

Cape York

**Central Australia, Top End, Gulf Country
Cape York, Channel Country, Hay Plains**

June – July 2007

Jim Russell

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Itinerary

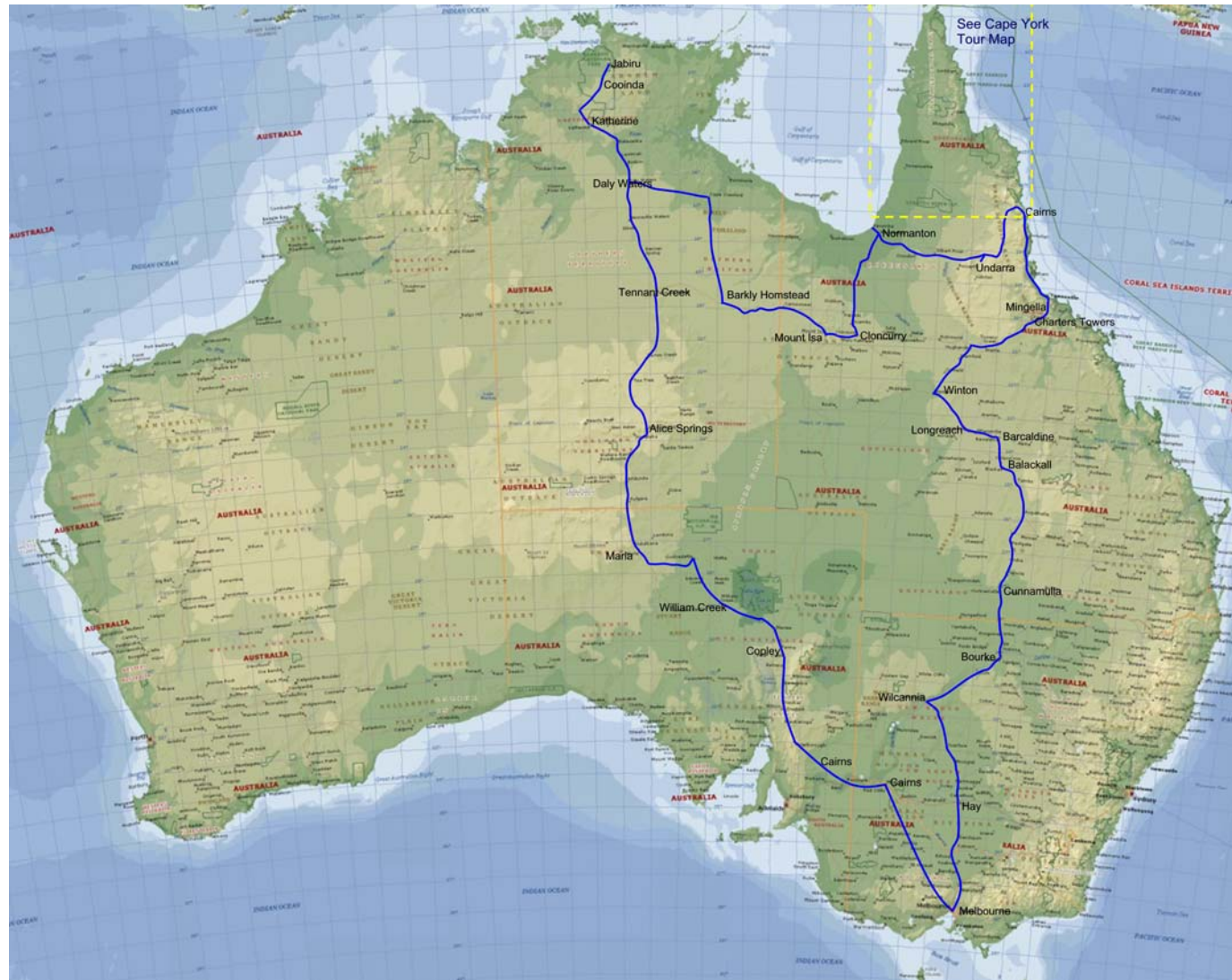
Central and North Australia – June – July 2007

Trip Day	Day	Day	Activity	Accommodation
Day 01	Tuesday	05 June 2007	Melbourne to Mildura	River Gardens Caravan Park, Gol Gol
Day 02	Wednesday	06 June 2007	Mungo National Park	River Gardens Caravan Park, Gol Gol
Day 03	Thursday	07 June 2007	Mildura	River Gardens Caravan Park, Gol Gol
Day 04	Friday	08 June 2007	Mildura to Burra	Burra Caravan Park
Day 05	Saturday	09 June 2007	Burra to Leigh Creek	Copley Caravan Park
Day 06	Sunday	10 June 2007	Leigh Creek to William Creek	William Creek Store Campground
Day 07	Monday	11 June 2007	William Creek, Lake Eyre (Halligan Bay), William Creek	William Creek Store Campground
Day 08	Tuesday	12 June 2007	08:00 Scenic flight – Lake Eyre – Painted Hills William Creek - Oodnadatta - Painted Desert - Marla	Marla Travellers Rest Caravan Park
Day 09	Wednesday	13 June 2007	Marla to Alice Springs	Stuart Caravan Park
Day 10	Thursday	14 June 2007	Helicopter flight over MacDonnell Ranges Alice Springs Desert Park	Stuart Caravan Park
Day 11	Friday	15 June 2007	Alice Springs – MacDonnell Ranges	Stuart Caravan Park
Day 12	Saturday	16 June 2007	Alice Springs to Tennant Creek	Outback Caravan Park
Day 13	Sunday	17 June 2007	Tennant Creek	Outback Caravan Park
Day 14	Monday	18 June 2007	Tennant Creek - Katherine	Knott's Crossing Resort Park
Day 15	Tuesday	19 June 2007	Katherine	Knott's Crossing Resort Park
Day 16	Wednesday	20 June 2007	Katherine	Knott's Crossing Resort Park
Day 17	Thursday	21 June 2007	Katherine to Jabiru	Kakadu Lodge Caravan Park
Day 18	Friday	22 June 2007	Jabiru – visit Oenpelli	Kakadu Lodge Caravan Park
Day 19	Saturday	23 June 2007	Jabiru - Cooinda	Cooinda Caravan Park
Day 20	Sunday	24 June 2007	Cooinda – Daly Waters	Daly Waters Pub Caravan Park
Day 21	Monday	25 June 2007	Daly Waters – Barkly Homestead	Barkly Homestead
Day 22	Tuesday	26 June 2007	Barkly Homestead – Mt Isa	Copper City Caravan Park
Day 23	Wednesday	27 June 2007	Mt Isa	Copper City Caravan Park
Day 24	Thursday	28 June 2007	Mt Isa - Cloncurry	Cloncurryt Caravan Park Oasis
Day 25	Friday	29 June 2007	Cloncurry Normanton	Normanton Caravan Park

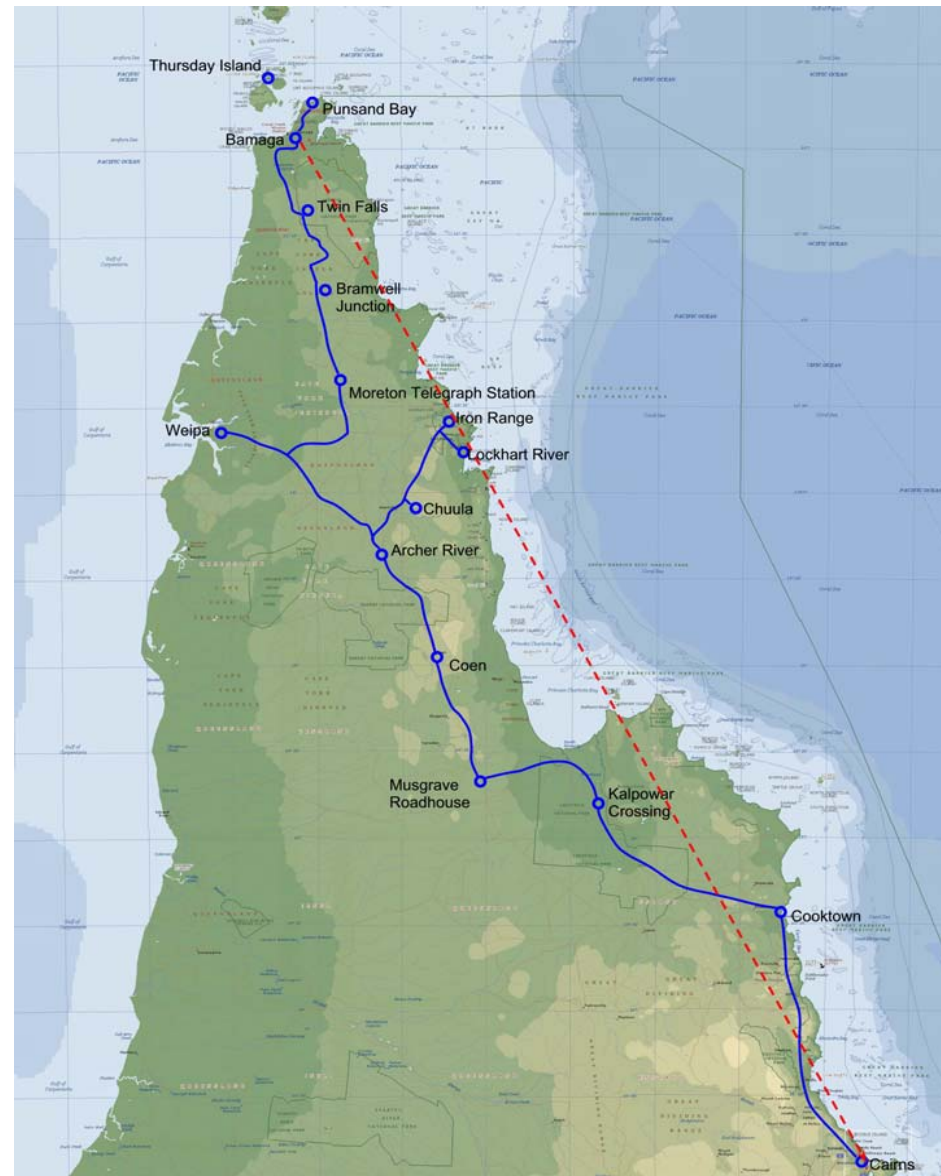
Day 26	Saturday	30 June 2007	Normanton	Normanton Caravan Park	
Day 27	Sunday	01 July 2007	Normanton - Undara	Undara Lava Lodge & Camping Ground	
Day 28	Monday	02 July 2007	Undara - Cairns	Ian Marsh	
Day 29	Tuesday	03 July 2007	Cairns	Ian Marsh	
Day 30	Wednesday	04 July 2007	Cairns	Ian Marsh	
Day 31	Thursday	05 July 2007	Commence Cape York Tour Cairns, Cape Tribulation, Cooktown Area	Day 01	Cooktown Caravan Park
Day 32	Friday	06 July 2007	Cooktown, Lakefield National Park, Kalpower Crossing	Day 02	Kalpower Crossing Campground
Day 33	Saturday	07 July 2007	Kalpower, Musgrave, Coen, Archer River	Day 03	Archer River Roadhouse
Day 34	Sunday	08 July 2007	Archer River - Iron Range National Park	Day 04	Iron Range NP Campsite
Day 35	Monday	09 July 2007	Portland Roads, Chilli Beach, WW2 Sites, Batavia Goldfields, Chuula	Day 05	Chuula Campsite
Day 36	Tuesday	10 July 2007	Chuula to Weipa	Day 06	Weipa Camping Ground
Day 37	Wednesday	11 July 2007	Weipa, Wenlock River, Moreton Telegraph Station	Day 07	Moreton Camping Ground
Day 38	Thursday	12 July 2007	Moreton Telegraph Station, Telegraph Track, Twin Falls	Day 08	Twin Falls Campsite
Day 39	Friday	13 July 2007	Twin Falls, Jardine River, Punsand Bay	Day 09	Punsand Bay Camping Resort
Day 40	Saturday	14 July 2007	Thursday Island	Day 10	Punsand Bay Camping Resort
Day 41	Sunday	15 July 2007	Cape York, Somerset	Day 11	Punsand Bay Camping Resort
Day 42	Monday	16 July 2007	Punsand Bay to Cairns End Cape York Tour	Day 12	Ian Marsh
Day 43	Tuesday	17 July 2007	Cairns	Ian Marsh	
Day 44	Wednesday	18 July 2007	Cairns	Ian Marsh	
Day 45	Thursday	19 July 2007	Cairns to Mingela	Tony Keiller	
Day 46	Friday	20 July 2007	Mingela	Tony Keiller	
Day 47	Saturday	21 July 2007	Mingela to Winton	Matilda Country Tourist park	
Day 48	Sunday	22 July 2007	Winton to Longreach	Gunnadoo Caravan Park	
Day 49	Monday	23 July 2007	Longreach	Gunnadoo Caravan Park	
Day 50	Tuesday	24 July 2007	Longreach	Gunnadoo Caravan Park	
Day 51	Wednesday	25 July 2007	Longreach to Charleville	Bailey Bar Caravan Park	
Day 52	Thursday	26 July 2007	Charleville	Bailey Bar Caravan Park	
Day 53	Friday	27 July 2007	Charleville - Bourke	Mitchell Caravan Park	
Day 54	Saturday	28 July 2007	Bourke	Mitchell Caravan Park	
Day 55	Sunday	29 July 2007	Bourke - Wilcannia - Hay	Hay Plains Holiday Park	
Day 56	Monday	30 July 2007	Hay - Melbourne		

MAPS

Central Australia and Central Queensland and New South Wales



Cape York



Melbourne to Cairns

Tuesday 5th June 2007 - Melbourne to Mildura

Day 01

An 06:00 start had me on my way on the Calder Highway before any peak hour traffic, nevertheless as I headed out past Keilor the traffic heading towards the city was already very heavy.

I had a breakfast appointment with Sally Kaptien and Jack Carolan at Castlemaine and, as I had planned, but a little earlier than Sally expected, I arrived at their house at 08:00. Sally was already cooking the breakfast and Jack was out walking the dog.

It was a most enjoyable breakfast and a chance to catch up with friends I had not seen since I stayed overnight on the way home from the trip to the Kimberley last year.

At 10:00 it was time to get on the road again for the trip to Mildura. A good day for driving, sunny and not too hot I arrived at the River Gardens Caravan Park at Gol Gol around 15:30.

<http://www.rivergardenstouristpark.com.au/Attractions.asp>

The contrast with last year is amazing, the parched wheat fields of July 2006 are green with crops already 75-100mm high. This should be a good season if there is more rain.

After setting up camp on a site on the banks of the Murray River I headed back into Mildura to the information centre and to buy some food I had forgotten to get before I left.

Cooked dinner on the barbeque with a young couple from Mooroolbark with two very polite young daughters, 3 and 5 years old, who always prefaced a question to me with 'excuse me'.

Although it has been a pleasant day the temperature dropped rapidly and under the doona was the most sensible place to be: so an early night.

Wednesday 6th June 2007 - Mungo National Park

Day 02

My plan for today is to drive about 110km to Mungo National Park.

Sunrise is around 07:00 so there is not much point in making a move until I can see to cook breakfast. I arise to find there is a fog over the river and this turns out to be widespread. I might add the

temperature is about 2C so I am not anxious to get up too quickly. Nevertheless I get up, have a shower and cook breakfast and by 08:30 I am well on my way to Mungo National Park in the fog. It is not too thick but one had to drive carefully on the unsealed road to avoid boggy patches and cattle so it was after 10: when I arrived.

There is a very good visitors centre and I spent some time there waiting for the fog to lift, but in the end I had no choice but to go and see the old Mungo Station Woolshed built of local Cyprus Pine. Sheep were last shorn there in 1976 and it stills smells strongly of lanolin. Originally there were thirty stands where hand shears were used to shear up to 50,000 sheep in a season. With the introduction of steam driven overhead gear

the stands were reduced to eighteen and later to 5 due to further mechanisation and reduction in sheep numbers.

<http://www.visitmildura.com.au/quicksite/?i=d=mungonationalpark>
<http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/parks.nsf/ParkDiscovery?OpenAgent&ParkKey=N0049>



**Diesel Engine - Shearing Shed -
Mungo National Park**

Mungo National Park is the site of a unique geological and archaeological

significance. Over the last 65,000 years the lakes in the park have 4 times experienced flooding and drying as the climate changed. The last drying of the lakes occurred 15000 years ago.



Morning Mist - Murray River - Gol Gol



Shearing Shed - Mungo National Park



Shearing Shed - Mungo National Park



**Salt tolerant and drought resistant Black Bluebush -
Mungo National Park**

When the Willandra lakes were filled they provided an environment for now extinct mega fauna and for indigenous Australians. Archaeological evidence of habitation of the area has been found in the ' Wall of China' Lunette on the Eastern side of the dry lake indication Australian indigenous people

have inhabited the area for at least 30000 years. The finding of Mungo Woman and later Mungo Man confirmed this.



Mother and Joey - Mungo National Park

The Wall of China was built from wind blown sand from the beaches of the lake and the clay of the dry lake.

This is often a stark dry landscape but recent rains have brought on a green ground cover of grasses, small plants and mosses and lichens in this normally arid

region vegetated by only very salt and drought resistant plants.



Mallee Cypress - Mungo National Park



Red Mallee - Fire resistant and common to dune systems - Mungo National Park

There is a very good 2.5km walk around what was the edge of lake Mungo with interpretive signs along the way.



'Wall of China' - Mungo National Park



Structure of the Wall of China Lunette - Mungo National Park

By the time I have finished the walk the fog has burnt off and it is possible to see across the dry lake to the 'Wall of China' on the other side and it is time to drive across the dry lakebed and take a closer look. There are many red and grey kangaroos, many with joeys, an indicator of a good season in the offing, and emus grazing on lake floor.

Access to Mungo National Park is impossible at times and it is only in the last few days that it has been possible. The 70km drive around the Wall of China was not yet open.

The Wall of China is an incredible structure stretching about 30km and made up of four very different alluvial clays and sands brought from the eastern highlands by the Lachlan River into its distributary the Willandra Creek that sometimes discharged into the Murray River.

After returning to the western side of Lake Mungo I walked the 1km grasslands walk through a flat area above the lake. Signs point out the native vegetation of the area.

It is a much more pleasant and faster trip back to Mildura now that the fog has gone.



'Wall of China' - Mungo National Park

Thursday 7th June 2007 - Mildura

Day 03

<http://www.murrayriver.com.au/regions/mildura/chaffey.htm>



**Confluence of Darling and Murray Rivers -
Wentworth**

<http://www.murrayriver.com.au/history/default.htm>



Weir and Lock 10 - Murray River - Wentworth

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mildura>



Diprotodon - Folk Museum - Wentworth

<http://www.visitmildura.com.au/quicksite/>
<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/VICMildura.shtml>



**Church of St John the Evangelist -
Wentworth**

Today I intend to see some of the sites around Mildura and Wentworth. A tourist route, The Chaffey Trail, visits sites associated with early Mildura and William.B.Chaffey and his brother George who were responsible for much off the design and development of the irrigation systems in the region.



Old Wentworth Gaol



Old Wentworth Gaol

Before the arrival of the Chaffey brothers in 1887 Wentworth and Mildura were already important river ports for paddle steamers carrying goods to and from the pastoral stations in the Murray and Darling River basins. In it' s hey day Wentworth was the third busiest port in NSW.

I decided to make my first call the old wharf at Wentworth only to find that, as in Mildura, nothing remains of the old wharf and in their places are jetties for the cruise paddle steamers.

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/NSWWentworth.shtml>
<http://www.wentworth.nsw.gov.au/history/>



Wentworth Court House - 1880

Nevertheless I followed the signs to the viewpoint overlooking the junction of the Darling and Murray Rivers. This appears as the junction of two mighty rivers should, but it is not as it appears, the water level in the lower 60km if the Darling is maintained at the level of the Murray by a weir that prevents water from the Murray travelling further upstream when flows in the Darling are low.

