

JUMPING JEFFREY'S TRACK

With immaculate campsites and tough tracks including the challenging Jeffrey's Track, Tassie's south proves there's no shortage of adventure on the apple isle

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFF MARTIN



Relaxing around the campfire on the banks of Meadowbank Lake

Without a doubt Tasmania has some amazing scenery, camping and 4WDing and should be on everyone's bucket list to experience. When discussing Tasmania around the campfire the iconic destinations such as the west coast immediately rate a big mention for the avid 4WDer, but there are some brilliant tracks and camping in the southern and central region not far from Hobart.

This trip begins at Huonville which is less than an hour's drive south from Hobart on the A6 and Huon Highway. Huonville is the best place to stock up with supplies and offers a range of supermarkets and fuel outlets. From Huonville the Huon Valley stretches inland and here the river is narrower and winds through rural country around the towns of Glen Huon and Judbury. The surrounding hills are covered in

thick forests that stretch all the way to the West coast of Tasmania.

The first Europeans to arrive in the Huon did so in 1792 when Frenchman Admiral Bruni D'Entrecasteaux explored and named the area after his second in command, Huon de Kemaedec. The first European settlers arrived in 1840 and began the apple growing industry that was to dominate the area until its steady decline since the 1950's. The entry of England into the European Common Market doomed the much of the apple industry as it was, though today it is coming back for extra high quality fruit. Apples, pears, cherries and fish farming are the main Huon Valley primary products.

From Huonville there are a couple of options for the next stretch, which are basically to follow the Huon River to the east on the North or South side of the river. For our trip, we took the North Huon Road (obviously on the North Side!) eastwards through the picturesque

WHERE

This trek starts from Huonville just 40km south from Hobart and traverses some fantastic country along the Huon Valley and then through the Wellington Ranges to the Derwent Valley and New Norfolk.

CAMPING

RIVERS EDGE WILDERNESS CAMPING
1322 Lonnvale Rd,
Lonnvale, TAS 7109
Ph: 0439 760 007
W: www.riversedgecamping.com.au

WHAT TO TAKE

Take sufficient food and drinking water for the planned duration of your trip. Basic equipment spares and recovery equipment should also be carried. In the wet you will need recovery equipment. There is generally solid mobile phone coverage available but it is still a smart idea to carry alternative communication such as a satellite phone.

