

CLERMONT GOLD GENERAL PERMISSION AREAS

The area surrounding Clermont is an old gold mining district which is still of interest to fossickers and metal detector enthusiasts. A number of “general permission” areas at selected localities in State Forest and Reserve have been agreed to for fossicking in accordance with the *Fossicking Act 1994*. The “general permissions” are given to the Mining Registrar, Emerald and are subject to specific conditions, which must be complied with by all fossickers.

History

Alluvial gold was discovered in gullies south of Clermont in 1861, and triggered one of Queensland’s major gold rushes. By 1862 mining extended from McDonald Flat in the southeast to Hurleys in the northwest. Subsequent finds were at Expedition Dam, The Springs, Black Ridge and Miclere. In 1873 many miners left to join the Palmer River rush, but mining continued and expanded to deep leads in Permian conglomerates and Tertiary sediments, and some lodes, with the peak year of 1898 seeing 3000 miners on the field. After 1910 the activity declined to virtually nothing in the 1920s.

There was a revival at Miclere in 1931, which lasted to the mid 1950s. In the 1980s and early 1990s small to medium-scale alluvial mining was carried out at McDonalds Flat, Bathampton and Expedition Creek, and further mining of

Permian conglomerates has been attempted.

Occurrence

Gold occurs in four settings in the district. The primary source is numerous lode gold deposits, mostly quartz reefs in the Anakie Metamorphic Group. Only a small number of these were economic to work. More important were ‘deep leads’ in old conglomerates (gravels) of Permian age, which overlie the metamorphics. These have usually been interpreted as ancient buried streams in which alluvial gold shed from the lodes has accumulated.

Nuggets in excess of 15g were common and some specimen gold occurred in quartz-rich clasts.

Other deep leads were located in late Tertiary alluvial deposits, in linear belts cutting across the present drainage pattern. Finally there were the alluvial deposits of modern day streams, derived from gold shed from all three types of older deposits. The deep leads produced the most gold.

The gold of interest to modern fossickers is primarily from the young alluvial material, as well as eluvial deposits formed when gold or gold bearing rock fragments have been transported short distances from their sources, and concentrated within the soil horizon. Some older Tertiary wash on the edges and tops of interfluves may also be of interest. Some nuggets may have formed in these environments by chemical accretion of small gold

particles into larger fragments or through the chemical action of host soils or sediments on a gold solution.

Panning and Detecting

Hand tools only (including metal detectors) are permitted for fossicking; machinery of any type is not allowed. Panning is the simplest recovery method for the finer alluvial gold. However, the scarcity of water may preclude panning during dry periods. Dry blowing methods may be employed.

The continued improvement in electronic metal detector technology has seen a resurgence of the use of these instruments in the search for gold nuggets.

Areas of “general permission”

There are nine separate areas in the Clermont area where landholders have given “general permission” for fossicking. These are **Bathampton, Black Ridge, Birimban, Bottom Apsley, Town Reserve, McDonald Flat, Museum, McMasters, and Four Mile (see separate maps)**.

Requirements

To fossick you need to hold a **Fossickers Licence**. Individual, family, club, educational institution and commercial tour operator licences can be obtained for this area or for the whole of the State for periods between one and twelve months, with fees varying accordingly. Licences

can be obtained from Departmental offices or agents.

In these areas at Clermont you must also **comply with the conditions of the “general permissions”** for fossicking that have been given by the landholders.

These conditions are:

- permission is given only to **holders of a Fossickers Licence**
- **a Fossickers Kit must also be purchased** from the Clermont Caravan Park. This Kit serves as a “*Permit to Traverse*” over the “general permission” areas of the State Forests. It includes detailed maps of each of the areas.
- stickers included in this Kit must be attached to the vehicle's rear window
- visitors must not interfere with any stock, infrastructure or improvements (water bores, pump equipment etc) or obtain water from them
- all children must be supervised by an adult at all times due to the presence of old workings
- gates must be left as found
- visitors must not interfere with any wildlife or flora

- all rubbish from fossicking sites is to be taken away on leaving
- all excavations to be refilled and made safe for other visitors and stock
- any motor vehicle (including motorcycles) used in the State Forest must have current vehicle registration and the driver must hold the appropriate valid licence
- the use of a motor vehicle on State Forest is restricted to formed roads and tracks only
- fires are **not permitted** and should not be lit under any circumstances in the State Forest
- camping is **not permitted** in the State Forest
- all conditions as stated in the Fossickers Kit

The landholder may withdraw permission if these conditions are not complied with.

Code of Conduct

In addition to the conditions of the “general permission” a person fossicking under a Fossickers Licence must comply with the requirements of the *Fossicking Act 1994* and

Fossicking Regulation 1994 to maintain safety, hygiene and a high standard of behaviour during their visit.

On-the-spot fines may be issued for offences.

Further reading

Mineral Deposits in the Southern Anakie Inlier. **In** *1995 Field Conference Guidebook, Clermont-Anakie Area*. Geological Society of Australia, Queensland Division, GPO Box 1820 Brisbane Q 4001

For further information:

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