<http://www.mdbc.gov.au/>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murray-Darling_Basin

http://www.savethemurray.com/facts_history_of_the_murray.php



Ancient Red Gum - Deep in Sand - Perry Sand Hills

Weir and lock number 10 are nearby. There were proposals for 75 locks and weirs in Murray Darling system, the greater number being on the Darling but by the time construction started the railway were providing more reliable transport from the pastoral stations to the sea ports and eventually only 13 navigation locks were built on the Murray,

guaranteeing navigation from Goolwa to Mildura. Navigation further up the Murray is dependent on stream flow. No new navigation locks were built on the Darling, although there are some weirs for flood control and irrigation. A lock had been built at Bourke in 1897.



Perry Sand Hills

The Folk Museum Pioneer World Wentworth is a project of the local Rotary Club and displays a large collection of local folk memorabilia, including a very large collection of photographs of paddle steamers. There is also a display of full sized models of the mega fauna whose remains have been found in the Mungo National Park and the nearby Perry Sand Hills.

Across the road is the old Wentworth Gaol that has been restored and was the prototype for many gaols built in NSW during the late 19th C. Apart from its penal and architectural interest there was a display of photographs of NSW rural police stations and courthouses of the of the early 20th C. An

instruction to all police stations and courthouses to have photos of the buildings taken by amateur photographers and sent to Sydney resulted in an almost complete record of the buildings of the time. A selection of the photographs was on display. They were all available on a computer and visitors could search for any town.



Rio Vista - Mildura

[http://www.australia.travelmall.com/travelmall/attraction/Riverina+and+the+Murray+\(NSW\)/The+Old+Wentworth+Gaol](http://www.australia.travelmall.com/travelmall/attraction/Riverina+and+the+Murray+(NSW)/The+Old+Wentworth+Gaol)

The Old Wentworth Gaol is the oldest of the Australian designed gaols. It was built during 1879 -1881 and operated until 1927 when other prisons in New South Wales superseded it.

Many gaols throughout New South Wales either copied the design - as in the Hay Gaol; or took elements from it - as in the

Dubbo Gaol. Even the Long Bay Gaol, built in 1912, has cells exactly the same as the Wentworth Gaol.

James Barnett, a colonial architect, designed the Gaol. He also designed the Court House. Wentworth is fortunate to have the two such excellent examples of Barnett's work. The Trial Bay Gaol at south-west Rocks, the Customs House and the GPO in Sydney are other examples of his work. Barnett is reputed to have been responsible for the construction of over 5,000 buildings.

The Gaol ceased to operate over seventy years ago and apart from some minor changes made by the Education Department in the 1930's it remains very much as it was when it was originally built. Of all old gaols in Australia, it is the Wentworth Gaol that is acknowledged as the one in its best original condition. Its beauty is in its uninviting, inhospitable starkness.

Even though the Gaol is 120 years old it maintains the impression that it could be used again tomorrow. In fact in 1962 there were riots in Mildura and the cells were again utilised.



PS Melbourne emerging from Lock 11 - Mildura

My next stop was the Perry Sand Hills, about 6km west of Wentworth. They are surrounded by a flat plain and are believed to have been formed after the last Ice Age, 40,000 years ago.

<http://www.wentworth.nsw.gov.au/tourism/view.php?id=56>

Returning to Wentworth I discover the visitor centre and I am told about a remarkable River Red Gum tree at the Sand Hills. Believed to be 4-500 years old, the trunk of the tree and lower branches have been buried in sand to a height of 15-20 feet. I decide to return and get some photos and indeed when you walk in under the branches you are in the upper branches of the tree – some of the lower branches disappear into the sand and reappear far from the huge trunk.

Back to Mildura and Rio Vista, the grand home built by William Chaffey, Now part of the Mildura Arts Centre it is currently being renovated. Several of the main rooms were open for inspection and the jarrah floors and Murray pine panelling and ceilings convey an air of opulence in what were frontier times.

<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070687b.htm>

<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070609b.htm>

<http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/murray/content/irrigation/chaffeyIntro.htm>

The art gallery has many works donated by the widow of the late Senator Robert Elliot. Currently the touring collection of Brushmen of the Bush from the Broken Hill Art Gallery is on display.



Psyche Bend Pumping Station



Psyche Bend Pumping Station

Nearby is Old Mildura Homestead, a replica of the original building set in lush lawns on the riverbank. There is a display

of historical photographs and some typical station buildings.

Mildura lock number 11 and weir is also nearby. The paddle steamer Melbourne was approaching when I arrived on its way downstream, so I stopped to watch it pass through the lock.

As I have already said the Mildura Wharf is a disappointment and I gave it a miss preferring instead to head up river to the Psyche Bend Pumping Station where the original steam engine and pumps, built to designs by the Chaffeys, have been restored to working order. The engine is the oldest and only one of its type in the world. The triple expansion engine has the unusual feature of having the high and intermediate pressure pistons connected to the one connecting rod and two low pressure pistons, one on each side of the high and intermediate pressure pistons. The pumps were able to pump 67500 litres per minute.

I was fortunate to be there when the pumping station was open.



'Big Lizzie' - Red Cliffs

Pressing on I followed the signs along the dirt track on the river bank to the Red Cliffs Pumping Station and then on into Red Cliffs to view Big Lizzie an enormous tractor, first used for transporting heavy components for the irrigation projects over soft ground and the for clearing the scrub around Red Cliffs.

It is time to call it a day.

Friday 8th June 2007 - Mildura to Burra

Day 04

A not so early departure! The sun is not up until after 07:00 and I am a little slow packing the trailer after 10-month break. A few photos in Mildura and I am off along the Sturt highway to Renmark crossing the Murray River on the way.

Linking Paringa and Renmark the Paringa Bridge is the only lifting span bridge in South Australia. It was first opened in January of 1927 as a railway and road bridge. At the height of the 1956 flood it was the only way to cross the Murray River between Renmark and Murray Bridge.

My first stop is a Morgan on the Murray River where I take a few photographs of the town and some of the old buildings and cross the river on the ferry to get a photo of the remnants of the Morgan wharf.



St Andrew's Uniting Church - Mildura

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/SAMorgan.shtml>

<http://www.morgan.org.au/history.htm>

This done, I continue on to Burra through country which on previous trips was brown and dry is now green and looking like the early settlers saw it, a farming wonderland.

<http://www.visitburra.com/>

<http://www.burrahistory.info/>

<http://www.southeasternhistory.com.au/burra.htm>



Mildura Workingman's Club



Paringa Lifting Bridge - 1927



Terminus Hotel - Morgan

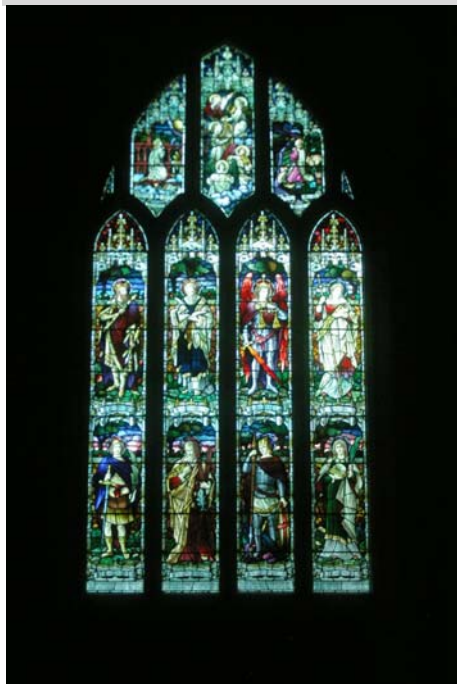


Station Master's House - Morgan

<http://www.weblogic.com.au/burra/index.html>

It was the two significant discoveries of ore in 1845 by shepherd William Streair and later Thomas Pickett which quickly turned this sheep grazing area into such a significant copper mining area. Collectively known as 'The Burra' the area consisted of

several townships including the South Australian Mining Association company town Kooringa, Redruth (Cornish) Aberdeen (Scottish) Llŵchwr (Welsh) and Hampton (English). The settlement quickly grew to an established community of some 5,000 in 1851 when Adelaide's population stood at 18,000.



Window - Church of St Mary - Burra

The lode, though initially rich in ore lasted only some 32 years. In its lifetime the mine produced ore worth (then) 5 million pounds.

In the 1850's much of the mining labour scrambled to the lure of gold at the new fields in Victoria. In 1877 through diminishing production and a rising water table, the mining interests were abandoned and the mine closed.

Today the town of great historical value guards its mining heritage with high determination and a regard for preserving its fascinating past.



Wharf remains - Morgan

Arriving in Burra around 13:30 I checked into the Burra Caravan Park by the Burra Creek, a very good location close to the centre of town beside the Burra Creek.

Sue and I had been here in 2002 and this time I sought to visit some different places. In the centre of town there is the Town Hall, once the Mechanics Institute that has been restored by the local historical society as a function room and for display of an

incredible collection of information about Burra and photographs spanning the history of Burra. They have been very fortunate that many families have remained in the area and made family photos available for the collection.



Ferry - Morgan



Former Post Office - Burra

Next door is the Burra Art Gallery; once the Burra Post Office, it was from here that John McDouall Stewart advised Adelaide that he had successfully crossed Australia from South to North and back and that his companions were all well.

Further along the road is the Catholic Church, but it was not open. The Anglican Church was, and the stained glass windows were quite outstanding, reflecting the prosperity of the town when copper was abundant.

There is a good display in the Goyder Regional Offices of the Mega Fauna to which I have previously referred.



Commercial Hotel - Burra

The local cider maker was strongly recommended as a place to visit by the lady in the information centre so after refuelling the car I headed a little out of town to visit and taste the cider. As with the Town Hall and the Art Gallery I was the only visitor and so the owner and I chatted for about 30 minutes while I tried the ciders that he makes from the apples which he grows. I bought a bottle of his Scrumpy, a very dry Cider that I will drink at an appropriate time.

Sunset is early so I head back to camp to complete setting up camp and prepare dinner.



House - Burra



Cottage - Burra

Today is mainly a travel day through territory that I have traversed before. The notable difference is that the countryside is green, not brown and dry.



Peterborough Hotel



Derelict Colonial Farmhouse.



Flinders Ranges



Old Bucyrus Erie 9W Walking Dragline - Leigh Creek Coal Mine

An occasional stop to photograph some of the colonial era buildings and the scenery but otherwise I push on towards Leigh Creek and Copley. I check out the

caravan park at Leigh Creek and although the town seems pleasant enough the caravan park is a bit barren so I decide to go on to Copley, only another 5km and find a more pleasant campground. Copley and Leigh Creek were at one time the same place. Today only the local pub bears the name the Leigh Creek Hotel.



Dragline winches - Leigh Creek Coal Mine

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/South-Australia/Leigh-Creek/2005/02/17/1108500204360.html>

<http://www.users.on.net/~lcvic/main.html>

<http://www.flinderspower.com.au/>

<http://www.flinderspower.com.au/leighcreekhistory>

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/SA/LeighCreek.shtml>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leigh_Creek,_South_Australia



Overburden pile - Leigh Creek Coal Mine



Leigh Creek Hotel - Copley

These days Leigh Creek is the mining town for the Leigh Creek coal mine that supplies coal to the Port Augusta Power Station, and important generating plant for South Australia. The original Leigh Creek mine town was moved to allow expansion of the open cut.



Lush trees - Depot Creek - Aroona Dam - Leigh Creek



There are many places to visit in the nearby Flinders and Gammon Ranges but as I am only here for the afternoon I don't have many options. The Leigh Creek Coal Mine Viewpoint is a great disappointment; there is a view of the open cut mine, but not of the working area. The old dragline excavator and truck provide some compensation.

Aroona Dam, the source of water for Leigh Creek and Copley is an oasis in an otherwise harsh environment. Built to dam the Depot Creek it is full after the heavy rains earlier in the year and there are lush stands of river red gums below the dam.

The campground has a campfire around which some of the campers gather in the evening despite the low temperature that will get lower overnight. The brilliant spectacle of the night sky and the company of other campers compensates for the slight discomfort of the cool evening.

Aroona Dam - Leigh Creek



Aroona Dam - Leigh Creek



On the road to Marree



Marree

Since leaving Hawker I have been following the Old Ghan Rail Route and today will be no different. I head north to Lyndhurst, the end of the bitumen and then onto Marree and the start of the Oodnadatta Track.

<http://www.southaustralianhistory.com.au/marree.htm>
<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/SAMarree.shtm>
!



Sculpture at Alberrie Creek



Derelict Ghan Railway Buildings



The Bubbler Mound Spring

As it happens it is a big weekend in Marree; horses races on Saturday and a Gymkhana today. I stop to take a few photos of the derelict Ghan locos; the hotel and the Second World War truck used by EG Kruse to carry the mail along the Birdsville Track.

As I set out from Marree I can see where the Gymkhana is being held.

From here it is 200km to William Creek and the track is pretty good – few corrugations but in places it is stony and I encounter three vehicles with flat tyres in the next 100km.

At Alberrie Creek there are some amazing sculptures. They there when came the other way by bus a few years ago but we did not stop to get any photos.



Blanche Cup Mound Spring

Lake Eyre South is dry so all one can see is endless salt. We had stopped at Curdimurka in 2002 so I kept going to the Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park. The water for these springs comes from the Great Artesian Basin and over the millennia mounds of earth have built up around them so that pools are atop mounds perhaps 3-4m above the surrounding plain. Each has a unique ecosystem with fish, insects

and snails. The flow of water creates a green oasis in an otherwise red and saltbush landscape. I arrived at William Creek soon after 14:00.



Blanche Cup Mound Spring

<http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/cgi-bin/parkabout.pl?WabmaKadarbuMoundSpringsCP>
<http://www.gabcc.org.au/index.aspx>
<http://www.gabcc.org.au/tools/getFile.aspx?tbl=tblContentItem&id=24>

William Creek is a small settlement near the Junction of the Oodnadatta Track and the road to Coober Pedy.



Swamp - Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park

Once a stop of the Ghan Railway it is now a stop for travellers on the Track. There is a store, a quirky pub, a camping park and a small airfield from which one can take scenic flights over Lake Eyre and the Painted Hills. It is within the boundaries of Anna Creek Station.

<http://www.southaustralia.com/9002341.aspx>

Monday 11th June 2007 - William Creek, Lake Eyre (Halligan Bay), William Creek

Day 07

This morning I drove to Halligan Bay about 70km east of William Creek on the western side of Lake Eyre in the hope that

I might see some water in the lake. There appeared to be some water in the distance but it was only a mirage. Water from the floods in Queensland in February – March did reach the

southern end of North Lake Eyre, but it has now dried up. The fairly rough track was easily followed although in some places it was necessary to diverge from the track to avoid very bad

corrugations and washaways. I saw only two other vehicles all morning.



Old Ghan Route



Parched Landscape -Halligan Bay Track

This is arid desolate country and I would not want to be out there in summer, but this afternoon it is a pleasant 25C and it would be easy to forget the dangers of travelling in this country.



Landscape - Halligan Bay Track



Creek Bed - Halligan Bay Track



Memorial to Caroline Grossmueller - Halligan Bay Track

About 30km from the Oodnadatta Track the memorial to a tourist, Caroline Grossmueller, who perished in the summer of 1998, is a grim reminder of the dangers of this country.

http://www.courts.sa.gov.au/courts/coroner/findings/findings_2000/grossmueller.finding.htm



Lake Eyre



Halligan Bay Track



Bones - Halligan Bay Track



Stockyard - Halligan Bay Track

It is hard to imagine grazing cattle in this country – vegetation is restricted to a few now dry watercourses and even the saltbush is very thin on the ground. Yet this is part of the largest cattle station, Anna Creek at 24000km², in the world. Bores tapping the Great Artesian Basin provides water for stock and at one of them there was about 20 head of cattle. Otherwise apart

from a few small birds and a flock of cockatoos nothing moved out there.



On the stockyard fence - Halligan Bay Track



Cattle - Halligan Bay Track

This year because of the drought Anna Creek Station is carrying about 2000 head of cattle. In a good year it can carry 10000 head of cattle.

<http://www.williamcreekcampground.com/outback/annacreek/anaacreek.htm>

<http://www.williamcreekcampground.com/characters/randall.htm>

Evidence of the mustering of large mobs of cattle can be seen in the modern stockyards along the road.

Predominantly flat, the landscape is broken by sand hills, some of which are brightly coloured in the sunlight. Some of the small hills seem to be the remnants of an ancient ground level that was protected by a hard layer of rock that prevented the erosion that has occurred in the surrounding area.



William Creek Store



William Creek Hotel



Inside William Creek Hotel

Tuesday 12th June 2007 - William Creek - Oodnadatta - Painted Desert - Marla

Day 08



Before Take off - William Creek

A very early start today – well before sunrise to get the camp packed up so that I can be at the airfield at 07:00 for toast and coffee before the flight.



Anna Creek Station

Yesterday when I checked to confirm Wrightsair had my booking I was the only starter. Some good selling by the owner, Trevor Wright, in William Creek pub during the afternoon



Water from recent rain - Anna Creek Station

resulted in another 6 passengers, a couple and a family with two young children spending a year travelling Australia.

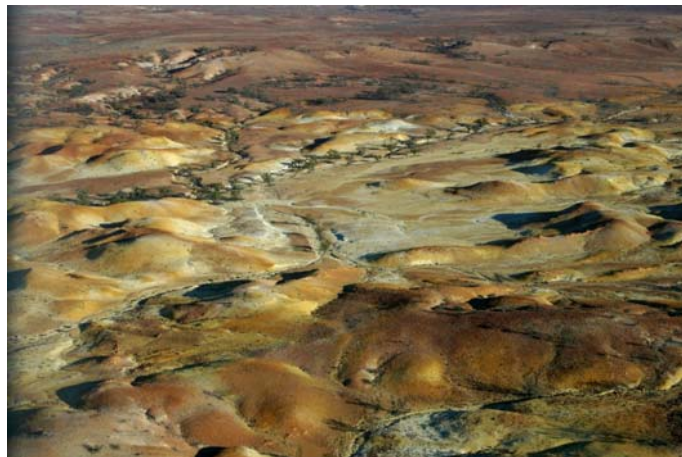
<http://www.wrightsair.com.au/anna.htm>



Tree lined watercourse - Anna Creek Station

The two-hour flight took us roughly west about 50km from William Creek over Anna Creek Station to the Painted Hills, a range of small flat-topped hills. Covering an area about 10kmx30km they are outcrops protected by silcrete and have not eroded along with the surrounding plain. The mainly iron oxides have brightly coloured these hills as the sandstone is exposed by erosion. Located in Anna Creek Station and inside the Woomera Rocket Range

exclusion zone the Painted Hills are inaccessible by road and can only be seen by air. Hopefully this will protect them from some of the 4WD vandalism I saw on my drive to Halligan Bay.



Painted Hills



Painted Hills

<http://www.southaustralia.com/OutbackLandscapes.aspx>



Painted Hills



Oodnadatta Track and Old Ghan Railway

Besides the splendour of the Hills the flight enabled us to see the country below in a way that cannot be seen from the ground. Rain three weeks ago had left shallow pools of water everywhere and the creeks and rivers that carry the run off to Lake Eyre were clearly visible.

They are clearly visible on the ground because of the trees and bushes that grow along them but it is difficult to follow their courses.



Lake Eyre



Lake Eyre

We turn and make our way east across the Oodnadatta Track and the Old Ghan Railway towards Bell Bay at the southern end of North Lake Eyre. We pass over a

number of large dry mound springs and to our north a swamp fed by mound springs and dry Lake William.

As we approach Lake Eyre we descend to get a closer look at the salt surface that is tinged pink from the red dust of the desert. There are signs of now dry pools of water on the top of the salt crust. To the north a dark area on the salt indicates where the floodwaters came to. Nowhere near filling the lake.

