



Castle Hill Blackstone Reserve A Walking Museum

7 Mary Street, Blackstone



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Destination Overview

Proximity



5 min

from Ipswich CBD,
30 min from Brisbane



Trail rating



Moderate

Length of tracks



750m – 1.5km

How long will it take me?



1 hr walk

Take a walk back in time along the vast signposted historic walking tracks of Castle Hill Blackstone Reserve.

Destination Description

Castle Hill Blackstone Reserve is an award-winning destination with culture-rich mining heritage offering an experience unlike anything else in the region.

In 2016, Castle Hill Blackstone Reserve won a Queensland Outdoor Recreation Foundation Award for improving recreational experiences for residents.

The trails lead you through a walking museum, taking you back in time to the days of 19th century coal mining. Hand-dug mine shafts and tunnels, remnants of the famous Castle and even evidence of coal fires deep underground all provide an authentic glimpse into Blackstone's fascinating mining history. Informative signs point out these features along the way.

Getting There

From Ipswich follow Blackstone Road then turn right onto Mary Street at the top of the hill, next to Brynhyfryd Park.

From Brisbane follow the Cunningham Hwy and take the Redbank Plains Road exit, then follow Mary Street to Castle Hill Blackstone Reserve.

The Lewis Thomas Historical Trail is best accessed from the top of Thomas Street.

Choose The Best Trail For You

Popular walks include the Lewis Thomas Historical Trail, Blackleg Gully Trail, and the main service roads. The walking trails are rated as Class 3 under the Australian Standard for walking trails. They have natural surfaces and as it is a hilly site, walkers require a moderate level of fitness and are advised to wear comfortable walking shoes, a hat, and carry drinking water.

Please read and observe all signage and be aware that the area is popular with cyclists. Permitted uses are clearly marked on trail signs.



Lewis Thomas Historical Trail 1.5km

This must-do trail meanders from one piece of history to the next. It can be walked in either direction, starting from either the top of Thomas Street or by following the 'Impala' trail from the Blackstone Hall on Mary Street.

Highlights along this trail include open mine tunnels, hand-dug shafts, and ground cracks which emit heat from underground coal fires. It also encompasses original brick stairs and a rendered brick dome-shaped water tank which hark back to the time of Brynhyfryd.



Lewis Thomas Historical Trail



Blackleg Gully Circuit 1km | Shared walk/cycle trail

Starting and finishing in the Quarry, this trail leads up Blackleg Gully where there was once a rail line built to transport coal from the tunnels. Coal was loaded onto wagons here for transport to Brisbane. Several mine tunnels started in and around this gully and piles of coal can still be seen today. A short section of rail track has been reconstructed using original steel rails found within the reserve as a reminder of days gone by.



Lewis Thomas



Mango Track 750m | Shared walk/cycle trail

Mango Track was named after a mango tree which once stood near the site of Brynhyfryd. It leads up through the original site of Brynhyfryd, and a bit further on to the brick remnants of a former milking shed.



Central Track 830m | Shared walk/cycle trail

Central Track takes you up an adjoining ridge past a good example of a ventilation shaft. Although the fan is missing, the concrete housing is still in place.

Brynhyfryd - The 'Castle'

Remnants of the once imposing Brynhyfryd (pronounced 'Brin-Huv-Rid') are still in evidence on the hill. This three storey mansion was built in 1889 by the 'Coal King', Lewis Thomas (1832-1913). Mr Thomas was one of the most successful coal miners of the day thanks to the abundant coal reserves under what is now Castle Hill Blackstone Reserve.

Brynhyfryd featured marble fireplaces, electric lighting, cedar joinery, stately verandas on each level, and 49 rooms laid out over 24 metres squared. A hydraulic lift was added to the house in 1901. Sadly, after Brynhyfryd was sold to Ryland Collieries in 1936, mine excavations under the building rendered it unstable and it was demolished in 1937.



Coal Mining

Coal mining at Castle Hill Blackstone Reserve took place from 1866 to the mid 1940s. The early mining was done by means of shafts and tunnels which were dug using hand tools by candle light. It was back-breaking work in very tough conditions. The majority of miners in Blackstone were Welsh migrants, and many of their descendants still live in the area.

Seven coal seams were targeted by miners. These were known by the evocative names of *New Found Out*, *Aberdare*, *Bluff*, *Four Foot*, *Bergin's*, *Striped Bacon* and *Rob Roy*.

Coal was found at depths ranging from ground level down to almost 300 metres. The Aberdare Seam was the primary seam of interest because of its thickness, quality and initial easy accessibility.

The coal was transported to Brisbane by rail using a line built by Lewis Thomas in 1883 to link Blackstone with the main line at Bundamba.

Trail Etiquette

- Be courteous and respect others.
- Be aware of cyclists and joggers on shared trails; they may approach unexpectedly.
- Stay on the trails at all times; do not cut corners.
- Leave no trace. Remove all litter and respect the environment.
- Do not remove any rocks, artefacts, flora or fauna from the reserve.
- Read and obey signage.
- Respect neighbouring private properties and stay within the reserve boundaries.

