

Carricktown Track, Bannockburn, Otago

From Duffers Saddle (1173m), the highest point on any public road in New Zealand, join the Carricktown Track, bearing left almost immediately at the large rocks. Watts Rock (1302m) is the highest point on the track and from here the trail is easily followed, albeit peppered by deep ruts, an unformed surface and washouts. Amble along the tops, imbibing the superb vistas. There's a sense of solitude up here as well as space. At about 5.5km, there's a sign directing to the massive waterwheel of the Young Australian Mine, very much worthy of closer inspection. Restored in the 1990s, the 7.9m wood and iron wheel was dragged up the mountain in 1874 to drive a 10-stamper battery. The battery's remains are on the opposite side of the gully. There are a couple of stone huts nearby, perched precariously on the hillside. An interpretation panel explains the workings.

This area was not rich with gold, but that didn't stop hundreds seeking their fortune here. The Star and Heart of Oak mines, just up the hill from Carricktown, were the most productive, and it was the nearby Elizabeth Mine that started the area's mini-rush in 1869. Mullock heaps, battery foundations, rock walls, tailings, sledge tracks, and two well-preserved stone dams are stark reminders in a desolate landscape of the activities in the past. Be aware of collapsed mine shafts; many are obscured, so stick to the track.

Carricktown sprang up at the start of the 1870s. There were once three pubs, several stores and plenty of miners' huts. The track goes through the old main street, lined with stone ruins, including a bakery, smithy and hotel.

Continuing down the hill, the gated end of the track is reached, the site of another town called Quartzville, originally set up to service the mines further up the hill, but quickly abandoned when Carricktown was built. Turn right to make your way to Bannockburn via Quartzville, Gully and Schoolhouse roads.

Wild file

Access Duffers Saddle on the Nevis Road from Bannockburn. To reach it, continue south on the sealed road through Bannockburn, bear right on the Nevis road after 5.8km and continue on gravel to the top.

Grade Moderate

Time Duffers Saddle to Quartzville (with Royal Australian Mine side-trip) 4-5hr

Distance 12.7km

Total ascent 245m

Map CC12

Elevation Profile



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Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to map this route correctly, *Wilderness* does not accept responsibility for any errors. Users should plan their routes and gather as much information as possible before departing. The GPX file associated with this route has been drawn using Memory-Map software, version 6. Use discretion when following the route, especially when no track is marked on the map. The GPX file in these cases are a 'best guess' of the route only. Users should use a combination of GPS, visual observations, maps and compass to find the best possible route. Memory Map shows purple tracks and hut icons as verified routes and huts. Red or blue routes are those drawn by Wilderness.

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