Mound springs below the surface of the lake feed artesian water onto the salt surface to produce freshwater pools.

We have now been flying for about an hour and a half and it is time to return to William Creek. On the way we hear the pilot of the Anna Creek Station reporting they are mustering about 60km north in the vicinity of the Davenport Range the northern boundary of the station.



Derelict Ghan Railway Building

Soon after 10:00 I am on my way north towards Oodnadatta 200km away. I am still following the Old Ghan Railway Route and it is disappointing to see that buildings associated with the railway are all derelict despite it having closed as recently as 1980.

However at Algebuckina Waterhole on the Neales River is the Algebuckina Bridge, the longest rail bridge built in South Australia.

<http://www.williamcreekcampground.com/outback/oodtrack/track4.htm>

http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/heritage/pdfs/surveys/oodnadatta/part_2.pdf



Algebuckina Bridge - Old Ghan Railway

From the Neales River it is about 60km to Oodnadatta and I arrive there just after 13:00, buy some fuel, have a very quick look at the town and head off along the road to Coober Pedy and the Painted Desert. About 45km

along the Coober Pedy Road a turn to the right takes me into the Painted Desert and the coloured landscape. I continue on this road through Arckaringa Station and Copper Hill Station, unfortunately getting a flat tyre about 20km from the Stuart Highway. 10 minutes to change the wheel and I am soon at Cadney Homestead on the highway and heading north to Marla, my planned stop for the night.



Algebuckina Waterhole



Oodnadatta Roadhouse



Trees in a watercourse



Painted Desert

http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/heritage/shas/sha_arc_karinga.html

Arckaringa Hills, in the region known as the Painted Desert, adds variety to South Australia's outback landscape and is geologically significant as a site illustrating the effects of a prolonged weathering history. The ancient, rugged landscape, once laid down by a

vast inland sea, is an isolated South Australian example of terrain known as Badlands or Breakaway topography. It is an area of striking scenic value, with a range of red, brown and yellow bands in the cliff formations.

The region is also of biological significance, noted for a number of rare or uncommon plant species and as the southern limits for the distribution of Australia's largest monitor lizard.

Geology of the Arckaringa Hills

The Arckaringa Hills provide a unique South Australian example of Breakaway Country or Badlands Topography.



Painted Desert

The term 'Badlands' was first applied to the arid, dissected plateau of [SW Dakota USA](#), and refers to areas of severe erosion, usually found in semi-arid

climates and characterised by countless gullies, steep ridges and sparse vegetation. Badland topography is formed on poorly cemented sediments that have sparse, deeply-rooted plants. Short, heavy showers sweep away surface soil and small plants, creating depressions that gradually deepen into gullies. (source <http://reference.allrefer.com>)

Because rainfall is low and infrequent, protective crusts known as Duricrusts, tend to form on reasonably flat surfaces. This Duricrust involves cementation of the original material and results in a hard resistant surface, in this case silcrete (cemented by silica). As weathering and erosion take place, these areas of Duricrust protect the underlying strata, but 'break away' on the edges to

leave mesas or pedestal rocks. The ancient and richly coloured underlying strata are revealed, creating a cliffline known as Breakaway Country. Each crumbling layer represents a period in geologic history. (source [Cadney Homestead Web Site](#))

In South Australia's outback, the erosion of deeply weathered marine and early Cretaceous mudstone and sandstone has produced the picturesque and colourful Breakaway Country of the Arkaringa Hills. The cliffs are an array of coloured strata of red, brown and yellow oxides and hydroxides. Prolonged weathering over time has formed hard, resistant caps, above which is a silicified soil composed of a red jasper matrix referred to

as Rousseau Beds. The area also includes fossilised termite burrows.



Copper Hill Station

Wednesday 13th June 2007 - Marla to Alice Springs

Day 09

Not a lot to report today. An uneventful run to Alice Springs! A few stops to take photos and arrived in Alice about 13:00. After I set up camp the first job was to get the tyre looked at. As usual it is a write off. The tyres were going to be due for replacement when I got home anyway so I replace both front tyres and keep the good old tyre as an emergency replacement if I have trouble later on. The rear tyres are also a bit sus and I will replace them in Katherine in a few days time.

By the time I have done this and checked out my helicopter flight over the MacDonnell ranges tomorrow and restocked my freezer the day is just about over and it is time to cook dinner and settle down for the night.



Rocky outcrop beside the Stuart Highway



The Ghan in Alice Springs



Before Take Off - Alice Springs

My helicopter flight this morning is associated with passengers on the southbound Ghan and so is a shorter flight than I had sought to do. Nevertheless the 30-minute flight out to Simpson Gap, where Roe Creek cuts through the Rungtjirba Range, and return provided an

excellent snapshot of the West MacDonnell ranges and the Pine Gap communications facility.



West MacDonnell Ranges

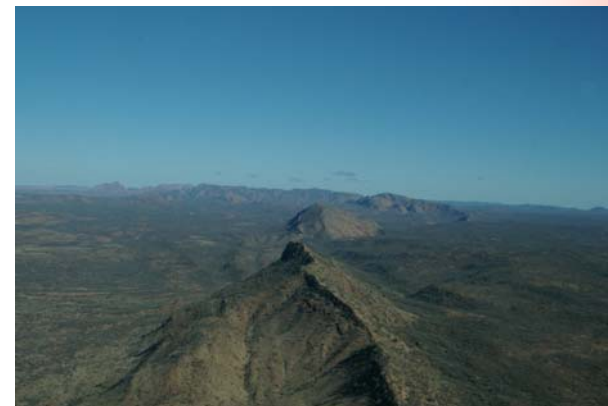


Pine Gap Tracking Station

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/NTAliceSprings.shtml>



Simpson Gap - West MacDonnell Ranges



West MacDonnell Ranges

<http://www.travelnt.com/en/explore/alice-springs/>

<http://www.thealice.com.au/>

<http://www.alicespringshelicopters.com.au/>



Pied Honeyeater - Alice Springs Desert Park



Inland Dotterel - Alice Springs Desert Park

The Alice Springs Desert Park is a place not to be missed. Here each of the three major desert habitats is recreated; river beds, sandy desert and woodland. The significance of each is explained and the typical flora is displayed. Each section has one or more aviaries with birds of the habitat and some animals, usually lizards of which there are many varieties.

<http://www.alicespringsdesertpark.com.au/>



Dragon - Alice Springs Desert Park



Lounge Lizard - Alice Springs Desert Park

A building housing nocturnal animals provides a window on the night activities of the desert. Many small animals, reptiles and birds only appear in the cool of the night.

In the afternoon there is a display of birds of prey in the area; barn owl, buzzard, black kite, brown falcon and an

Australian Hobby. The display showed the different feeding habits of the birds. For example the brown kestrel hunted reptiles whilst the Hobby hunted birds and insects and as a result had different feet and legs for the different prey. The barn owls feathers and wings enabled it to fly silently and hunt small animals.



Barn Owl - Alice Springs Desert Park

The kites showed their amazing flying skills that enable them to catch insects, small lizards and animals in flight with their talons and eat their prey whilst in flight.

http://www.austmus.gov.au/factsheets/black_kite.htm
<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/finder/display.cfm?id=63>
<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/finder/display.cfm?id=59>
<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/finder/display.cfm?id=33>
[3](#)

The buzzard' s instinctive skill for opening emu eggs by dropping a stone on the egg was fascinating.



Black Kite - Alice Springs Desert Park



Buzzard cracking Emu Egg - Alice Springs Desert Park



Australian Hobby - Alice Springs Desert Park

Friday 15th June 2007 - Alice Springs – MacDonnell Ranges

Day 11

Although not quite so cold this morning – 3.5C – there is a cold lazy wind blowing. Otherwise it is a fine sunny day.



West MacDonnell Ranges



Ellery Creek Big Hole - West MacDonnell Ranges

Today I am heading into the West MacDonnell Ranges along Larapinta Drive and Namatjira Drive to Glen Helen about 140km west of Alice Springs.



Ellery Creek Bed - West MacDonnell Ranges

The MacDonnell Ranges are remnants of mountains formed several hundred million years ago. When they were formed they would have rivalled the Himalayas but now there is only a few mountains over 1000m in height.



Simpson Gap - West MacDonnell Ranges

<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks/find/westmacdonnell.html>

Everywhere there is evidence of the violent distortion of the earth's crust that formed these mountains. Hard rock strata stand vertical above the valleys between the present day ranges. Watercourses that carry the waters from occasional violent storms are lined with ancient river red gums. At various places along the range these creeks and rivers have broken

through the ranges to provide outlets to the surrounding plains. The rains that fall on these mountains do not end in the sea, but in swamps that evaporate or percolate into the underground aquifers. The watercourses and waterholes provide a habitat in the desert for flora and fauna that would not otherwise survive in the desert environment.



Serpentine Gorge - West MacDonnell Ranges

The rivers and creeks originate north of the ranges and flow through to join the Finke and Todd Rivers. Most of the year they are dry with occasional waterholes but there is usually water flowing below the surface and aboriginals have for thousands of years depended upon this water. When the rains come they become raging torrent able to erode the land and carry the soil into the plains.

Simpson Gap is close to Alice Springs and a popular destination for tourists; however further west, Ellery Creek Big Hole is a more interesting place. There is a large permanent

waterhole between the cliffs of the gorge through which Ellery Creek passes.



Serpentine Gorge from the lookout - West MacDonnell Ranges

Serpentine Gorge winds its way through the range and the small waterhole blocks access to the gorge. However a lookout point above the gorge allows those prepared to climb a great view of the gorge.

Further west are the Ochre Pits where aboriginal people obtained ochres of many colours for their ceremonies. The creek has exposed rock strata of various colours and yellow, red and brown ochre deposits are exposed. The quality of the ochre was important and ochres were traded between aboriginal communities.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ochre_pits



Serpentine Gorge - West MacDonnell Ranges

My next stop is Glen Helen Gorge and it is here that the Finke River cuts its way through the MacDonnell ranges through a narrow gorge. As this is the only exit to the south heavy rains result in water banking up and the Glen Helen resort has been submerged by the flood waters.

<http://www.walkabout.fairfax.com.au/locations/NTGlenHelen.shtml>



Ochre Pits - West MacDonnell Ranges



Ochre Pits - West MacDonnell Ranges

The Finke River is thought to be the oldest river still following its original course. Over millions of years the river has followed its present course despite massive geological upheavals.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finke_River



Glen Helen Gorge - West MacDonnell Ranges

Finally I start my way back towards Alice Springs and my last stop is Ormiston Gorge and Pound. I do not have time to explore the Pound, but I am able to walk to the beautiful waterhole nestling in the gorge and to climb to the Ghost Gum Lookout overlooking the gorge and the pound. The walk is supposed to take 30-minutes but it is an easy climb and takes me about 10 minutes. The views are well worth the climb.

<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/wildlife/nature/macdonnell.html>

http://www.lpi.usra.edu/publications/slidesets/geology/sgeo/slide_24.html

I am only 140km from Alice Springs so I am easily back Alice Springs in time to restock my supplies for the journey north. Temperatures should start to rise. I have just about had enough of 10 to 15C days. I was 13C here today.



Ormiston Gorge - West MacDonnell Ranges



Ormiston Gorge - West MacDonnell Ranges



Ormiston Gorge - West MacDonnell Ranges

Saturday 16th June 2007 - Alice Springs to Tennant Creek

Day 12

This morning when I got up at 06:30 it was – 3.5C, fortunately there was no wind and it was quite pleasant provided you were rugged up for the cold. The forecast max for today is 13C in Alice Springs. However today I am on my way north and by 08:00 I have showered, breakfasted and packed up camp and ready to head north.

My next stop is Tennant Creek 500 km away where the forecast is 21C, maybe a little rain tomorrow.

I am soon across the Tropic of Capricorn travelling through light bushland where

there is an abundance of wattle in bloom. Autumn rains have brought on the grasses and the roadside is green although the Spinifex grass appears dry. Some areas are more sparsely vegetated but one could be forgiven for thinking that this is not a desert area as the creek beds and floodways are so green. The terrain is flat with occasional remnants of ancient hills and in the distance remnant mountains.

Apart from a stop at Ti Tree for fuel I make a stop at Barrow Creek the site of one of the four remaining Telegraph Stations. Unfortunately it is unsafe to enter the building and it is not open for inspection.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barrow_Creek,_Northern_Territory
<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/NTBarrowCreek.shtml>

<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks/find/barrowcreek.html>



Barrow Creek Telegraph Station

My next stop is at the Devil's Marbles about 100km south of Tennant Creek. This rather spectacular formation of granite boulders is the weathered remains of a granite outcrop that forced its way through the surrounding plain.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Devils_Marbles_Conservation_Reserve

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/NTWauchope.shtml>

It is widely accepted that the 'Marbles', which are roughly egg-shaped, were considered by the local Aborigines to have been eggs laid by the Rainbow Serpent during the Dreamtime.

They are, by any measure, a remarkable geological formation having been formed by spheroidal weathering. Signs along the pathways describe how the boulders were formed by a combination of mechanical weathering (which cracked the rocks) and chemical weathering (which flaked the surface off). One sign succinctly explains

the process: 'These boulders were originally part of a solid mass of coarse grained granite which formed deep within the earth's surface about 1640 million years ago. Erosion has since stripped away the overlying material and weathering processes have shaped the forms you see here today. As the molten magma cooled and hardened to form granite the mass shrank and cracked and these cracks known as joints effectively split the granite body into a series of tight fitting blocks.'



The Devil's Marbles

The enormous daily and annual temperature ranges in the harsh desert landscape - from sub-zero temperatures at night to over 40°C during the day - mean that the erosive processes are still very much at work.

At about 14:00 I arrive in Tennant Creek and make my way to the Outback Caravan Park and set up camp. My neighbour is also travelling alone so we soon establish a cordial relationship.

It is the weekend and some of the Tennant Creek attractions are closed but a visit to the Information Centre confirms there is enough to see to keep me busy tomorrow.

Tonight around a campfire in the caravan park, Jimmy Hooker, a local identity, whose address is Gum Tree 69 outside Tennant Creek, will entertain guests with yarns and poems of the outback. For \$3 this seems to be something not to be missed.

<http://www.connectingthecontinent.com/ctcwebsite/tennantcreek/tennantaudio01.htm>

It is an entertaining evening; billy tea made with native lemongrass is served to everyone who wants it. He demonstrates soap from the seeds of the wattle common in the area and finally serves the damper that has been cooking all evening in the camp oven. For some reason there seems to be a larger than usual audience and the damper barely goes around.

Tomorrow night is, I believe, witchetty grub night.

<http://www.tennantcreek.nt.gov.au/home/home>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennant_Creek

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/NTTennantCreek.shtml>

<http://ozpedia.org/Tennant+Creek,+Northern+Territory>



No. 3 Government Stamp Battery - Tennant Creek



No. 3 Government Stamp Battery - Tennant Creek



Underground in the Mine - Battery Hill Mining Centre - Tennant Creek



Underground in the Mine - Battery Hill Mining Centre - Tennant Creek

Overnight we have had about 2mm of rain. This morning there is a cool wind but still much warmer than Alice Springs.

Tennant Creek is the administrative centre for the Barkly region of the Northern Territory, an area larger than Victoria and has a population of about 3500 people.



Underground in the Mine - Battery Hill Mining Centre - Tennant Creek



Landscape - Tennant Creek



Mary Ann Recreational Dam - Tennant Creek



Tennant Creek Telegraph Station

Settlement here began after John McDouall Stewart had paved the way for the construction of the Overland Telegraph and when the telegraph was constructed a repeater station was built near Tennant Creek about 10km north of the present town of Tennant Creek. The Telegraph Station became a stopping place for travellers between Adelaide and Darwin, as did other Telegraph Stations.

<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks/find/tennantcreek.html>

Gold had been found in small quantities from the early days but it was one of the telegraph operators, 'Woody' Woodforde, who had enlisted local Aborigines in the search for gold and, in 1932, an Aboriginal man brought Woodforde a lump of black ironstone containing visible specks of gold. At the time this was a revelation as gold was usually found in, and associated with, quartz and had no prior associations with ironstone. This discovery led prospectors to cast their eyes upon previously overlooked geological formations in the area, particularly the hills to the south of the telegraph station which had caps of ironstone. There gold was found with ironstone deposits returning as much as 1.2 kg per tonne. This led to Australia's last great goldrush.

Despite government warnings of the harsh conditions 600 men flocked to the area only to find there was no work and without capital no way they could mine the gold.

By 1934 the numbers prompted the government to gazette a new township, to be called Tennant Creek.

The mines proved very rich and after WWII large mining companies worked the ironstone lode for nearly 40 years.



Pioneer Graves - Tennant Creek Telegraph Station



Cellar - Tennant Creek Telegraph Station The Battery

Hill Mining Centre, on the site of the enormous No. 3 Government Stamp Battery which was established in the 1940s for prospectors to crush their ore, has a collection of old mining machinery and two museums. One has a collection of memorabilia and photographs from the early mining day, graphically showing the hardships of living in this country where water and shelter are in short supply and summer temperatures are above 40C.

The other is an excellent small minerals museum.

<http://www.barklytourism.com.au/Default.aspx?tabid=62>

It was easy to spend a couple of hours at the Centre visiting the museums, looking at the old battery and other machinery and taking the mine tour. Although not part of any of the original mines the drive has been built to simulate the way mines were worked, and with working equipment it was a very good tour.

Having spent the morning at the Mining Centre it was time to visit some of the attractions around town.



The Pebbles

Mary Ann Recreational Dam to the north of the town provides a green oasis in a sometimes very parched land.

<http://www.tennantcreek.nt.gov.au/council/content/view/full/215?PHPSESSID=96a34e1ba8b4d037b>.

To enter the Telegraph Station it is necessary to borrow the key from the information centre. 11km north of Tennant Creek it is still in reasonable condition and restoration is in progress. Signs tell the story of the station and its characters.

The Pebbles is an outcrop of granite boulders. It is now enclosed in land owned by Aboriginals and entry is forbidden. It is only possible to view them from the carpark



Tennant Creek

Returning to town the main point of interest is Church of Christ the King

There are few buildings of historical importance in Tennant Creek. Most of the early buildings were constructed out of corrugated iron and have simply

disappeared. One of the most notable buildings is the Roman Catholic Church of Christ the King which was originally built at Pine Creek in 1904. As Pine Creek declined and Tennant Creek grew, the decision was made in 1936 to dismantle the building and transport it to the new settlement.



**Roman Catholic Church of Christ the King -
Tennant Creek**

Unfortunately, the trip commenced at the start of the wet season and, while the first truck made it, the second got bogged in a creek and overturned. The third returned to Pine Creek to await improved weather. This left the front door in Tennant Creek, the back door 700 km north at Pine Creek and the side walls scattered along a creek at Daly Waters. Thus the locals started referring to the building as 'The Longest Church in Australia'. It was the first church to be built between Alice Springs and Katherine and its unique use of corrugated iron, caneite, masonite and recycled telegraph poles for support stumps, make it a rare, if eccentric and somewhat

makeshift, example of original Australian vernacular architecture.

Jimmy Hooper's show tonight was far better than last night. Tonight he was focussed on bush tucker - bush

banana, bush coconut and witchetty grub. Of course he also demonstrated the bush soap and the wattle's use for relieving bites and stings.

The juice of the bush banana can be used for healing small wounds. The bush coconut is a parasite on the bloodwood tree. All parts of this can be eaten.

Monday 18th June 2007 - Tennant Creek to Katherine

Day 14

I was to have ended today in Daly Waters but when I looked again at the schedule for the Savannah Way it was obvious I needed another day so I decided to drive through to Katherine. No great drama in this the road is good and the countryside changes slowly from the fairly arid environment of Tennant Creek to savannah bushland. At first the bushes and trees are small but as I

travel north they become larger and the woodland is denser.

On my arrival in Katherine the Information Centre advises that the unsealed portion of the Savannah Way is very rough.

