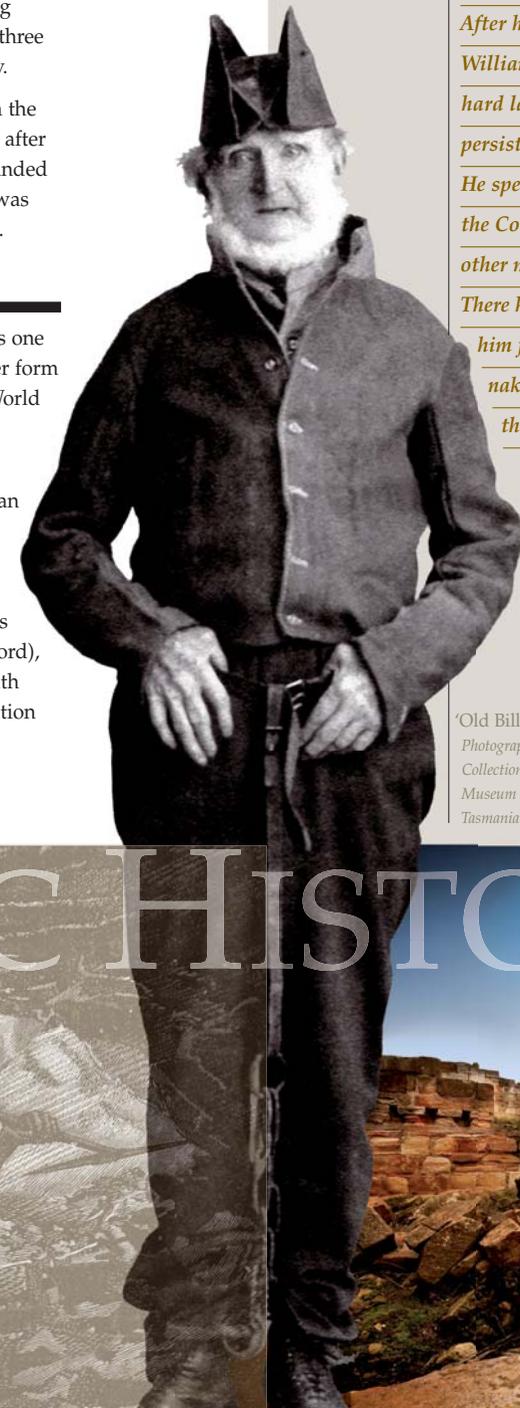
## A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The Coal Mines Historic Site is one of 11 historic sites that together form the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage property.

To gain an understanding of Tasmania's role in the Australian convict story, we recommend that you visit the other Tasmanian sites – the Port Arthur Historic Site, Woolmers Estate and Brickendon (Longford), Cascades Female Factory (South Hobart) and Darlington Probation Station (Maria Island).

## MEET WILLIAM THOMPSON

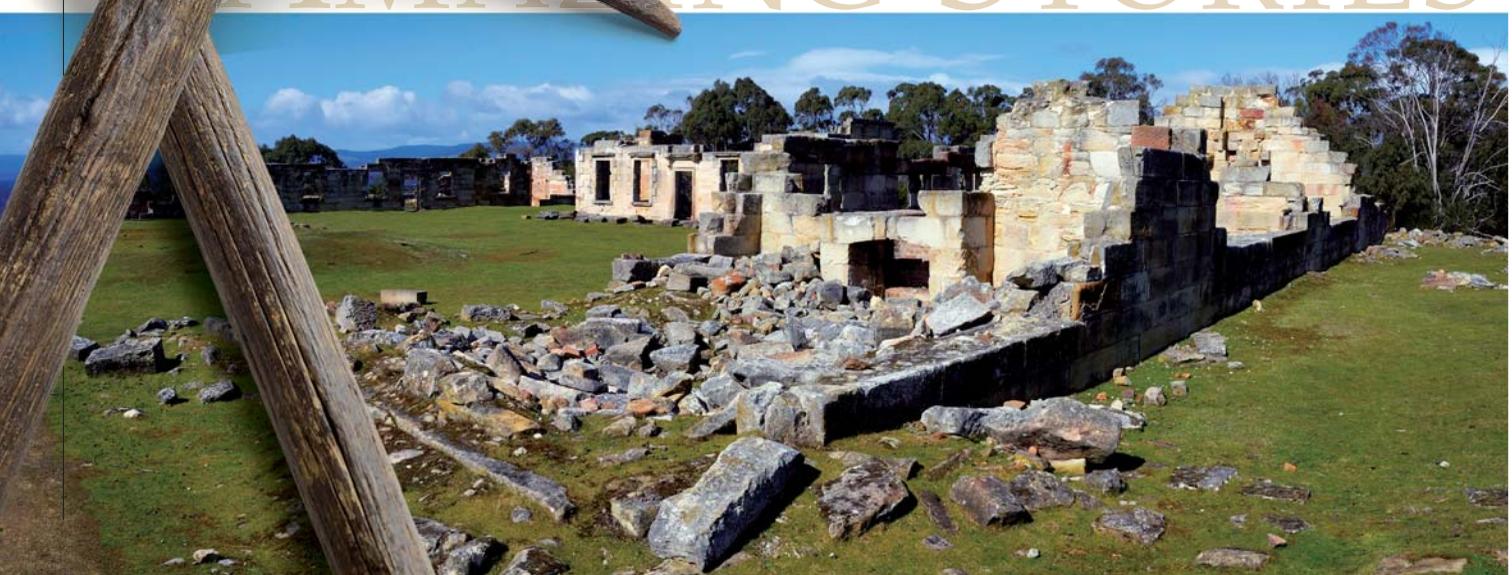
*William was a young shoemaker, transported for life in 1841 for burglary. After his arrival in the colony young William was sentenced to two years' hard labour in chains here, for persistent absconding and theft. He spent 12 months underground at the Coal Mines, harnessed with three other men to drag loaded coal carts. There he saw things that marked him for life. 'I contemplated the naked figures, faintly perceptible in the gloom, with feelings of horror.'*



'Old Bill' Thompson  
Photographer J W Beattie  
Collection: Allport Library and  
Museum of Fine Arts,  
Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office



# AMAZING STORIES



# EPIC HISTORY