History and Culture

Blackstone remains sacred to the Traditional Owners of Ipswich. Sacred sites are very important to the Traditional Owners, as they provide a link between Country and personal identity and allow the passing on of cultural knowledge. Some of the sacred sites within Ipswich include quarry sites, traditional food resources, story places, pre-contact and historical camp sites, fighting grounds, ceremonial sites, bora rings and women's business sites.



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Castle Hill Blackstone Reserve Walking Trails

Trail Name	Rating	Distance	Use
LTHT Lewis Thomas Historical Trail		1.5km	
BGC Blackleg Gully Circuit		1km	
MAN Mango Track		750m	
CEN Central Track		830m	
IMP Impala Track		400m	

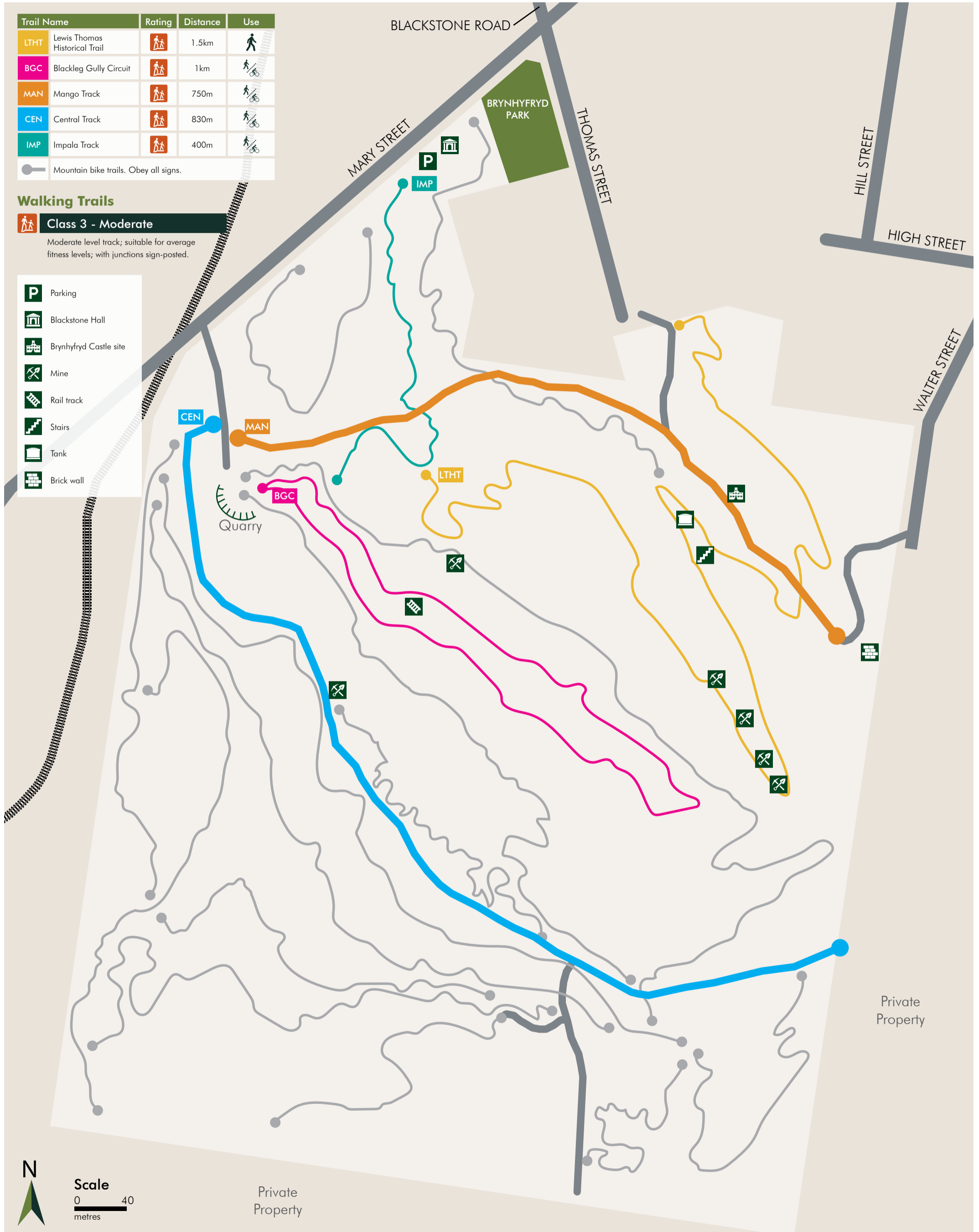
Mountain bike trails. Obey all signs.

Walking Trails

Class 3 - Moderate

Moderate level track; suitable for average fitness levels; with junctions sign-posted.

- Parking
- Blackstone Hall
- Brynhyfryd Castle site
- Mine
- Rail track
- Stairs
- Tank
- Brick wall



Scale
0 40
metres

Private Property