It is time to go to Plan B and reroute myself to avoid the rough section.

It is fortunate that I have gained a day by driving through to Katherine as now I can spend 2 nights in Mt Isa. The result is I will be a day later arriving in Cairns. This should not be a problem.

Tuesday 19th June 2007 – Katherine

Day 15



First Gorge - Nitmiluk

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/NTKatherine.shtml>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katherine,_Northern_Territory

Yesterday I booked an 8-hour safari tour in the Nitmiluk National Park.

<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks/find/nitmiluk.html>

<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks/management/nnpguide.html>

When I awoke rain seemed likely and so it was to be all day with a few drops falling all day; but nothing came of it. As I write this after dinner the occasional drops continue.

The Katherine River Gorge system is made up of 13 gorges separated by rock barriers that create a series of lakes in the dry season rising to the Arnhem Land escarpment.



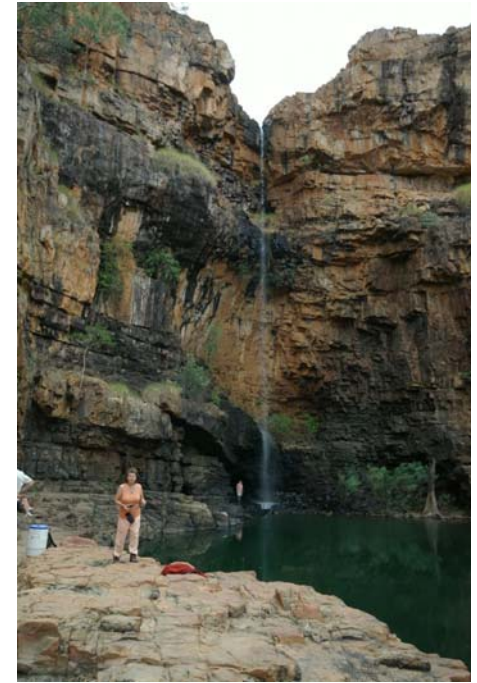
Second Gorge - Nitmiluk



Third Gorge - Nitmiluk



Nitmiluk



Lily Pond



Rock Art - Nitmiluk

In the wet season the average rainfall is 1000mm and the Katherine River drains an area the size of Victoria. Consequently large volumes of water cascade through the gorge system. Some of the gorges are quite narrow and so impede the flood, thus reducing the risk of flooding in Katherine and further downstream. However there are years when the flood is so great that Katherine has been inundated and this year the town was on flood warning during the wet.



Between First and Second Gorge - Nitmiluk



Rock Art - Nitmiluk

The safari takes us by boat and on foot through the lower 5 gorges and to the start of the 6th gorge.



Katherine Gorge - Nitmiluk

In places the cliffs tower 160m above the river and aboriginal paintings the work of the ancestors of the traditional owners, the Jawoyn people, are to be seen on the cliffs. Images in red ochre survive the test of time

and are believed to be between 10000 and 15000 years old.



Fourth Gorge - Nitmiluk

Images in yellow and white ochre and charcoal are less durable and only a few yellow ochre figures are visible. It is almost impossible to determine how the other colours were associated with the red ochre paintings, as they have long ago weathered away.



Rockholes eroded by stones and water - Nitmiluk



Nitmiluk

Many of the paintings are high above the river and well below the top of the gorge so it is mystery as to how they were painted. The Jaywon people believe Mimi men painted them in the dreamtime. The Jaywon people also have dreamtime stories for the creation of the gorge and the water that flows through it.



Schmidt Rock - Nitmiluk

The overcast day meant it stayed fairly cool and a pleasant day for scrambling over rocks. Our guides provided an excellent barbecue lunch.

On the way back we stopped at Lily Pond, a plunge pool at the foot of a waterfall and some brave souls took a dip.

We also nosed our way into a cave inhabited by tiny ghost bats. The plastic green tree snake that was there in 2004 had gone, probably carried away by a flood.

Wednesday 20th June 2007 - Katherine

Day 16



High Road Bridge - Katherine



Flood Debris - High Road Bridge - Katherine

First stop this morning is to replace the rear tyres on the Forester; no drama they are simply worn out, although they will make emergency spares and I will keep them.



Old Rail Bridge - Katherine

While the tyres are being done I take a walk around the river, take a few photos and head to the supermarket to replenish supplies for the next few days.

It is raining lightly; it has not rained in June in Katherine for 17 years and I believe today was the coldest June day on record.



School of the Air - Katherine



School of the Air - Katherine



Pool - Edith Falls



Melaleucas and Pandanus beside the river - Edith Falls

After the tyres were done it was time to visit the Katherine School of the Air, a service run by the NT government for children in the top half of the NT. There is another school in Alice Springs. These schools cater for years pre-school to eight and for many children provide an interactive link with the teacher via an internet link. Others are serviced totally by correspondence. 280 students are enrolled and a student ratio of 1 teacher to

13 students and the support of parents ensure they do not miss out on a primary education. Student turnover is very high; about 70% of the students do not reenrol as the parents have moved on to another state. 2 or 3 per year complete the whole primary education through the School of the Air at Katherine.

<http://www.schools.nt.edu.au/ksa/>



Bowerbird - Edith Falls



View from the Lookout - Edith Falls

Secondary education is also available through the School of the Air at Batchelor, near Darwin. However most children who complete their primary schooling through Katherine move on to boarding school for their secondary education.



View from the Lookout - Edith Falls



Edith Falls

After the visit to the School of the Air I head to the northern edge of Nitmiluk National Park and Edith Falls.



Longhole - Edith Falls

Here there is a very pleasant campground beside a large pool at the foot of the Edith Falls. Water from these falls comes from the Arnhem Plateau and finds its way to the Katherine River.

There is plenty of water coming over the falls but as it is a series of cascades it is necessary to climb up onto the escarpment to the upper pools to fully appreciate the extent of the falls. Yesterday we saw few birds in the Nitmiluk Gorge; today as I climbed the escarpment there were many different birds to be seen, including a nesting bowerbird. However once on the plateau birds seem to become scarce. The track is fairly easy going, although a little rough in places and views from the lookouts are spectacular.

I have time to take the walk upstream to Longhole; it was well worth the walk.

Sweetwater Pool 2km further on is reported to be worth a visit but I was concerned about time and weather so I turned back. The rain has held off and does so until I get

back to the car park but 15minutes after I leave on my way back it starts to rain quite heavily. Rain has persisted on and off ever since.



Falls - Longhole - Edith Falls

Thursday 21st June 2007 - Katherine to Jabiru (Kakadu NP)

Day 17

Nice early start at 08:00 this morning. It has been raining on and off all night so the canvas is wet, but hopefully it will be dry in Jabiru. It is a pleasant drive though the savannah woodlands to Pine Creek and then along the Kakadu Highway.

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/NTPineCreek.shtml>

<http://www.southeasternhistory.com.au/pinecreek.htm>



Enterprise Pit - Pine Creek



Ranger Uranium Mine - Jabiru

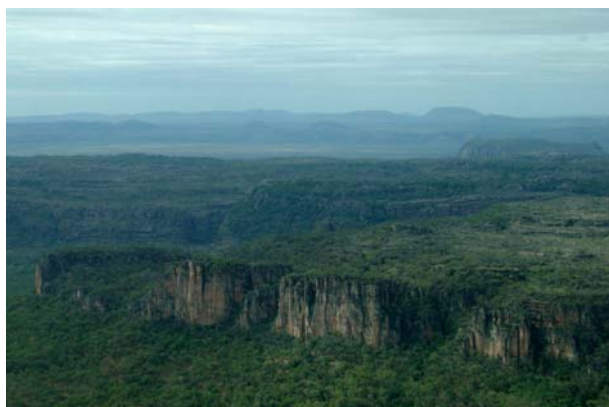
A brief stop at the Pine Creek Goldfields to look at the Enterprise Pit!

http://www.travelnt.com/en/search/product-detail.aspx?product_id=9000317&index=true

Before being mined this area was Enterprise Hill, now it's Enterprise Pit. The Pit is now a 135 metres deep and filled with water, but before its closure, more than 764,000 ounces of gold were extracted from the mine.

This is the same route followed in 2004 so I did not stop at most of the places I visited then, but pressed on to Jabiru.

<http://www.jabiru.nt.gov.au/>



Arnhem Plateau Escarpment – Kakadu National Park

Along the road wattles, kapok, turkey bush and some eucalypts are in flower. The purple of the turkey bush

and the deep orange of some of the eucalypts is quite striking.



Jim Jim Falls – Kakadu National Park

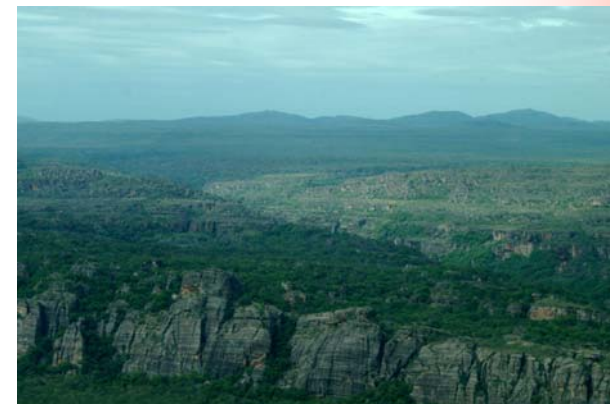
I stopped at the excellent Bowali Visitor Centre just out of Jabiru and picked up some interesting fact sheets.



Twin Falls – Kakadu National Park

I checked into the Kakadu Lodge Caravan Park which was recommended by Elaine from her trip with Marcus

and Rachel and first booked a day trip to Arnhem Land for tomorrow. Then I asked about a flight and, shades of Kununurra last year, I was asked if I want to go now. Of course I said yes, just give me time to park the car and trailer. By the time I had done that the pilot had arrived to take me to the airport.



Arnhem Plateau



Arnhem Plateau

The flight took off to the east and circled the Ranger Uranium Mine and Jabiru before heading south past Mt Brockman. Mt Brockman is so sacred to the aboriginals that they will not visit it. Our flight continues south past Nourlangie the site of many aboriginal rock paintings and on to Jim Jim Falls and Twin Falls. Both have more water flowing over them than in October 2004.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranger_Uranium_Mine

<http://www.environment.gov.au/ssd/uranium-mining/arr-mines/ranger.html>

As we return to Jabiru we have the Arnhem Land Escarpment to the east and the Savannah woodlands and flood plains to the west.

Kakadu National Park is World Heritage listed because of its cultural and natural significance. Archaeological sites up to 40,000 years old attest to the significance of the area.

<http://www.travelnt.com/en/>

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/NTKakaduNationalPark.shtml>

http://www.auroraresorts.com.au/display.asp?Property_ID=14

<http://www.gagudjulodgecooinda.com.au/>

Kakadu National Park is over 22,000 km², about the same size as Anna Creek Station and one quarter the size of Tasmania or Arnhem Land.

Friday 22nd June 2007 - Kakadu

Day 18

It is overcast and quite mild, a perfect day for walking.

Pickup for the day tour to Arnhem Land is soon after 08:00 and as there are only 7 of us we fit comfortably into the 13 seat OKA, air conditioned, 4WD vehicle.

Arnhem Land is aboriginal land and subject to restricted access by non-indigenous people. A permit is required, and the tour company has obtained this for us to enter this 100,000 km² region of northern Australia.



Long Tom Fish Dreaming - Gunbalanya

It is about 60km to Gunbalanya (Oenpelli), the first settlement across the border between Kakadu National Park and Arnhem Land.



Artist, Graham Badari - Gunbalanya

As we travel north towards Gunbalanya the Arnhem Plateau escarpment is visible to the west. Rising in some places to over

260m the plateau slopes towards the east and the Gulf of Carpentaria.



Passage Through - Long Tom Fish Dreaming - Gunbalanya

Our guide, Michael, keeps up a running commentary describing the changing countryside as we alternately move from the savannah woodlands to the wetlands and watercourses where paperbark trees dominate. As the wet season has not long finished there is plenty of water about and the waterholes and billabongs are alive with birds,



View from Long Tom Fish Dreaming - Gunbalanya



Wilfred explaining the paintings - Long Tom Fish Dreaming - Gunbalanya

The sealed road ends at the East Alligator River crossing. The river is tidal at this point, about 50km upstream from the sea, and as the tide is low the ford is only about 150mm deep. Michael expects it to be much deeper when we return.



Paintings - Long Tom Fish Dreaming - Gunbalanya



Paintings are protected under these overhangs - Long Tom Fish Dreaming - Gunbalanya

We are soon at Gunbalanya and we stop at the Injalak Arts and Crafts Centre where we meet some of the local artists and pick up our local guide, Wilfred.

The billabong beside the town is teeming with birds, magpie ducks, herons, ibis, whistling ducks, jabiru and unseen saltwater crocodiles.

We travel on to the other side of the billabong to the foot of the long tom fish dreaming mountain where Wilfred quietly leads us up the hill to one after another of the most brilliant aboriginal art sites I have seen. Vivid colours and clearly defined images showing the layer upon layer of paintings done over the eons. Exact ages are unknown as it is not yet possible to accurately date these paintings but according to Wilfred some could be 10000 to 20000 years old.

Apart from images of fish, animals, reptiles and birds, there are images of lightning man and the earth mother. Wilfred quietly explains them to us and tells us many stories of his peoples dreaming.

Apart from the paintings the views across the flood plain to the other mountains; the magpie geese dreaming and the leech dreaming mountains and more distant views of the escarpment are sharp and clear.



Eroded Rock Formation - Long Tom Fish Dreaming - Gunbalanya

Michael has climbed another path and is waiting for us with morning tea at lookout point under a huge overhanging rock with views of the wetlands below and the escarpment. Below us Whistling Kites are circling searching for food.



Earth Mother - Long Tom Fish Dreaming - Gunbalanya



East Alligator River Flood Plains



Fleeing Dingo - Long Tom Fish Dreaming - Gunbalanya

Finally Wilfred leads us to a lookout with a 270degree view of the mountains and the flood plain.

We have not seen any animals, other than lizards, but as we descend to the vehicle I spot a dingo ahead of us. The others

behind were making too much noise and by the time they caught up it had gone.



**Spear Throwing Practice Site -
Gunbalanya**

We have spent over two hours scrambling over the mountain looking at the views, paintings and burial site and it is time to return to the Injalak Arts and Crafts Centre and take a closer look at the work on offer.

The work on display was of excellent quality and great craftsmanship, whether it

was woven crafts, didgeridoos, or paintings on bark or Arches paper.

Two pieces took my fancy and they will be posted home.



Art from Contact Period - Gunbalanya



Spears Lodged in the Crevasse - Gunbalanya

We start to head for home, but first lunch by a billabong, not too close to water in case of crocs and then a stop at an art site featuring contact period images, i.e. since the appearance of Europeans in northern Australia during the last 400 years and nearby some paintings with images from the contact, freshwater and estuarine periods, i.e. some up to 8000 years old.

A painting of a ketch generates much discussion.

Finally we stop at a site where young warriors and hunters honed their spear throwing skills by hurling spears 70m into the air and lodging them in a crevice in the rock. There are spear like objects in the crevice!



Tide Flooding In - East Alligator River Crossing

As expected the water level at the East Alligator River crossing is much higher, 60 – 70 cm and flowing strongly. A number of vehicles are waiting till they think it safe to cross, but the OKA

easily handles the depth and current, a Toyota troopie follows us through.

Once across the river we are soon on the bitumen and heading back to Jabiru.

In all a very interesting day!

Saturday 23th June 2007 – Jabiru to Cooinda

Day 19

Rather leisurely starts this morning as I am going about 60km to Cooinda and Yellow waters so I can do the early morning Yellow Waters cruise on Sunday.



Arnhem Escarpment from Mirrai Lookout

Mirrai lookout is situated on a rocky outlier close to the highway. The 1.6km walk to the observation point is fairly steep, but in the early morning it is quite a pleasant walk.

There are 360° views over Kakadu National Park, to the east is the Arnhem Plateau escarpment, to the north the Arafura Sea, and to the west the South Alligator River flood plain.

It is about 11:00 when arrive at Cooinda and set up camp.



Straw Necked Ibis - Yellow Waters - Kakadu NP

After I have set up camp I head out to explore the nearby attractions. Yellow Waters wetlands are the major attraction here and so I spend some time viewing the birds from the boardwalk and then make my way to the Warradjan cultural centre. Here the traditions and culture of the local indigenous people is portrayed. Whilst it is a very good display there is little to take away that can remind one of the information displayed.

Jim Jim Billabong is nearby so I head out to have a look. Hardly worth the effort, it is obviously a popular fishing spot but otherwise there is little to see.



Australian White Ibis - Yellow Waters - Kakadu NP

Returning to the highway I head south to Majuk Falls. Access roads have not been open long and a sandy creek crossing is a bit of a challenge. However I negotiate it without any drama. The walk into the falls is sandy and rocky and not comfortable. However there is a fair amount of water coming over the falls so the walk through the tall paperbarks and pandanus is worthwhile.



Great Egret – Yellow Waters – Kakadu National Park



Melaleuca Forest – Majuk Falls – Kakadu National Park



Majuk Falls – Kakadu National Park



Termite Mound – Kakadu National Park

On the way out I find a National Parks vehicle bogged in the creek crossing. Two girls, new to the service, were in the vehicle and I suspect no one had briefed them on how to cross the creeks. They were too deeply bogged for me to attempt to pull them out but I knew there was

two large 4WD tour vehicles behind me, so we waited until one arrived.

Once they were out of the crossing we were all able to cross without any problems.

Drinks with the neighbours meant dinner was a little later tonight.

When I checked into Cooinda yesterday they thought there might not be many crocodiles to see, as it had been too cold in the morning for them to be on the move. Fortunately yesterday was quite warm and it has been warm overnight. So it turns out there are enough crocs up and about to satisfy everyone.



Jabiru – Black Necked Stork – Yellow Waters – Kakadu National Park



Sunrise – Yellow Waters – Kakadu National Park



Darter Drying Wings – Yellow Waters – Kakadu NP

The reason for returning to Yellow Waters was not to see crocs but see more of the birds that this wetland is famous for. In October 2004 the flood plains were fairly dry and the birds had

mostly gone to greener pastures. This time it is wet, so wet that some birds that are usually there at this time of the year have not yet arrived. There is a profusion birds, Whistling Ducks, Whistling Kites, Jabiru, Rufous Night Herons, Ibis, Spoonbills, Herons, White Breasted Sea Eagles, Small Kingfishers, Burdekin Ducks and Comb-Crested Jacana, a small bird with large toes that dances about on the lily pads and many others.



Juvenile Nankeen Night Heron – Yellow Waters – Kakadu National Park

I have modified my plans again and so that I can head off straight after the cruise I have been up since 05:00 breakfasting and packing. This means I can stop in Katherine for a few supplies and then continue south to Daly Waters.

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/NTDalyWaters.shtml>



Estuarine Crocodile - Yellow Waters - Kakadu National Park



Nankeen Night Heron - Yellow Waters - Kakadu NP

There are two places to stay, a modern caravan park on the highway and one beside the historic Daly Waters Pub. It is obviously the place to be, the park was pretty full when I arrived at about 16:00, it is now packed and dinner and show in the pub is a must if you stop here.

The singer – comedian presents a very funny show to a receptive audience of campers.



A good Barramundi - Yellow Waters - Kakadu National Park



Sea Eagle in Flight - Yellow Waters - Kakadu National Park

The weather is crazy, it is supposed to be dry, but it is pouring.

Daly Waters was an important stop for John McDouall Stewart on his trip across Australia and there is a tree that may have his initials carved into it.

There was also an important airfield here during WWII.