SUPPLIES AND FACILITIES

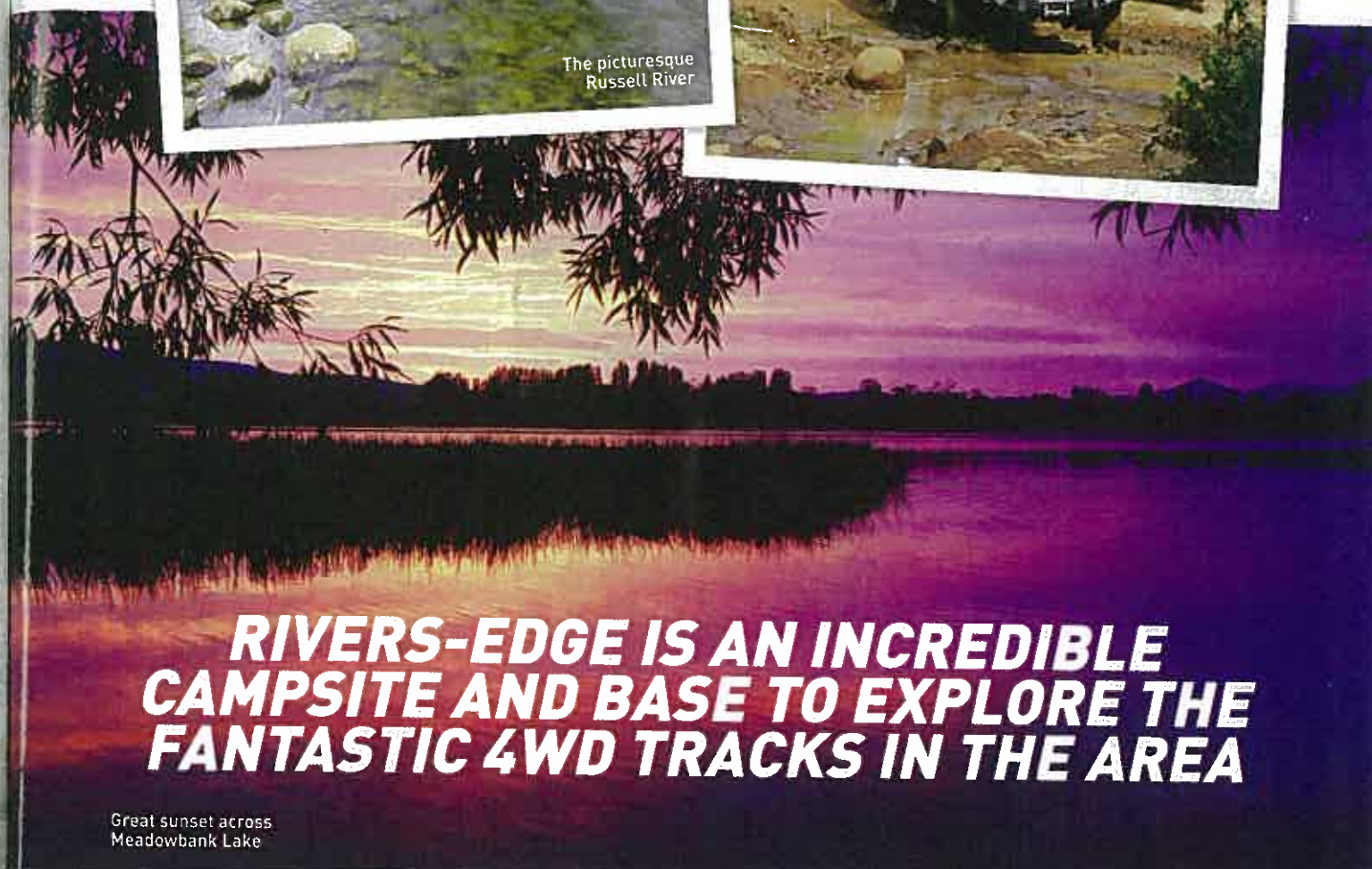
Huonville is a major centre with a choice of supermarkets, fuel outlets, and vehicle service centres. New Norfolk also has all major facilities.



The picturesque Russell River



Joe's 'Cruiser' negotiating the bogholes and ruts on White Timber Trail



RIVERS-EDGE IS AN INCREDIBLE CAMPSITE AND BASE TO EXPLORE THE FANTASTIC 4WD TRACKS IN THE AREA

Great sunset across Meadowbank Lake

Huon Valley passing lush farmland and plantation forests. Continue through the small town of Judbury where the road name changes to Lonnvale Road still continuing eastwards. Leaving the bitumen behind the road leaves the Huon River and heads north-east following the Russell River to the fabulous Rivers-Edge Campground.

Rivers-Edge Wilderness Camping is located alongside the Russell River with plenty of flat spacious sites to choose from. There are even a few powered sites if you need 240V power. There is a fantastic communal shelter with a kitchen and lounge area around a large wood heater. It's obvious from this place that it gets more than a bit cold at times here!