Nesting Jabiru - Yellow Waters - Kakadu National Park



Azure Kingfisher - Yellow Waters - Kakadu National Park



Comb-Crested Jacana - Yellow Waters - Kakadu National Park



Nesting Sea Eagle - Yellow Waters - Kakadu National Park



At Daly Waters



Daly Waters Pub



Bar - Daly Waters Pub



Entertainment - Daly Waters Pub

Monday 25th June 2007 – Daly Waters to Barkly Homestead

Day 21

It has rained all night so I have a wet tent to pack before I set off. Nevertheless I am on the road soon after 08:00 and on my way out of town I have the time I take a quick

look at the airfield. One WWII hangar remains as a museum otherwise it is a typical rural strip.

Once I have refuelled I turn on to the Carpentaria Highway and head east to Cape Crawford – no idea why the town is called Cape Crawford, as it is 100km from the sea.

It is an overstatement to call the road a highway – it is mostly a single lane sealed strip built to carry road trains carrying cattle out of the Barkly Tablelands. If you meet one and I did, a four-tanker train, you get off the road and wait till it passes.

I am still travelling through savannah woodland. There is great variety in the density and type of woodland. In some places the bush is quite open and in others it is dense and lush. The dominant tree variety also changes from place to place, so the shades of green and brown change quite dramatically.

On this road a dingo crosses in front of me. There is very little traffic.



Straight Road to Cape Crawford

Cape Crawford seems a pleasant little stop and the camp ground behind the Heartbreak Hotel looks a good

place to stop. Straight on leads to Borroloola. A right turn heads south on the Tablelands Highway to Barkly Homestead.

The rain is continuing and has been steady to the east for some days so my decision against the Savannah Way to Normanton is vindicated. Also roads in some parts in Queensland have been closed.



Road Running Bustard - Tablelands Highway

The Tablelands Highway is a beef road and although in generally good repair it is pretty uneven in places. As it is wet and there is a lot of water on the road and lying in the floodways I am travelling more slowly and as the shoulders of the road are very soft in places I am taking great care when on coming vehicles approach. They and I usually slow right down before passing.

Roadside cattle have to be watched and occasionally grazing kangaroos are to be seen. At one point I am brought to a stop by large bustard standing in the middle

of the road. I have plenty of time for a photo before it flies off. The country side is intriguing, much of it is savannah woodland but there are also large tracts of grassland that appear to be dry flood plains as it is in these sections that warnings about road flooding are most common.

Apart from the settlement at Cape Crawford I have not seen a homestead all day. There have been several signs pointing to station homesteads, usually many kilometres from the highway.



Cattle - Barkly Tablelands

Although it has been raining steadily, it is not heavy rain and I encounter only one floodway with a small amount of water flowing across it.

Finally about 15:30 I reach my destination, Barkly Homestead, at the junction of the Tablelands Highway and the Barkly Highway that is the main highway from Townsville to Tennant Creek.

It is also a major stopping point for travellers and there are already a fair number of caravans in the park and it is waterlogged. I book in and finally find a site without water all over it so that I can set up camp.

By about 18:00 it looks like the rain might be clearing up and the moon is trying to shine through the clouds. So

with a bit of luck we might have seen the last of the wet and overcast weather.

Tuesday 26th June 2007 –Barkly Homestead to Mt Isa

Day 22



Roadside Wedge Tail Eagle

This morning I awake to fog. Unbelievable weather for this part of Australia at this time of year!

By the time I am packed and ready to leave there are signs that the fog is lifting and at last it will be a bright sunny day.



Endless Plains – Barkly Highway

I am heading east again and the sun soon appears and it is a bright clear day. I am still travelling through savannah bushland and the tablelands are incredibly flat. It is not until I am about 40km from Mt Isa that there are some hills. There are changes in vegetation; regions of bushland and open grasslands.



Approaching Mt Isa from the West

I have been warned of flood damaged road from about 40km west of the NT border to the border. The accounts suggest the road is in terrible condition. When I get there I find a few potholes, most of which can be straddled, in damaged patches. I really don't know what the drama was all about.

Camooweal is the most westerly town in Queensland and I refuel there before heading onto Mt Isa.

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDMountIsa.shtml>

Located 1829 km from Brisbane, 883 km from Townsville and 356 m above sea-level, Mount Isa proudly claims to be the largest city in the world; a fact born out by its accreditation in the Guinness Book of Records. The argument is that the city extends for 40 977 sq. km, and that the road from Mount Isa to Camooweal, a distance of 189 km, is the longest city road in the world.

Prior to white settlement the area was occupied by the Kalkadoon Aborigines, who produced large numbers of axes and other tools in the area, using them as trade. They fiercely resisted the encroachment of pastoralists in the 1870s and early 1880s but their resistance and raids were effectively ended when native police and white settlers retaliated with a bloody massacre in 1884.

Copper was mined in the area from the 1880s but a price slump in the early 1920s saw the venture collapse. However, in February 1923 vast silver-lead-zinc deposits were discovered by the prospector John Campbell Miles. Miles named the site after Mount Ida, a Western Australian goldmine. Within months over

500 claims had been lodged in Cloncurry but slowly these claims were amalgamated into two major companies. Mount Isa Mines Ltd was formed in 1924 and by 1925 it had taken over all the leases to the field. Isolation and lack of facilities proved an early problem so MIM began to build a company town with low-rent housing and amenities in 1927. Matters were further aided when the railway arrived from Townsville in 1929.



Signpost - Lookout - Mt Isa

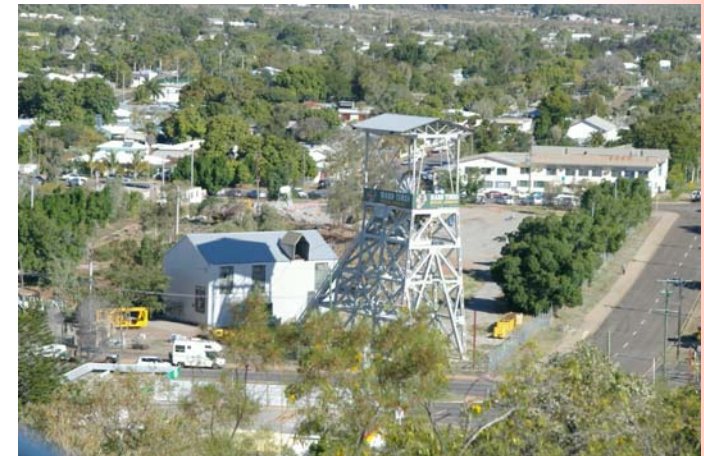
The cost of developing the mine in such a remote location proved too much for the original Australian and British shareholders and, in mid-1930, the American Smelting and Refining Company (now ASARCO Incorporated) rescued the operation by providing millions of dollars to complete the treatment plant and commence the production of lead, although profits did not emerge until 1937.

When a particularly large copper deposit was proven to exist in 1942 the Australian government, enduring wartime shortages of

the strategic material, encouraged its exploitation. Copper would prove the main source of revenue in the 1950s.



Mt Isa



Hard Times Mine - Mt Isa

In 1958 the Leichhardt River was dammed to provide a guaranteed water supply for the town and mine. Mount Isa was declared a city in 1968.

The novelist Vance Palmer wrote a trilogy of books about Mount Isa (Golconda, Seedtime, and The Big Fellow) and his descriptions of the town are a reminder of its harsh beginnings. In Golconda he writes of the town:

'There's nothing much to catch the eye at the first glance. It's bone-dry country, twisted shrubs and spinifex, and the hills are mostly humps of rock where a goat would find it hard to pick up a feed. But there's a life about the air of a morning that makes you feel that the few trees there are might pull up their roots and float away while you're looking at them.'

Today Mount Isa Mines Ltd is one of the most highly mechanised and cost efficient mines in the world. It's the world's

biggest single producer of silver and lead and is amongst the world's top ten for copper and zinc. It is also one of the few areas in the world where the four minerals are found in close proximity. As Australia's largest underground mine, it has a daily output of around 35 000 tonnes of ore. The underground workings extend approximately 4.5 km in length and 1.3 km in width.

Wednesday 27th June 2007 – Mt Isa

Day 23

The town of Mount Isa exists because of the mine, however other mines that feed concentrate to the copper smelter secure its future.

In the early days of the mine Mount Isa Mines built tent houses to provide accommodation for miners. A cross between a traditional house and a tent they were an improvement on the first miners accommodation. One of the houses has been preserved as a National Trust site.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service Base has a visitor centre that is worth a visit for those not familiar with the role and history of the service. Established at Cloncurry n

1928 by Rev John Flynn the base was later moved to Mt. Isa. The service has expanded to cover all remote areas of Australia.



Tent House Mt Isa

There are two mining tours, an underground tour in the Hard Times Mine, a simulation of the underground mining at Mount Isa Mines, and a surface tour of the real thing. The Hard Time Mine was named after John Campbell Miles' horse.



Mine Vent - Mt Isa Mine



Chimney Stack - Copper Smelter - Mt Isa Mine

I have chosen to tour take the surface tour of this unique mine. It is a massive operation. The previously underground silver - lead - zinc mine is being developed as a super pit that will be 6km long, 2km wide and 800m deep. Below it is the copper underground mine extending to a depth of 1800m. The copper ore body extends even deeper but so far the technology to mine at these depths where rock temperatures exceed 60C does not exist. Already the mine is using the

world' s largest air-cooling plant to maintain reasonable ambient temperatures for men and machines.



Pit Head - Mt Isa Mine



Open Pit - Mt Isa Mine

3000 tonnes of sulphuric acid per day is produced from the sulphur dioxide extracted from the flue gases from the copper smelter. This is given away to a nearby fertiliser plant.



Sulphuric Acid Plant - Mt Isa Mine



Copper Anode - Mt Isa Mine

The cast copper anodes that are produced are railed to Townsville further refining to produce 99.8% pure copper. Zinc concentrate is also railed to Townsville and exported. Lead and silver ingots weighing 4 tonne and containing 10kg of silver are shipped to the UK for refining to separate the silver.



Chimney Stack - Lead Smelter - Mt Isa Mine

It is a very interesting 2-hour tour.

The tour has run a little overtime so I do not have much time to get to the Underground Hospital.

At the outbreak of WWII there was a cottage hospital at Mt Isa and after the bombing of Darwin in 1942 it was thought that Mt Isa would be a prime target for the Japanese because of the mines and the presence of American troops involved in

building the highway to Darwin. To protect the hospital a small hospital was cut into the adjacent hill and fully equipped, mainly by the US Army. It was never used and at the end of WWII the entrances were sealed with most of the equipment inside and forgotten.



Slag Bucket Haul Truck - Mt Isa Mine



Underground Hospital - Mt Isa



Cottage Hospital - Mt Isa



Mt Isa Lights

<http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au/destinations/outback/things-to-see-and-do/mount-isa-underground-hospital-and-museum/>
<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/extras/federation/CMFedNWHospital.htm> Discovery date was 1995 not 1977 as stated in this article.



Medicine Cupboard - Underground Hospital - Mt Isa



Flaming Slag Dump - Mt Isa Mine

In 1995 a contractor about to remove the hill for expansion of the Mt Isa Hospital broke into the underground hospital revealing an historical treasure trove.

The hospital was built in 15 weeks by volunteer miners from the Mt Isa Mines.

The local aboriginals were the Kalkadoons, reputed to be quite fierce, and there is a small centre to house the Kalkadon heritage next to the Outback at Isa Centre. It is rather depressing – some photographs and traditional objects and some badly faded photographs.

After dark I went back to the lookout to photograph the mine lights and then to the area where hot slag from the smelters is dumped to photograph the fiery flow of slag.

Thursday 28th June 2007 – Mt Isa to Cloncurry

Day 24

No great rush this morning as I am only travelling 115km to Cloncurry and it is about 08:45 when I set off. The road continues through the hills I encountered just before Mt Isa. As with the last few days, creeks and river, normally dry at this time of year have water flowing in them.

About half way between Mt Isa and Cloncurry is the abandoned uranium mining town of Mary Kathleen. When the mine closed everything was sold and all that remains is the streets and some concrete slabs from the foundations of buildings.

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/QLDMaryKathleen.shtml>

<http://www.uic.com.au/mku.htm>

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/Queensland/Cloncurry/2005/02/17/1108500202260.html>

In 1867, only 6 years after Burke and Will' s ill-fated expedition, a pastoralist Ernest Henry discovered copper. He established the Great Australian Mine which

still exists today although it has not been worked continuously. The modern open cut Ernest Henry mine processes the ore to produce copper concentrates that are transported by road train to the smelter at Mt Isa.

<http://archive.xstrata.com/mim/www.mim.com.au/ehm.html>



Road to Cloncurry



Mary Kathleen Township



Road Trains - Road to Cloncurry



High Set House - Cloncurry

A small town today Cloncurry has seen a number of important periods in Australian Outback history. Afghan Cameleers were an important part of transport to the outback and Chinese miners played a part in developing the mines. The remains of the Chinese cemetery by the river shows little of the people but there are records of some of the people buried there. The Afghan cemetery is a corner of the main Cloncurry Cemetery but the

records have disappeared and there are headstones for only two people, one of whom was a revered Muslim cleric.

Dame Mary Gilmore is also buried here.



Sculpture - Christopher Trotter - Remnants - 2003 - Cloncurry



Post Office Hotel - Cloncurry



Traction Engine - Mary Kathleen Memorial Park

Perhaps the most significant event in Cloncurry's history was the establishment of the first Flying Doctor Service Base by the Rev. John Flynn. John Flynn Place provides an historical display of the formation of the service and the life of John Flynn and his successor Fred McKay. This initiative led to the Royal Flying Doctor Service that provides medical and emergency support to all the remote areas of Australia. The successful development of the pedal radio enabled

remote communities to communicate with the Flying Doctor Service and ultimately lead to formation of schools of the air that provided education to children in remote locations.

<http://www.action-graphics.com.au/matilda/pages/cloncurry/cloncurryjohnflynn.html>
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Flynn_\(minister\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Flynn_(minister))



Flynn Place - Cloncurry

The Mary Kathleen Memorial Park and Museum has some buildings and memorabilia from the old Mary Kathleen township. There is a large collection of minerals and gemstones and a water bottle believed to have belonged to Robert O' Hara Bourke.

Buildings in the town are a mixture of designs. There are number of examples of the typical high set houses of the Australian tropics with wide eaves and shuttered windows.



Minerals Museum - Mary Kathleen Memorial Park



Furphy Water Tank - Mary Kathleen Memorial Park



Headstone - Syid Omar - Afghan Cemetery - Cloncurry



Traction Engine - Mary Kathleen Memorial Park



Grave - Chinese Cemetery - Cloncurry



Cloncurry River



Leichhardt Hotel - Cloncurry



Rocky outcrop on the road to Normanton

It has been a cold night and this morning everything is wet with dew. It is only about 4 hours to Normanton and I do not rush to pack up in the hope that things will dry little. I have some success but most things are still pretty wet when I pack up ready to leave at about 08:45.

The road north as far as Burke and Wills Crossing is mostly two lane and quite good. Shortly after leaving Cloncurry the landscape becomes very flat and apart from a few rocky outcrops continues this way until Normanton.

There is little at Burke and Wills Crossing except the pub and caravan park and intersections with the road from

Julia Creek and the road to Burketown. Beyond B&W Crossing the road is mainly single track.

<http://www.savannah-guides.com.au/page2-4.html>

<http://www.gulf-savannah.com.au/carpentaria-general.html>

<http://www.gulf-savannah.com.au/carpentaria-places.html>



Brolgas beside the Normanton – Karumba Road

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDNormanton.shtml>

Normanton is located 712 km west of Cairns and 681 km west of Townsville and started life as a port for the Gulf

of Carpentaria's cattle industry and grew in importance with the discovery of gold at Croydon in 1885.



Zinifex Plant – Karumba

In 1867 William Landsborough sailed up the Norman river and chose the site for the settlement of Normanton. Over the next decade it became an important port. The large Burns Philp building at the end of the town's main street is evidence of its importance at this time. There were even suggestions that it would become a port to rival Darwin as the main centre on the north coast of Australia.

In 1892 a boiling-down works was established on the river and shortly afterwards a meatworks was opened.



Mouth of the Norman River - Karumba



Commercial Fishing Wharf - Karumba

The town experienced a major boom with the discovery of gold at Croydon. By 1891 the population had reached 1251. However the gold diggings were short-lived and although the Normanton-Croydon railway line was opened by 1907 the whole area was on the decline. Even the cattle which had been the town's mainstay started heading south as the railway line was extended out towards Mount Isa. By 1947 the population had

dropped to 234. It has since picked up with the development of prawn fishing at Karumba and the increasing interest in tourism.



Krys - 8.63m long - Normanton

This is the largest Saltwater Crocodile ever shot.



Shire of Carpentaria Office - Normanton

In the town's hey day Burns Philp established their first store to service the growing pastoral industry. The building now houses the visitor centre and library.



Burns Philp Store - Normanton



Purple Pub - Normanton

These days the thought of Normanton being a major port is ridiculous. It is about 50km upstream from the mouth of the Norman River which is very shallow. Karumba at the mouth of the river is a more likely site but in the wet

season was probably impossible to reach from Normanton by land. These days Karumba is a fishing and holiday location. Kallis Fisheries have a base there and Zinifex has a processing plant and port for its Century Mine on the river. A chart I saw indicates the river channel is shallow so I don't know what size vessels are used to transport product from Zinifex.

http://www.zinifex.com/index.aspx?link_id=18.763

<http://www.gulf-savannah.com.au/mining.html>

Zinifex's Century Mine (officially opened in April 2000) is located in one of the most remote areas of Queensland approximately 250km north-north west of Mount Isa and within 120km of the Gulf of Carpentaria. The Century deposit has a life of approximately 20 years. A slurry pipeline constructed within an Integrated Transport Corridor links the mine with Karumba port, a distance of over 300Km. The slurry is processed in Karumba and the extracted zinc and lead exported to Europe.

The road to Karumba from Normanton is across very flat country, obviously subject to flooding during the wet season, as there is plenty of water around after the recent unseasonable rains. At present there is a lot of cattle grazing along the road. Water birds are everywhere in the lagoons and beside the road I saw 4 pairs of brolgas, one pair with two young birds.

Saturday 30th June 2007 – Normanton

Day 26

This morning I have booked an excursion on the Gulflander. This railway was built the 1880's between the port of Normanton and the goldfields at Croydon.



Normanton Railway Station



Gulflander - Normanton Railway Station

The scheme for a railway to transport copper between Cloncurry and Normanton was approved by the Queensland parliament in November 1886. The discovery of gold at Croydon in 1885 changed all that.

The scheme was hurriedly redrawn to provide a few miles of track out of Normanton, common to the two destinations. Ultimately only the deviation to Croydon was built.

The line is laid on steel sleepers laid on the ground and not on ballast creating a submersible railway, less likely to be damaged by the annual floods. Track laid in the 19th C is still in use today.

<http://qroti.com/longdistance/gulflander/>

Today's excursion takes us as far as Critter's Camp, so called because of insects that attacked workers at the site, 16 miles from Normanton. On the way back we stop

at Clarina Waterhole for morning tea. It was here on the way out that bushrangers – all good fun, waylaid us!



Bandit Leader makes off with the Gold - Gulflander



Norman River Bridge - Gulflander

Although now primarily a tourist line it has been in continuous operation since 1888 and in times of flood may be the only means of communication to stations along its route.

Besides the present railmotor powered by a Gardiner diesel engine there is an older railmotor powered by a crank started AEC petrol engine. RM31 has been fully restored and is used for short excursions.



Critters Camp - Gulflander

During the afternoon I spend some time walking around town photographing buildings and other points of interest.



The Gulflander runs on this!



Clarina Waterhole - Gulflander



Steel Sleeper - Gulflander



Old Rail Motor - Gulflander



From the Days of Steam - Normanton RS



Westpac Bank - Normanton



AEC Engine



House - Normanton



Main Street - Normanton

Sunday 1st July 2007 – Normanton to Undara

Day 27

My plan for the day was to drive to Georgetown, about half was to Cairns and as it was only 300km I took my time

packing up and it was about 08:15 when I set off.

The section of the Gulf Development between Normanton follows the Gulflander rail route across the Norman River flood plains and is a good dual lane road.

Approaching Croydon the countryside becomes hilly.



Chimney - Cumberland Mine

Croydon is an attractive little town with a present day population of 300. In August 1888 there were officially about 6500, unofficially 8000, residents.

<http://www.gulf-savannah.com.au/croydon-general.html>

When water was scarce, disease and fever ravaged the population of the fields and four undertakers worked in the town.



SES Headquarters - Croydon



Club Hotel - Croydon



Gulflander RS - Croydon



Old School House - Croydon

There were 122 liquor licences issued on the field before 1900 with up to 36 hotels; now there is one.



Courthouse - Croydon



Former Police Station - Croydon

Fortunately a number of historic buildings have been preserved. A ward of the hospital is now the SES headquarters and the police station, lockup, courthouse and town hall are part of an historic precinct, museum and visitor centre.

Prior to the discovery of gold the town existed as centre serving surrounding pastoral properties and after the

gold rush continued to do so and the railway continued to provide a reliable link to the port at Normanton.



Toxic Waste Site - Cumberland Mine



Glistening Foliage - Undara

Moving on I am now travelling through rolling rocky hills towards Georgetown. About 60km east of Croydon the road crosses the Gilbert River, a large river flowing into the Gulf of Carpentaria.

20km west of Georgetown is the remains of the Cumberland Mine. It was here that the first parcel of stone from the Croydon mines crushed by mechanical means was crushed. The parcel yielded 52 ounces to the ton.

<http://www.gulf-savannah.com.au/etheridge-shire-places.html>

The toxic waste site is a haven for water birds.

Georgetown's claim to fame is its mining and gemstone history. It is a popular place for fossickers. There is a large mineral museum in the town and little else and as it was only 12:30 I decided to refuel and push on to Undara National Park and arrived at about 14:00.

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDGeorgetown.shtml>

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/Queensland/Georgetown/2005/02/17/1108500203335.html>

On the way I passed through the little township of Mt Surprise, another popular place for fossickers.

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/QLDMountSurprise.shtml>

The unique feature of Undara National Park is the lava tubes formed when lava gushed from surrounding

volcanoes into the valleys and flowed northwest. The surface lava cooled, covering the valleys, forming a tube through which the lava continued to flow for up to 160km. When the lava flow stopped the lava drained from the tubes leaving large caverns that are now inhabited by unique micro bats, insects, snakes and small animals.

<http://www.undara.com.au/geo/>

http://volcano.und.edu/vwdocs/volc_images/australia/undara/undara.html

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/QLDUndara.shtml>



Spider's Web - Undara

I have time for walk to Atkinson's lookout, before the sunset tour.

The 2-hour Sunset Tour is a wildlife and sunset viewing tour. Along the way to lookout where we were to have champagne and nibbles as the sun set behind the

Newcastle Ranges there were many Wallaroos, Antelope Wallaroos and Pretty Faced Wallabies of all ages grazing near the road.



Waterhole - Undara

Wild pigs were also seen on the road.

Sunset was not spectacular but as is often the case the colours of the mountains to east and the plains below changed as the sun went down.

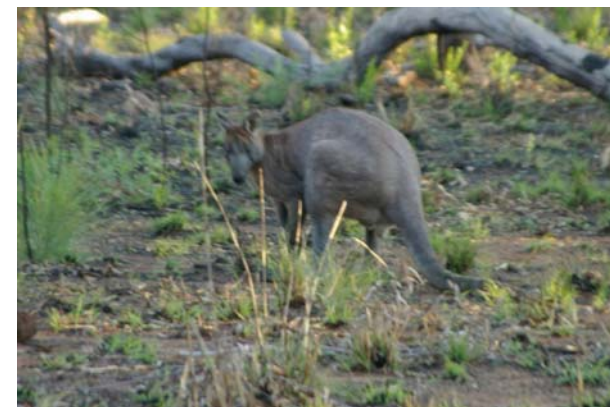
There was some excitement when a bush turkey was spotted. According to our guide, Tim, they are not often seen at the lookout.

We then went to the entrance to one of the lava tubes to see the myriads of tiny bats flying out to catch their fill of insects and returning to roost.

The full moon rose as a huge orange ball in the smoke haze from a bush fire to the southeast as we drove back.



View from Atkinson's lookout - Undara



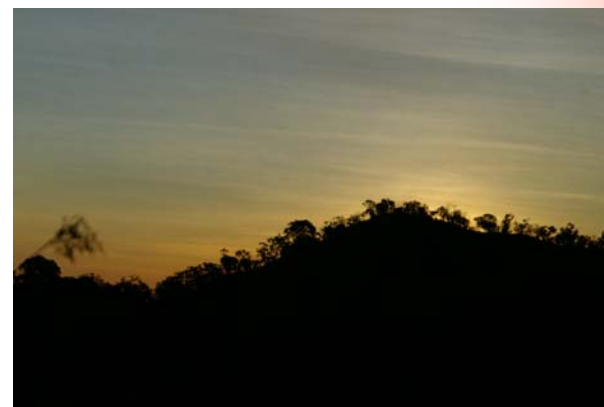
Wallaroo - Undara



Antelope Wallaroo - Undara



Pretty Face Wallaby - Undara



Setting Sun - Undara

Monday 2nd July 2007 – Undara to Cairns

Day 28

Soon after leaving Undara the Gulf Development Road merges into the Kennedy Way to Cairns. This generally a single sealed lane with occasional sections of 2-lane road. It is not until after Kuranda, 32km from Cairns that it becomes a wholly 2-lane road. The road is very busy with road trains heading towards me and it is slow going as it necessary to pull over and let them pass.

I am now climbing into the Atherton Tableland, a rich agricultural area and a region of tropical rain forests. Atherton is

the centre of a rich dairying and fruit-growing region.



Bush Turkey - Mt Hypipamee National Park

However before reaching Atherton I stop at Mt Hypipamee National Park. The volcanic crater formed by an explosion of gas and the falls are worth the short walk from the car park.

http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/find_a_park_or_for est/mount_hypipamee_national_park/

Bush turkeys were common in the car park.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atherton,_Queensland
<http://www.athertonsc.qld.gov.au/history.htm>



Mt Hypipamee National Park

Apart from a refuelling stop at Atherton my next stop is at the Barron Falls near Kuranda. These falls can be spectacular in the wet season but at this time of year there is little water flowing over as the Barron River is used for hydroelectric power generation. The treetop walk through the rain forest to the falls viewing point at the railway station is pleasant and the explanatory signs are helpful.



Crater - Mt Hypipamee National Park

http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/find_a_park_or_for est/barron_gorge_national_park/
http://www.wettropics.gov.au/ttd/ttd_track.asp?trackIndex=6

Kuranda is a tourist town, full of cafes and gift shops and apart from its cool climate at the higher altitude has little to commend it.

The winding road down the escarpment to Cairns can be treacherous as evidenced by the overturned semi-trailer being attended by SES, Ambulance and Police blocking one lane of the road.



Falls - Mt Hypipamee National Park



Barron Falls - Kuranda



Atherton Tablelands

Once at the foot of the escarpment it was an easy run to Ian and Linda's home at Freshwater.

Apart from cool weather, some rain, and a cracked windscreen the 9000km journey has gone well.

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDCairns.shtml>

Tuesday 3rd July 2007 – Cairns

Day 29

Not a lot to report today! A little shopping and a haircut in the morning and after lunch tidying up last week's notes and

arranging to have the windscreen replaced.

Wendy, from the Myanmar trips, joined us for a very enjoyable Thai dinner prepared by Linda.

Wednesday 4th July 2007 - Cairns

Day 30



Paradise Palms Golf Club - Cairns

Windscreen replacement at 08:00! After the cost of replacing the rear window the cost of \$240 was a pleasant surprise.



Palm Cove

Lunch at the Paradise Palms Golf Club with Wendy and her friends, Jim and Peter Hobbs was a most enjoyable event.



Palm Cove

After lunch I went for a short drive to the northern beaches suburb of Palm Cove. A very attractive village atmosphere, a beautiful beach and along the shore large old paper barks provided a very shady promenade.

Cape York Tour

Thursday 5th July 2007 - Cape York Tour – Cairns to Cooktown – Tour Day 1

Day 31



Thornton Peak



Rain Trees - Mossman

A pickup at 07:25 at the Freshwater railway station gets the day off to an early start. The route north takes us along the James Cook Highway through the Northern

Beach suburbs of Cairns and through cane fields that are ready for harvest.



Cane Harvesting - Mossman



St David's Church - Mossman

Our first stop is at the sugar mill town of Mossman. Here the street is lined with huge rain trees. The little church of St David is across the road. As we travelled along the coast we can see the mountains of the Daintree, Thornton Peak stands out on the skyline. Along the way we have passed the turnoff to the resort town of Port Douglas.



Daintree River

Wet weather in the past few weeks has forced the tour to take the inland route; we are fortunate as the roads have dried out and we are able to take the sealed road to Cape Tribulation and then take the unsealed road through the Daintree.

We cross the Daintree River by ferry near the town of Daintree. The swamp is home to crocodiles and magpie geese.



View from Alexander Lookout



Double Eyed Fig Parrot

Our next stop is at Alexander Lookout where there are magnificent views along the coast in both directions, particularly to the south towards Cairns. Wanda our cook/guide spots some Double Eyed Fig Parrots in a

tree near the lookout. They seem to be unfazed by the people and I was able to get some good pictures. It is also a stop for a cuppa.



Cape Tribulation

At Cape Tribulation we stop to view the beach and the region of the Great Barrier Reef where Captain Cook ran aground and holed the Endeavour in 1770. After successfully refloating the ship he sailed north to what is now the Endeavour River and Cooktown.

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDCapeTribulation.shtml>

There are birds to be seen flitting among the trees. A very colourful rainbow bee-eater flies across the road in front of us.

This is the end of the bitumen and the beginning of a very rough Bloomfield Track that winds and climbs through the beautiful rain forest of the Daintree.



Woobadda Creek

There are several creek crossings and very steep climbs over the Donovan and Cowie Ranges.



Lunch - Woobadda Creek

Lunch stop is at the Woobadda Creek crossing.

The Bloomfield River is a large river at the north of the Daintree and we follow its course for some distance passing through a number of small settlements.

We make a short stop at the 100year old Lions Den hotel named after a tin mine in the area. Like William Creek and Daly Waters Hotels, the bar is filled with all sorts of memorabilia. The building is a corrugated iron shed.



Bloomfield River

observed that the rocks sometimes explode when cold rain falls on the rocks when the sun has heated them.



Lion's Den Hotel



Origin of the Lion's Den



Bar - Lion's Den Hotel

Our last stop is at the Black Mountain National Park. This unusual geological phenomenon stands out from the surrounding mountains as piles of black boulders. In fact they are granite boulders covered with lichen. There are different theories for the formation of these mountains but it has been



Black Mountain

They are of special significance to the local Aborigines due to their connection with the legend of Kalcajagga, which recounts a feud between two brothers for the love of a girl.

Two men from the rock wallaby tribe who were fighting over a girl from the python tribe were piling up the rocks. So intent

were they on piling the rocks they did not notice an approaching cyclone and all will killed. This is why the piles remain and rock wallabies and pythons inhabit the mountain.

We arrive in camp at Cooktown at about 16:00.

Friday 6th July 2007 – Cooktown to Kalpowar Crossing – Tour Day 2

Day 32



**Memorial to sighting of first kangaroo
– Grassy Knoll**

We are all up before sunrise, packing our gear and getting ready for an early breakfast and departure for downtown Cooktown for a quick orientation tour and

then up to the top of the “ Grassy Knoll” from which Captain Cook surveyed the entrance to the Endeavour and the sandbanks and coral reefs to the east, searching for a passage to the open seas. His only possible route was to the north east and unfavourable winds prevented him from leaving for a month after the Endeavour was repaired.



Endeavour River – Cooktown

Cooktown

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDCooktown.shtml>

The first true European settlement on Australian soil. Today it is an exotic and distant township with a lazy tropical feel.

Located 326 km (by the inland road) and 235 km (by the coast road) from Cairns, Cooktown is notable for the number of 4WD vehicles which exist in the town. They are monuments to the awfulness of both roads which bring travellers to the town.



Indian Head and Cape Bedford – Cooktown



Captain James Cook - Cooktown

The inland route is corrugated and bumpy. (This road was paved in 2006 opening Cooktown to more tourists). The coastal track, particularly the section from the Bloomfield River crossing to Cape Tribulation, may well have the honour of being the worst road in Australia: unbelievable gradients, narrowness, bulldust, cavernous holes in the dry season and quagmires of mud in the wet. It is a road which leaves the site of the first white 'settlement' in Australia when Captain James Cook, having accidentally

struck the Great Barrier Reef off the coast north of Cape Tribulation, struggled up the coast and beached the H.M. Barque Endeavour on the shores of the Endeavour River. Cook and his crew were to stay on the river's edge from 17 June to 4 August, 1770: the greatest amount of time they were to spend at any one location in Australia. Inhabitants of Cooktown little option but to buy a good 4WD vehicle - or a boat.



Post Office - Cooktown

Cooktown wears its name with pride. It was the site of the first white 'settlement' in Australia when Captain James Cook, having accidentally struck the Great Barrier Reef off the coast north of Cape Tribulation, struggled up the coast and beached the H.M. Barque Endeavour on the shores of the Endeavour River. Cook and his crew were to stay on the river's edge from 17 June to 4 August, 1770: the greatest amount of time they were to spend at any one location in Australia.

There are no fewer than six monuments to Captain Cook in the town. However, his journals of the voyage do not return the compliment:



Former Queensland National Bank Building - Cooktown

'18 June 1770. I climbed one of the highest hills among those that overlooked the harbour, which afforded by no means a comfortable prospect; the lowland near the river is wholly overrun with mangroves, among which the saltwater flows every tide; and the high land appeared everywhere stony and barren. In the mean time, Mr Banks had also taken a walk up the country and met with the frames of several old Indian houses, and places where they had dressed shellfish.

'30 June 1770. And went myself upon a hill which lies over the south point, to take a view of the sea. At this time it was low water and I saw, with great concern, innumerable sand banks and shoals lying all along the coast in every direction. The innermost lay about three or four miles from the shore, the

outermost extended as far as I could see with my glass, and many of them did but just rise above water. There was some appearance of a passage to the northward and I had no hope of getting clear but in that direction; for as the wind blows constantly from S.E., it would be difficult, if not impossible, to return back to the southward.' Hardly a glowing recommendation.



Memorial to the Miners of the 1870's Gold Rushes - Cooktown

After Cook came the coastal explorers Phillip Parker King and Allan Cunningham who explored the area in 1819 and climbed and named Mount Cook.



Former Queensland National Bank Building - Cooktown



James Cook Museum - Cooktown

It wasn't until the discovery of gold on the Palmer River that any serious settlement was contemplated. The government,

deciding the area needed a port, sent George Dalrymple to find a suitable location for one. However, events overtook both Dalrymple and the government when the Leichhardt arrived at Endeavour River with supplies and 96 people. Overnight the settlement of Cook's Town (as it was first called) grew up. This was a boom town. Within a few months there were over 500 tents and, by 1875, there were an incredible 65 hotels, a school, a fire brigade and two churches. The main street meandered on for nearly 3 km.

Some indication of the optimism which existed in the town at the time can be seen in the quality of the architecture invested in the James Cook Historical Museum building (1886) and the Westpac Bank building (1889).

The museum building was originally St Mary's Convent. A magnificent two-storey structure it was constructed in the belief that the town would become one of the great centres of Australia. At the time it was the second-largest city in Queensland. The elaborate cast-iron columns and balustrades reflect a sense of certainty which seems strange when observed from the Cooktown of a century later.

Similarly the Westpac Bank, with its superb cedar joinery and heavy masonry columns, suggests that the Queensland National Bank (which no longer exist) also believed in the future prosperity of the port. In many ways their belief was justified. At the time it was one of the busiest ports in Queensland.

The decline of the goldfields meant the decline of Cooktown. However, it had a sustained recovery when tin was found in the

area and it maintained its status for some years when vessels would stop on their way from South-East Asia to the ports further down the coast.



Dying Gebang Palm - Old Laura Station

Fortunes turned again in 1907 when a cyclone nearly destroyed the town. It had a brief recovery during World War II but it wasn't until the current North Queensland tourist boom that it began to achieve a level of success comparable with the 1870s and 1880s.



Cooktown Hotel

Cook Worship - Memorials and Lighthouse

Captain Cook is not only important in the town's history but he is also somebody whom the civic fathers feel compelled to honour at every opportunity. There are no fewer than six Cook monuments in the town. There is a cairn at the place where he beached the Endeavour, another smaller monument a few metres away, a Bicentennial statue of the good Captain in a nearby park, and a huge civic monument further down the road.

Even the town's lighthouse is dedicated to Captain Cook. A steep winding road leads to Grassy Hill which provides excellent views of the coast, the Endeavour River and Cooktown. At the top of the hill is another monument to Cook as well as the lighthouse. A nearby placard reprints a section from the Cooktown Courier of 5 August 1885 declaring: 'We understand that our lighthouse is on board the New Guinea

which left Batavia on 27 July for Queensland ports. We have here another proof of the government's desire to deal fairly with us. Before long the bright rays of our lighthouse will be gleaming over the waste of waters, carrying comfort and an assurance of safety to mariners who have to thread the intricate navigation of our coast...no better monument could be erected to the memory of Captain Cook. It is the one he himself would have chosen, as it will recall the gallant navigator and explorer everytime its bright tower of white light is seen.'



Isabella Falls

As if all of these public declarations of admiration were not sufficient there is also the excellent James Cook Museum.

Other Memorials

Cook is not the only person to be memorialised. Next to the large Cook statue in the park there is a tribute to Edmund Kennedy, honouring his journey from Rockingham Bay to

Escape River. There's also a monument to Dan Seymour who established the National Riding Track from Melbourne to Cooktown in 1977. There's even a cannon which was brought to the town in 1889 to prevent an unlikely attack from the Russians.



Gebang Palm in Fruit

Further along the main street is a memorial to Mary Beatrice Watson who, in 1882, with her baby and a Chinese servant, died from lack of water after escaping from Lizard Island where they

had been attacked by Aborigines. Mary Watson's monument, a perfect example of Victorian Gothic design, was funded by public subscription and erected in 1888.



Eastern Brown Snake - Isabella Falls

The James Cook Museum

The museum building was originally St Mary's Convent. A magnificent two-storey structure it was constructed in the belief that the town would become one of the great centres of Australia. The elaborate cast-iron columns and balustrades reflect a sense of certainty which seems strange when observed from the Cooktown of a century later.

The museum recommends that each visitor spend at least an hour looking at the exhibits, which include a Chinese joss house (originally brought out from Canton), a shell collection, interesting material on Cooktown's early history, and artefacts from the Endeavour, including one of the cannons jettisoned

from the vessel when it ran aground on Endeavour Reef, and one of the ship's anchors which was also recovered from the reef. The museum is open from 10.00am - 4.00pm each day, tel: (07) 4069 5386.

The Westpac Building

The Westpac Bank, with its superb cedar joinery and heavy masonry columns, suggests that the Queensland National Bank (which no longer exist) believed in the future prosperity of the port. In many ways their belief was justified. At the time it was one of the busiest ports in Queensland.

The Jacky Jacky Building

Located in Charlotte Street this is one of the town's oldest buildings. The front windows contain an interesting collection of photographs which offer an insight into the town during its boom period.

Cooktown Cemetery

The cemetery at the western end of town may well be the best presented graveyard in Australia. At the entrance is a large map indicating the location of tombstones and other sites of interest. These include the sepulchres of William Hovell, the hapless Mrs. Watson, the mysterious Normanby woman (a white woman who was found living with Aborigines in unexplained circumstances), the victims of at least two shipwrecks, and a special section for non-believers and Aborigines.