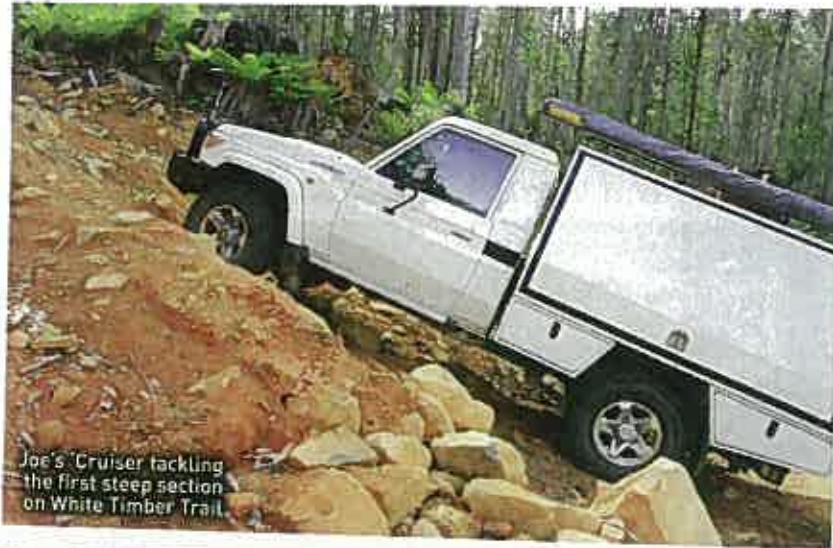
Rivers-Edge is also renowned for its fantastic trout fishing, so make sure you pack your rod and lures. There's wood available to buy for the essential campfire, flush toilets, hot showers, and some pristine swimming holes if the weather is warm enough for a dip. It's the perfect place to spend a few days to just relax and unwind, before tackling the terrific 4WD tracks in the area. It's even pet friendly, so man's best friend can come along as well. There is a walking track along the Russell River and if you're lucky you may even spot one of the elusive platypuses that frequent the area.

The Rivers-Edge camp site is only a short drive from Hartz Mountains National Park where you can take short strolls out to the glacial lakes in the area,

or try the more challenging walks up to the highest peak of Hartz mountain (1255 m). The best route to Hartz from Rivers-Edge is to head back to Judbury and cross the Huon River, then take Bermuda and Ligerwood Roads to Arve Road and turn right. Further along Arve Road take the Hartz Road to the National Park.

Another attraction in the area is the Tahune Air Walk where you can walk through the three-storey high canopy of a Tasmanian forest to the end where you stand 48m above the ground and can view the majestic meeting of the Huon and Picton rivers. The Tahune forest also has a variety of walks of varying difficulties, the most popular being the Huon Pine Track where you can walk





Joe's Cruiser tackling the first steep section on White Timber Trail



amongst 2000 year-old giant Huon Pines. From Rivers-Edge Campground the best way to get to the Air Walk is via Bermuda Road which heads south from Judbury, then take Bracken Ridge 4WD track and Edwards Road.

Looking for a little more excitement? Maybe a jet boat ride up the up the Huon River is on the cards! Back at Huonville the Huon River Jet Boats operate regular trip along the Huon River. Feel the adrenalin surge as the jet boat quickly accelerates to speeds of up to 80kph. You'll whip along the riverbank, weaving in and out of the forest canopy that overhangs the river, dodge around trees and rocks in the river, bounce through white water and fly into full 360° spins.

Rivers-Edge is an incredible place to camp and use as a base to explore the fantastic 4WD tracks in the area. If you haven't already explored the 4WD tracks to the north it's well worth following the

White Timber Trail and Jeffery's Track to New Norfolk when it's time to continue the journey.

White Timber Trail commences from Judbury which is only 10km back down the Lonnvale Road from Rivers-Edge. Turn left and follow Judds Creek Road to the north. The first part of this road is well maintained as it is used as access for forestry operations, but it's not long until the road comes to an abrupt end at a log loading area and the 4WD driving starts! Time to air down, lock in the hubs, and engage the air locker to tackle the first challenge – a steep rocky climb into up into the forest.

The trail continues climbing steeply through the Stringybark forest then unexpectedly terminates onto a new forestry road. Turning right into this road and now heading west, the road quickly peters out and becomes a rough 4WD track again, with several muddy bog holes to negotiate along with plenty of rocky sections as well. Take

TRIP STANDARD

Trip rating A through to E grade, with E meaning a 2WD could do the trip, and A requiring a lift, lockers, a winch and aggressive tyres to complete. The start of this trip to Rivers-Edge Campground is mostly on bitumen and graded gravel roads, rating E. The next section through the Wellington Ranges on White Timber Trail and Jefferys Track converse steep rocky terrain with plenty of mud sections. In the dry this is rated C, in the wet rating A.

FUEL

HUONVILLE
168.9c/L Diesel
160.9c/L Unleaded

ROAD CONDITIONS

The road conditions were generally very good due to recent dry weather, but several boggy sections were still encountered on the tracks.

care and check the depth of the larger bog holes as there are often hidden obstacles lurking just below the surface, and the track condition varies greatly depending recent weather conditions. In the dry it will be challenging but fairly straight-forward, however heavy rain will mean a difficult slog with the winch likely to get a work-out.

White Timber Trail and the nearby White Timber Mountain get its name from the colour of the timber logged here during the early part of the last century. These stands of Gum-topped Stringybark (*Eucalyptus delegatensis*) have a light coloured wood and were widely available in those times.

White Timber Trail eventually terminates into Jeffery's Track, turn left heading north. Jeffery's Track has been in existence since the early 1800's when it was used as a link between the Derwent and Huon Valleys. The track was named after Molesworth Jeffery who was a landowner near Lachlan, and he controlled access to the valley for many years.

Not long into Jeffery's Track there is right turn into East West Trail. A gate blocks this track (and other tracks in the Wellington Range) but access can be obtained by obtaining a permit from the Glenorchy Parks & Wildlife Service. This is well worth the time

BUDGET ATTRACTIONS

Rivers-Edge is a great place to chill out and just take in the fabulous scenery and local wildlife. With the Russell and Huon Rivers there is great trout fishing on offer, photography opportunities abound, swimming in the warmer weather, and plenty of 4WD tracks to choose from. There are also a number of fantastic walking tracks to investigate if feeling energetic.

TIME OF TRIP:
March

and effort to arrange with spectacular views to be had on a clear day, but be aware that tracks may be closed in poor weather conditions and the key must be promptly returned to the Glenorchy Office.

Jeffrey's Track continues along the ridge through Pine Plantation country, with several wild looking tracks heading into the forest. Most of these tracks don't appear on maps and look to be old logging tracks. Further along the Lachlan River appears on the left, way down a steep gully. The track now drops steeply, and track conditions deteriorate rapidly as well. There is one section with huge ruts that will require a spotter outside the vehicle to help negotiate; careful wheel placement and reasonable vehicle flex will see you through. In wet conditions this



Great sunset across Meadowbank Lake

TASMANIA IS TRULY A 4WD HEAVEN WITH A HUGE ARRAY OF TRACKS ONLY A SHORT DISTANCE FROM MAJOR CENTRES



The tracks through the dense Tasmanian forest are spectacular

clay based section will be extremely difficult and you won't be able to avoid the ruts, so vehicle clearance will become very important and recovery equipment will most likely be needed.

After dropping over 500m from the top of Jeffrey's Track to the bottom, the track terminates into Lachlan Road and the location of Lachlan. Now is a good time to pump the tyres back up to normal and unlock the hubs. This is now the Derwent Valley; continue on the Lachlan Road alongside the Lachlan River through Brookside and into New Norfolk.

From New Norfolk there are several options depending on your time available and inclination. A cracking option is to continue along the Glenora Road on the south side of the Derwent River through to Bushy Park