There is also a Chinese Shrine. Over 20 000 Chinese passed through the town on their way to the goldfields and, at one time, Cooktown had a separate Chinatown with a permanent population of nearly 3000 people. Interestingly there is only one Chinese gravestone in the cemetery.



Normanby River – Kalpowar Crossing

The Cooktown Sea Museum

Apart from the many interesting objects inside the building there are, in the grounds, a number of anchors, a gold skip

from the Palmer River, a lakatoi from Papua New Guinea and a bark canoe.

Lizard Island

93 km north-east of Cooktown Lizard Island was first explored by Captain Cook, who anchored in one of the island's bays and climbed to the top of the hill now known as Cook's Look. There he surveyed a suitable passage away from the island.

It was not until a century later that Captain Robert Watson with his wife, a servant and baby daughter, built a cottage on the island. The ruins are still visible. Captain Watson, was a beche-de-mer (sea cucumber) fisherman and during one of his absences Aborigines from the mainland attacked the cottage. Mrs. Watson, accompanied by her child and a Chinese servant, attempted to flee to the mainland in a barrel used for boiling beche-de-mer. The vessel floated away from the coast and all three died of thirst.

After spending the morning exploring the town we headed out of town on our way to Lakefield National Park and the Battle Camp Ranges. The sealed road soon runs out and Matt stops by the Isabella Falls to lower the tyre pressures for the corrugated roads ahead. It is a very attractive spot but as always in Cape York saltwater crocodiles are everywhere. So far we have not seen any.

As we drive up from the river crossing a very large (2m+) eastern brown snake is on the road in front. It is in no hurry to cross the road and we are able to stop and photograph it.

Lakeland National Park is drained by the extensive river system comprising the Normanby, Morehead and Kennedy rivers.

<http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/projects/park/index.cgi?parkid=187>

<http://www.cook.qld.gov.au/visitors/Lakefield.shtml>

http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/find_a_park_or_for_est/lakefield_national_park/#gen2



Old Laura Station

Grasslands and woodlands with scattered eucalypts and paperbarks on the extensive flood plains of the river systems cover most of the park. Open forest and gallery forest (a type of rainforest) occur commonly along the riverbanks, while monsoonal scrubs are found on sections of sandstone escarpments. To the north mudflats and mangroves line the coast and extensive estuary systems of the Normanby and North Kennedy Rivers.

The Gebang Palm (*Corypha elata*), a most unusual large fan palm grows in this area. It grows to about 20m over 80 years, fruits and dies. When the fruit appears all the fronds die off and the tree dies.

<http://www.pacsoa.org.au/palms/Corypha/utan.html>

We continue on through the rolling hills and open woodland spotting birds as we go. A roadside stop to collect firewood is near a high bluff stained with bird droppings. Peregrine Falcons nest there but we do not see any.

Our next stop is at the Old Laura Homestead, selected in 1887, the present buildings date from 1943 and have been restored by volunteers for the Queensland National Trust.

http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/find_a_park_or_for est/lakefield_national_park/lakefield_national_park_nature_culture_and_history/

A stop by the Kennedy River to look for crocodiles was unsuccessful.

However we are rewarded by 2 black-necked storks (jabiru) on the road ahead that take off and join two others circling high above us.

Our campsite at the Kalpowar Crossing on the Normanby River is very pleasant.

Crocodiles inhabit the river. None are to be seen during the day but after dark a bright light illuminates two pairs of eyes in the water not far from the crossing.



Normanby River – Kalpowar Crossing

Saturday 7th July 2007 – Kalpowar Crossing to Archer River – Tour Day 3

Day 33

It is a brisk morning and mist is rising off the river. A White Bellied Sea Eagle soars overhead and lands in the dead tree on the other side of the river.

While Wanda and Matt finish packing camp we all head off down the road. After about 330 minutes they appear and pick us up to head off into the Great Dividing Range.

We continue through the eucalyptus forest spotting wallabies in the grass beside the road. Our first stop is at

the Red Lily Lagoon where the lagoon is covered with lotus plant, most of which have flowered and the seedpods are bobbing in the breeze. It is a little early for the flowers to have opened in the sun.

We slow down at most waterholes to see what birds there are. Beside Breeza Homestead there is a large permanent waterhole and the remains of the homestead and the stockyards.

http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/find_a_park_or_forest/lakefield_national_park/lakefield_national_park_nature_culture_and_history/

We are now well up into the ranges and likelihood of crocodiles is low and a paddle in the clear mountain streams is possible. Most of the crossings are quite shallow although the late rains have ensured the rivers are flowing.



White Bellied Sea Eagle

Morehead River crossing is a long rocky crossing with many deep holes that fortunately have been filled with sand by the Main Roads workers and is therefore easy going.



Lotus Flower - Red Lily Lagoon

Lotusbird Lagoon is the site of a small resort beside a large waterhole and bird sanctuary. Herons, Ibis,

Pelicans, Magpie Geese and several varieties of ducks are to be seen there.



Red Lily Lagoon



Morehead River Crossing

There is a lot of traffic on the road and many of the drivers are obviously inexperienced in the conditions.

Our lunch stop is at the old Musgrave Telegraph Station. The Telegraph Station has been converted into a hotel

and the defensive towers have been removed. The aborigines of Cape York attacked the white settlers and explorers on a number of occasions and to protect the Telegraph Station it was fortified with small towers at each corner. Stairways and water tanks were inside the building.

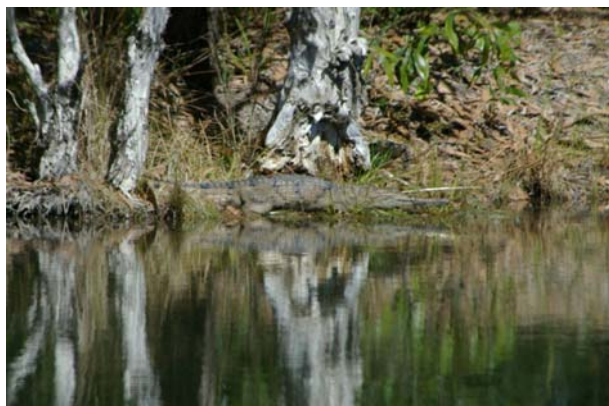


Magpie Geese - Lotusbird Lagoon



Musgrave Telegraph Station

We saw four crocodiles in the lagoon behind the buildings.



One of four Crocodiles - Musgrave Telegraph Station



Safe to paddle

Our next stop is Coen. This was once a booming mining town but is now a quiet wayside stop. It does however have a well-presented Heritage House with stories of the pioneers and personalities of the district. The Heritage House was the Telegraph Station and is unattended. A

gold coin donation is requested and there are some interesting notes to take away.

<http://www.coencapeyork.com/Heritage%20House.htm>

<http://www.coencapeyork.com/History2.htm>



Heritage House - Coen



'S'Exchange Hotel - Coen

Some wag renamed the Exchange Hotel, the Sexchange Hotel; the S has not been removed.

During the day we have seen; Black Breasted Buzzard; Brahminy Kite, Pacific Heron; Rainbow Bee Eater, Red Tailed Black Cockatoo, Sarus Cranes, Brolgas, Black Kites, Whistling Kites, Forest Kookaburra

We have crossed the grassy Nifold Plain, with views of Mt Janet to the east and the Bamboo Range.

The Archer River flows west to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Our campsite for the night is the Archer River Roadhouse at Archer River crossing. A very pleasant and popular campsite, it is, however, a little short of toilet facilities for the large number of people camping there.



Archer River Crossing

<http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/projects/park/index.cgi?parkid=195>

After breakfast we again headed off along the road towards Weipa and walked about 4km before Matt caught up with the bus.

We travel along the Peninsula Development Road towards Weipa and then turn east towards the Iron Range and the Great Dividing Range and the tropical lowland rainforest. Before crossing the range we cross the Wenlock River that flows to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Our next crossing is the Pascoe River that flows into Weymouth Bay on the east coast.

Spectacular Mt Tozer is a remnant of the volcanic activity in the region 300million years ago. It has been exposed by millions of years of erosion.

We stop in the rain forest to see if we can spot some of the very colourful eclectus parrots. We are unsuccessful but we do see a palm cockatoo in flight.



Striding out – Archer river



Wenlock River Crossing

Our campsite in the rainforest is at Cook's Hut, nothing to do with Captain Cook, but the home of a road worker who was responsible for maintaining the road.



Mt Tozer



Portland Roads

We are in camp before lunch and after lunch we make our way to Portland Roads.

<http://walkabout.com.au/tales/Travellerstories00044.shtml>



Grass Trees - Near Wenlock River

Portland Roads was the port for the Iron Range Gold Mine established in the

1930's. During WWII the jetty was extended to allow Liberty Ships to dock with material for the Iron Range Airfield.

It is now a very small pretty village.



Chilli Beach

Nearby is Chilli Beach, which is wide and long and fringed with palms. Chilli Beach overlooks Restoration Island, Bligh's first landing point in 1792. Fringed with coconut palms it is a typical tropical beach scene. A huge tree, possibly some sort of fig, has been blown over yet is still growing vigorously.

We finish the afternoon with a visit to the old Iron Range Mine. The remnants of the Empire crushing mill built by Babcock and Wilcox in Sydney is a roll mill not a stamping mill which is common in many other many other mines.

Wanda has remained in camp to prepare dinner.



Remains of Empire Crushing Mill

Monday 9th July 2007 – Iron Range National Park to Chuula – Tour Day 5

Day 35

A cool morning as the sun does not penetrate the rain forest canopy soon warms up as we make our way to Lockhart River and Lloyd Bay and Quintel

Beach where there are some amazing granite rock formations.

Lockhart River is an alcohol free aboriginal community of about 500 people and we do not have a permit to carry any liquor into

the community so our supplies have to be stashed in the bush on the way in.



Quintel Beach - Lockhart River



Supply Barge - Lockhart River

There is a great deal of activity on the beach as supplies for Lockhart River community are unloaded from the barge that tranships goods from the Trinity Bay supply ships that make a weekly call. Everything is brought in by ship.

A stop at the store for fuel gives us a chance for a brief look at the town. There is rubbish everywhere around

the store, however most of the homes appear in reasonable condition and the town has is certainly tidier than some I have seen. There is less junk lying about, although the tip is mess.



Quintel Beach - Lockhart River



Lockhart River

Iron Range Airport was constructed after the Battle of the Coral Sea during WWII by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The wartime airfield was the base for US

bomber squadrons. It is now the airport for Lockhart River and this morning was busy flying workman in and out.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Range_National_Park



Memorial to WWII Forces at Iron Range Airfield - Lockhart River Airport



Golden Orb Spider - Lockhart River Airport

<http://www.ozatwar.com/airfields/ironrange.htm>



Brown's Creek



Air Raid Shelter - Iron Range Airfield

Little remains of the wartime structures but in the rainforest around the airport are the remains of the concrete bunkers associated with the anti-aircraft guns that defended the airfield.



Mt Tozer

As we walked through the forest we came upon female golden orb spider in the centre of her web.

The air raid shelter has been occupied by microbats.



Relic - Batavia Goldfield



Wenlock River - Chuula



Wenlock River - Chuula

Our route out of Lockhart River takes us back past Mt Tozer and on to our lunch stop at Brown' s Creek. We are lucky to arrive before another tour and get the creek side spot where some have a swim in the water with the small fish and tortoises. It was a very relaxing spot for lunch.

Lunch over we continue on to the ruins of the Batavia Goldfields. Gold was first discovered in the late 19th but it

was not until the 1930' s that the main lode was discovered and serious mining began. An Empire Mill was constructed at this mine as this type of mill could be broken down and the pieces carried by packhorse from the coast at Portland Roads. Other pieces of old equipment is scattered about.

<http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/projects/heritage/index.cgi?pl ace=601862&back=1>

Our campsite at Chuula on the banks Wenlock River is only a few kilometres away. It is a very pleasant spot with a good swimming hole in the river. Amenities are very basic but this not a great worry, as tomorrow we will be in the caravan park at Weipa with all conveniences.

<http://www.kaanjungaachi.com.au/KaanjuHomelandsDevelopment.htm>

Tuesday 10th July 2007 – Chuula to Weipa – Tour Day 6

Day 36

As usual most of us set off to walk along the road until Matt and Wanda have finished their chores and catch up with us. It is an opportunity to look at the countryside and enjoy the trees, birds and blossom.

Today we are retracing our track to the Peninsular Development Road then north to the Y junction where the road to the Cape heads north and the PDR heads NW to Weipa.

These roads are known as RONI roads, Roads of National Importance, so named because they support the military installations on Cape York.



Chuula Track



Termite Mound - Chuula Track



Setting Sun - Weipa



Grevilleas in Bloom - Chuula Track



Chuula Track

A brief stop at the Y, and then across the Piccaninny Plains Station to Weipa, past RAAF Base Scherger and some of the bauxite mine workings.

Piccaninny Plain is flat open grassland.

We also pass through another large station property, Sudley Station.



Magnetic Termite Mound - Chuula Track

RAAF Base Scherger is a large unmanned, apart from some caretaker staff, advance airfield with three runways that can be activated in 24 hours. Most of the installations are underground.

A popular spot for fishermen, Weipa was developed by Comalco to work the bauxite deposits in the area. Rio Tinto now owns the mine.

The mine lease covers 2,500 square kilometres

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDWeipa.shtml>

<http://www.riotintoaluminium.com/localcommunities/296.asp>

It is pleasant tropical town with cool breezes and endless sunshine at this time of the year. Temperatures are a little below average this year due to the late rains

experienced on the north east coast of Australia. As a result the sea temperature is lower than usual and fishing is not as good as it usually is at this time of year.



Albatross Bay - Weipa



Sunset - Weipa



Haul Truck and Digger – Bauxite Mine – Weipa



Overburden Truck – Bauxite Mine – Weipa

In the cool of the early morning, we all take the optional Weipa Mine Tour. Mining is very straightforward; about 30cm of topsoil is removed to expose the bauxite. The topsoil is stored for future remediation and replanting of the workings. The ore body is up to 3m deep. Bauxite is

mined using large loaders to fill the 175tonne capacity haul trucks that transport the ore to the processing plant for grading and washing.



Regrowth Area – Bauxite Mine – Weipa



Power Station – Weipa

The bauxite is stockpiled according to grade and then loaded as required into 75-85,000 tonne ore carriers. 75% of the product goes to Rio Tinto aluminium smelters in Australia the remainder is exported.

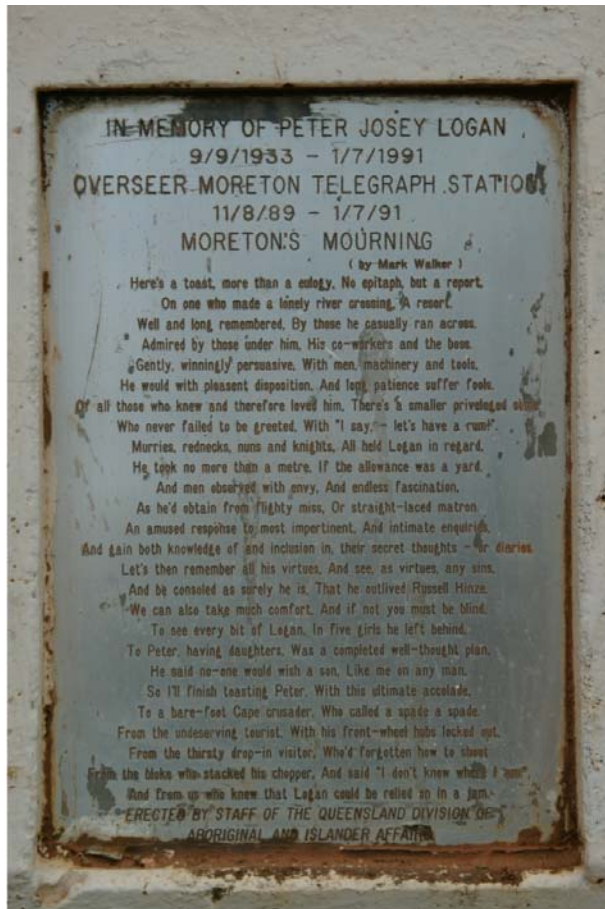


Ore Processing Plant – Bauxite Mine – Weipa



Ore Stacker – Bauxite Mine – Weipa

The tour over, we return to camp for morning tea. Before leaving Weipa we make a visit to the Western Cape Cultural Centre with lots of information about the local area, particularly the settlement of the area, the role of missionaries and the development of the mining lease. There is also a small art gallery.



Memorial to Peter Josey Logan - Moreton Telegraph Station

Our destination today is the Moreton Telegraph Station beside the Wenlock River. Matt expects the trip to be slow but it turns out that a lot of work has been done on the road through Batavia Downs Station. Consequently our trip from the turn off through Sudley Station and Batavia Downs to the Cape York Road is much quicker and we push on to Moreton Telegraph Station for a late lunch.



Batavia Downs Station



Camp at Moreton Telegraph Station

<http://www.moretonstation.com.au/history.html>

<http://www.aic.gov.au/conferences/hcpp/richards.pdf>



Flood Level 2003 - Wenlock River - Moreton Telegraph Station



Wenlock River - Moreton Telegraph Station

These stations are well stocked with cattle in prime condition.



Lagoon - Moreton Telegraph Station



Cave Creek - Moreton Telegraph Station

The afternoon is spent in taking short walks beside the river and through eucalypt forest or the nearby lagoon and Cave Creek. We spot a Palm Cockatoo, a rather large brown snake heading toward the camp that is successfully repelled, and a legless lizard.



Legless Lizard - Moreton Telegraph Station

The weather continues fine and mild. Light cloud during the day takes the edge of the otherwise hot sun.

Thursday 12th July 2007 – Moreton Telegraph Station to Twin Falls – Tour Day 8

Day 38



Bramwell Junction

We all seem to be getting up earlier each morning and this morning we have finished breakfast by 07:45 and most of us start out along the road towards the Cape. At about 08:25 Matt and Wanda catch us up and we all climb aboard for the trip to our first stop at Bramwell Junction.

At Bramwell Junction the road to the Cape deviates to the east from the Old Telegraph Track to avoid a number of creek and river crossings that make the Old Telegraph Track impassable in the wet season.



Palm Creek Crossing



Morning Light - Moreton Telegraph Station

Matt intends to follow the Old Telegraph Track provided he is able to cross the crossing at Palm Creek. So far the crossings have been straightforward; Palm Creek is different, the approach is very steep and deeply rutted, the water is not too deep but the opposite bank is also fairly steep.

Matt takes it slowly and gets through without any problems, as does a group of trail bike riders heading to Cape York.



Palm Creek Crossing



Boys having fun

There are several more challenging crossings and then at the Dulhunty River crossing where Matt parks in the middle of the river and we all go for a paddle in the river. Bertie Creek is a little further on and after crossing we park beside the river for lunch.

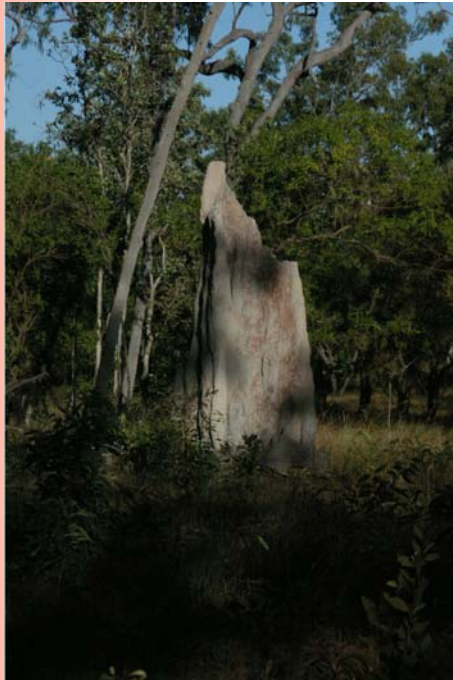


Parked in the Dulhunty River



Dulhunty River

The road has been rough and deeply washed away in places so it has been slow going. Near the Heathlands National Park we deviate from the OTT to avoid a very difficult Gunshot Creek crossing that Matt is not allowed to use.