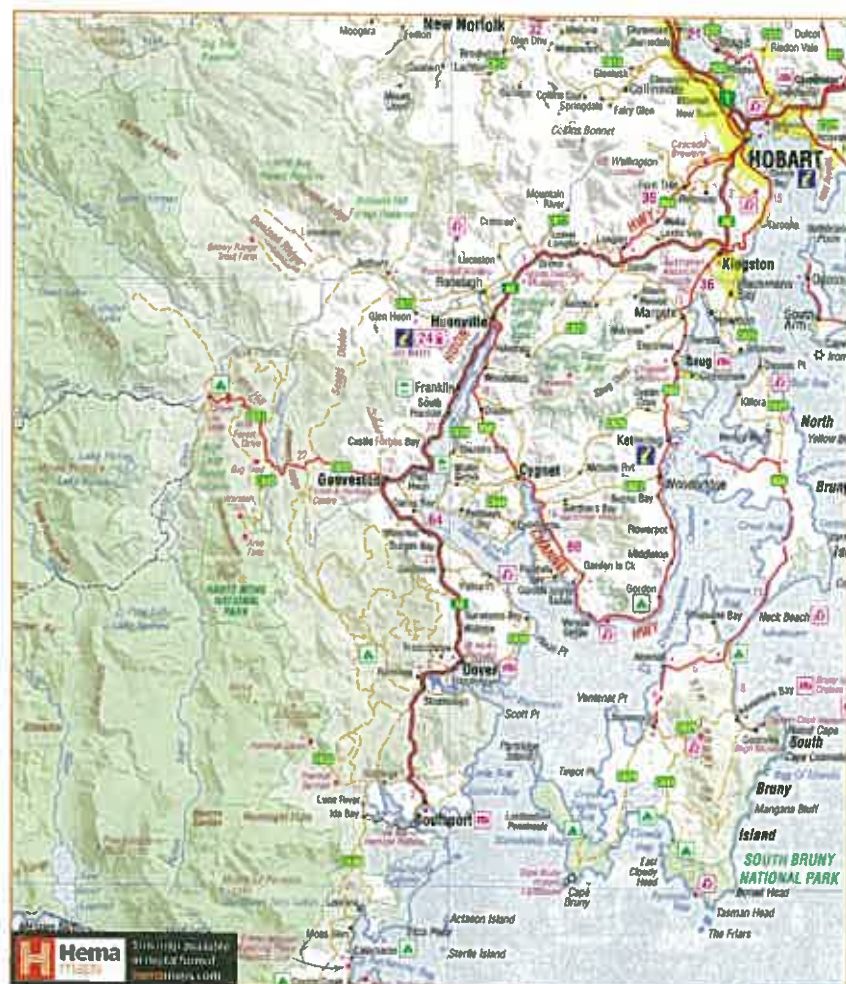
and Glenora, then through to National Park and the spectacular Russell Falls followed by the raft of 4WD tracks and camping opportunities in the Mt Field National Park. From here you can also continue further down to Lake Gordon and Lake Pedder.

Tasmania is truly a 4WD heaven with a fantastic array of tracks only a short distance from major centres. The Wellington Ranges boast tracks from mild to absolutely wild, and with Rivers-Edge Camp ground as your base you can't go wrong. Tasmanian locals certainly have it all, and for the rest of us from the 'big island' we just have to make the effort to visit this fantastic place and experience it for ourselves. Book your ferry passage now and make sure the Wellington Ranges are included on your Tasmanian itinerary, you will not be disappointed. ■



Geoff's cruiser negotiating a section of ruts on White Timber Trail

THE WELLINGTON RANGES BOASTS TRACKS THAT ARE SURE TO GIVE YOUR 4WD A WORKOUT



RESTRICTIONS AND PERMITS

None required, except for some tracks in the Wellington Ranges where a permit and key is needed from the Glenorchy Parks & Wildlife Service Office.

MAPS AND GUIDES

Tasmania by Hema

CONTACTS & INFORMATION

TASMANIAN PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ph: 1300 135 513
W: www.parks.tas.gov.au

GLENORCHY OFFICE
(Permit for Wellington Ranges)
124 Tolosa Street
Glenorchy
Ph: (03) 6233 6560 (BH)

FORESTRY TASMANIA
Phone 1300 FOREST
W: www.forestrytas.com.au
For track closures visit:
www.forestrytas.com.au/visiting/road-closures

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