Cathedral Termite Mound - Moreton Telegraph Station

After rejoining the OTT we make a stop at Sheldon Lagoon where Wanda attracts the tortoises by gently slapping the water. About a dozen appear.

Shortly after we rejoin the main road and then rejoin the OTT for the 8km trip into Eliot (or Twin) Falls Campsite.

Apart from the flies this is a pleasant campsite beside the Eliot River and Twin Falls where there are refreshing swimming

holes. A great opportunity to wash away the dust of a fairly rugged day!



Approach to Bertie Creek Crossing



Pitcher Plant - Bertie Creek

On the way to the swimming hole Wanda points out the blue spruce, it and the Cooktown ironwood are the only trees on Cape York that are resistant to termites, and an ant plant. The

ant plant hosts the nest of an ant that has a symbiotic relationship with a caterpillar of butterfly.



Tortoise - Sheldon Lagoon



Sheldon Lagoon



Banksia in Bloom - Bertie Creek



Ant Plant - Twin Falls



Twin Falls

Friday 13th July 2007 – Twin Falls to Punsand Bay - Day 9

Day 39



Fruit Bat Falls



Sun Dew Plant - Fruit Bat Falls



Miniature Pitcher Plant - Fruit Bat Falls

Everyone is up early again and by 08:00 we are on our way to nearby Fruit Bat Falls for an early morning swim.



Jardine River Ferry



Jardine River

Beside the falls are some sun dew plants and miniature pitcher plants. They are both carnivorous and catch and absorb small insects.

Back on the Bamaga Bypass Road our next stop is at the Jardine River Crossing. We cross the river on the ferry and continue north to the communities at the top, Injinoo, Umagico, Seisia, New Mapoon and Bamaga. Injinoo is home to members of the local tribes.



On a Mission - Bamaga



Cultural Centre - Bamaga

Bamaga is home to islanders who have migrated from the low-lying Torres Strait island of Saibai only 3km off the south coast of PNG.

The other communities have been established to resettle indigenous groups from Weipa, and Lockhart River.

After restocking at Bamaga we lunch at the little cultural centre that has an excellent display of the history of the migration from Saibai.

After lunch we make our final 25km run to Punsand Bay Campground on the North Coast of Cape York.

<http://www.punsand.com.au/>

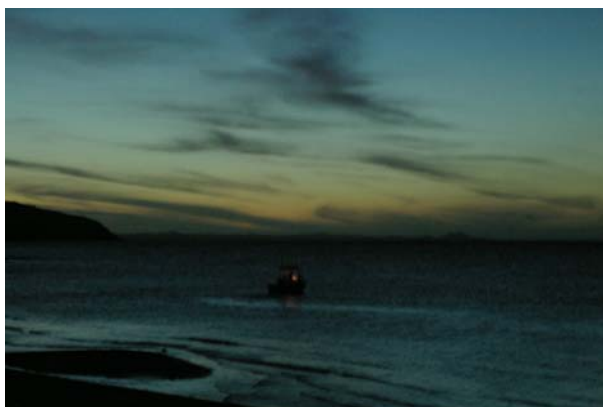
We have pitched our tents for the last time. We will leave them standing for the next group that comes in on Monday after we leave.



Welcome to Punsand Bay



Cape York in the distance - Punsand Bay



Setting Sun - Punsand Bay

Saturday 14th July 2007 - Thursday Island and Horn Island – Tour Day 10

Day 40



Welcome to Thursday Island

This morning we have to be ready to board the MV Ada Dan at 07:15 for the fast ferry trip to Thursday Island.



MV Ada Dann - Punsand Bay



Ferry to the Ada Dan - Punsand Bay

At breakfast there is three Papuan Frog Mouthed Owls perched in the trees above us, the scrub turkeys are quite tame and a male is tending a very large nesting mound next to our campfire.



**Sacred heart Catholic Church -
Thursday Island**

We embark the Ada Dan from the beach in a small pontoon. Loading all the passengers takes about 45 minutes. The seas are calm and it is a comfortable ride through the islands of Torres Strait.

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDThursdayIsland.shtml>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thursday_Island

<http://www.heritagetrails.qld.gov.au/attractions/thursday1.html>

<http://home.st.net.au/~dunn/horn01.htm>



Monument to Japanese Pearl Divers - Thursday Island



View to the West - Greenhill Fort - Thursday Island

My memory of Thursday Island when Sue and I visited on the Queen of the Isles about 15 years ago was the rubbish and general run down appearance of the town. All this seems of have been changed. The port area has been cleaned of plastic

bags, bottles and other rubbish and the town and houses have a generally bright and tidy appearance.



Township - Thursday Island



6" Breech Loading Guns - Greenhill Fort - Thursday Island

There are many new houses, probably due to the presence of the offices of 52 government agencies in the town.



Main Street - Thursday Island



Australia's Top Pub - Thursday Island

Our tour takes around the waterfront past the engineers and navy wharves and the Joint Services Depot. Customs and Quarantine is important as this is the frontline between Australia and our northern neighbours and there is regular traffic between the Torres Straights Islands and New Guinea. Continual vigilance is needed

to guard against smuggling and the introduction of plant diseases that may destroy Australian agricultural crops.



Quetta Memorial Cathedral - Thursday Island



Customs House - Thursday Island

The power station has been replaced and is supplemented by two wind turbines.

The cemetery has memorials to many pioneers, particularly the 700 Japanese pearl divers who lost their lives diving for pearl shell. Most died from the paralysing effects of the bends.



Foreshore and Greenhill - Thursday Island

As a millennium project the 1890's Greenhill Fort was restored and opened as a museum. The breech loading guns were restored and the underground passages cleaned out and opened up to house the displays. Like most forts around Australia's coast this fort was built to protect against a perceived threat from Russia after the Crimean War.

All Souls Quetta Memorial Cathedral commemorates the 133 people who died when the Quetta struck a rock and sank near Albany Island on 28th February 1890.

Thursday Island has a colourful pearling history, but it has also been important as a coaling station for ships

travelling through the Torres Straights and as the command headquarters for the Torres Straights during WWII. It seems now to have become, once again an important government centre for the region and a tourist attraction.

After the tour and a very short time to look at the town we return to the Ada Dan for the short trip across to Horn Island. Thursday Island is too small and too hilly for an airport, but Horn Island is much larger and flatter and in 1940 Horn Island airstrip began life as an Advanced Operational Airbase. Almost undefended when the Japanese first attacked it in March 1942 it became a major airbase for USAF bombers attacking Japanese positions in New Guinea and beyond. Up to 7000 US and Australian Service personnel occupied the base at its peak.

Strangely the role of Horn Island has been forgotten or ignored and it is only through the efforts of the Seekee family, particularly Vanessa, that the story is now being told and relics are being recovered and visitors are able to tour the wartime sites and view the material in the

Torres Straights Heritage Museum, which Vanessa crates, at the Gateway Torres Strait Resort.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horn_Island,_Queensland
http://www.anzacday.org.au/history/ww2/bfa/island_defenders.html
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torres_Strait_Light_Infantry_Battalion
<http://www.awm.gov.au/wartime/12/article.asp>
http://www.qm.qld.gov.au/organisation/e_prints/mqmch_4_1/ch4_1_Seekee.pdf
<http://www.torresstrait.com.au/index.html>

After our tour of the airfield relics, crashed planes, plane parking bays and anti aircraft bunkers lunch is served at the resort.

The return trip to Punsand Bay is not so smooth – the seas are now rough and so is the ride. We make a stop at Possession Island to view the plaque commemorating the spot where Cook took possession of Australia for the British on August 22nd 1770.

Wanda' s lamb roast was enjoyed by everyone and so ended another busy day



Remains of a P47 Thunderbolt - Horn Island



Plaque - Possession Island

Sunday 15th July 2007 - Cape York, Somerset – Tour Day 11

Day 41

At last, today we will visit the northern most tip of the Australian continent.

Breakfast at 07:00 then pack a sandwich lunch and we are off for another ride through tropical rainforest and eucalypt woodland. In the rainforest we see two

Amethystine Pythons on the road. We are able to stop in time to have a look at them before they slither off into the bush.

From the parking spot it is a short walk through the forest to the beach and then a climb over the hill to 'The Tip'. Here the tide races through the narrow channel between the mainland and York Island, as water moves from the Coral Sea to the Arafura Sea and back again. There may be as many as six tides a day.



Punsand Bay from Cape York



York Island

Many photos are taken as we enjoy the scenery at this remote spot. It may not remain a remote spot for very long if the traffic on the single-track road is any indication.



Raging Tides at the Tip



The Group at the Tip

We leave four of the group at the Tip to be picked up to go fishing and the rest of us head off to Somerset, the

site of a failed attempt to establish a Singapore of the South Pacific.



Torres Strait



Relics - Somerset

When the new settlement of Somerset was established at Cape York in 1863 by the Queensland Government, John Jardine became police magistrate and with his third son, John, erected the first buildings.

1866 Frank Jardine settled on a station near Somerset and was appointed police magistrate in 1868. The family owned the cattle station until 1948 when it was sold to the Queensland Government.



Headstone - Somerset



Beach - Somerset

You can read more about the Jardines and Somerset at the following:-



All that remains of the Jetty - Somerset



Albany Passage - Somerset

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/extras/oq/book2jardine.html>

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/Queensland/Bamaga/2005/02/17/1108500202088.html>

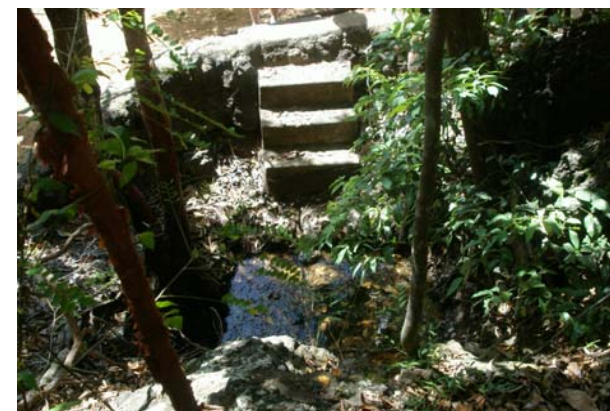
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A040533b.htm>

<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A040616b.htm>

<http://gutenberg.net.au/ausexpl0/ausexpl1-11.html>

<http://gutenberg.net.au/ausexpl0/ausexpl0-chaptsummaries.html>

The port proposal failed and moved to Thursday Island, a much more suitable site for the coaling station.



Well - Somerset

Since the return of land title to the indigenous people all the buildings have been destroyed. All that remains is a well and windmill, the stumps of a few piles from the jetty, and the graves of Frank Jardine and his wife and a few other pioneers.

On our way back to camp we stop at the 'Croc Tent' a famous souvenir shop. Mostly there are usual tourist items, t-shirts, tea Towels, mugs and other trinkets.

The fishers have returned. It is 16:00. They have had a good day, catching several fish. Unfortunately barracouta are considered inedible and the others were

too small except for a queen fish that Bob caught – about 8kg.



Mangroves - Somerset



The 'Croc Tent'



Bob's Trophy

Monday 16th July 2007 – Punsand Bay – Cairns – Tour Day 12

Day 42

The last day of a great trip made even better by Matt's commentary on the flora, fauna and history of the Cape and Wanda's cooking.

A late breakfast this morning 07:45, but most people are up with the sun, packing their gear for the trip home and cleaning the tent they have used for the last eleven nights.



Morning – Punsand Bay

Fortunately the weather has been kind to us apart from one damp night so the tents have been dry inside for the whole of the trip.

This morning is overcast and humid and as we leave camp for the airport at Bamaga – three of us are flying to Cairns – and the wharf at Siesia where the rest will travel on the supply ship, Trinity Bay, around Cape York and down the coast to Cairns.

We are early for the plane so Matt can't resist a couple more side excursions, a quick stop at the Croc Tent for those who were fishing when the rest of us went there yesterday and a

visit to the site where a DC3 crashed on its way to Port Moresby in 1945, all were killed, and also where a Beaufort Bomber, returning from Port Moresby, overshot the runway at Higgins Field and crashed due to mechanical problems during WWII. The crew survived the crash.

Finally we are at Bamaga or Injoo Airport which was built during WWII as a dispersal airfield for planes based at Horn Island and later became an Advanced Operational Airfield known as Higgins Field.

A memorial at the airport commemorates the first anniversary of a flight from Bamaga to Lockhart River that crashed approaching Lockhart River Airport with

the loss of all on board, the crew and 13 passengers in May 2005. It was Australia's worst civilian air crash in 36 years.



Crashed Dakota near Bamaga Airport

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/National/15-killed-in-our-worst-air-crash-in-36-years/2005/05/07/1115422846785.html>

http://www.atsb.gov.au/publications/investigation_reports/2005/AAIR/aair200501977.aspx

The flight was a few minutes late departing and cloud below us prevented a view of the Barrier Reef below until we descended below the clouds on approach to Cairns.



Memorial to the Crew of the Dakota

Tour Group Members



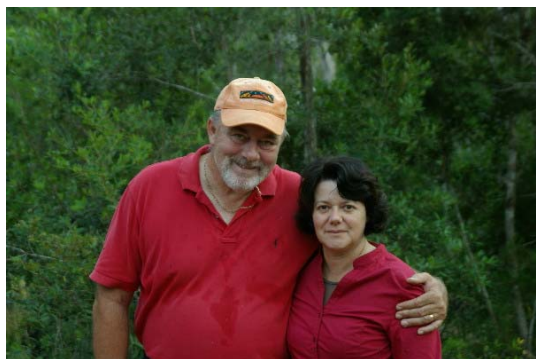
Matt Christenson & Wanda Harley



John & Robyn Vroland



David & Janine Barrett



Lorraine and Peter Hay



Kate & John Caraher



Bob & Jenni Jager



Owen Hayes & Andrea Goldsworthy



Trudy & Micheal Norris



Jim Russell

Cairns to Melbourne

Tuesday 17th July 2007 - Cairns

Day 43



Papuan Frog Mouth - Cairns Tropical Zoo



Blue Winged Kookaburra - Cairns Tropical Zoo



Dingo - Cairns Tropical Zoo



Kookaburra - Cairns Tropical Zoo

Most of the morning is spent sorting things out and generally cleaning up after the trip to Cape York.



Sleepy Koala - Cairns Tropical Zoo

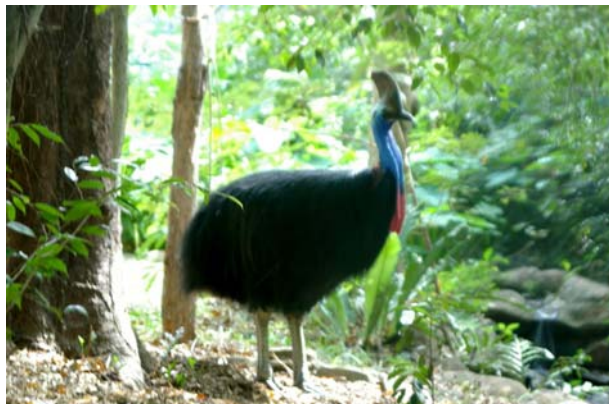
Around midday Aline and I head north to the Cairns Tropical Zoo.



Red Panda - Cairns Tropical Zoo

<http://www.wildworld.com.au/>

Aline is Sebastian's (from Myanmar last year and other trips with Ian Marsh) Italian niece who is staying with Ian and Linda for three months to practice her English.



Cassowary - Cairns Tropical Zoo



Python - Cairns Tropical Zoo

The small zoo has a collection of common tropical animals, birds and reptiles. Morning and afternoon there is a program of presentations when keepers talk about and display some of the animals. These usually took

between 20 and 30 minutes so that with 5 of them the afternoon was easily filled.

The zoo has three endangered Red Pandas, 2 males and female and they hope to breed more. The Red Panda has coat more suited to its homeland in Nepal yet it is able to cope with a tropical Cairns summer. The number of wild Red Pandas is unknown but is believed to be very small and hence captive breeding programs are essential to maintain the species.

The snake and the crocodile shows are informative and while not ignoring the dangers associated with these creatures the keepers are at great pains to point out the low incidence of snakebite and deaths from crocodile attacks and the simple precautions one should take to avoid a confrontation with either.

The Koala and Wombat talk was also informative. Northern Koalas, although the same species as Southern Koalas are much smaller than those we see in Victoria.

A free flight bird show is always spectacular and in this case having a magpie, a pair of red tailed black cockatoos, a barn owl, a Major Mitchell cockatoo and white breasted sea eagle swooping low over the audience was quite exciting, especially for the children in the audience. An entertaining sulphur crested cockatoo also entranced the audience with his antics.

As we had to be back home by 16:15 to meet Ellie and Emma after school we had to leave before seeing all the animals. Nevertheless we had seen most and probably another 45 minutes would have been enough time.



Eclectus Parrots - Cairns Tropical Zoo



White Breasted Sea Eagle - Cairns Tropical Zoo



Yachts - Cairns Marina

Alina is looking after Emma and Ellie while Ian and Linda are in Adelaide and after she had taken them to school we first went to visit the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Cairns and then went into downtown Cairns to have a quick look at the city centre. It is a bustling centre with many new shops, offices and shopping centres. The foreshore has been redeveloped since I was last here.



Swimming Lagoon - Cairns



Pelicans in Flight - Cairns

Cairns is built on the edge of mangrove mudflats and so has no beach to speak of. This has been overcome by building a large

swimming lagoon surrounded by lawns at the southern end of the esplanade.



Boardwalk - Cairns



Birds on the Mangrove Flats - Cairns



Masked Lapwing - Cairns

A wide boardwalk has been built along the edge of the mudflats and it is a pleasant walk, observing the birds feeding on crabs and whatever else they can find in the mud.



Yachts - Cairns Marina

A quick look at the boats in the marina and it is time to make our way to the boardwalk through the mangroves near the airport before returning home to pick up the girls from school.



Crab Mangrove Board Walk - Cairns

Thursday 19th July 2007 - Cairns to Mingela

Day 45



Cane Train Locomotive

I am ready to leave at about 08:00 only to discover that there is no power to the refrigerator – the fuse has blown for some reason that seems to be associated with the some of the cables. After replacing the fuse and plugging the fridge directly into the accessory socket everything seems to be OK and I head off and make my way around Cairns to the Bruce Highway and head south towards Townsville.

This is a driving day apart from stops for a few photos and fuel on the outskirts of Townsville I am heading

directly to Tony' s place in the little town of Mingela situated about 80 km west of Townsville on the Flinders Highway between Townsville and Charters Towers.

Mingela was once an important junction town on the Great Northern Railway that runs west to Mount Isa. There was once a branch line to the gold mining centre of Ravenswood. The branch line is closed, but gold mining has been resurrected at Ravenswood.

Mingela is now almost a ghost town with a small pub and about 10 residents.

I arrive at Mingela at about 14:30 and Tony is expecting me.

Tony has a multimeter and the problem with the cables is soon resolved.



Coastal Mountains



Setting Sun - Mingela

Friday 20th July 2007 - Mingela

Day 46

It is a very brisk clear morning and as the sun gets up it warms into a very pleasant day sitting on the veranda in the sun, drinking coffee, watching trains go by and helping Tony sort out a couple of problems with a power point and his VCR.

Around 17:30 we walk across the paddocks to the pub for a drink and maybe dinner. No dinner tonight at the pub tonight so after a couple of cans with some of the locals we wander back and find something to eat at home.



School (Closed) - Mingela



General Store (Closed) - Mingela



Hotel - Mingela



Derelict Cottage - Mingela



Passing Train - Mingela



Tony's Place - Mingela



Junk? - Mingela

Saturday 21st July 2007 – Mingela to Winton

Day 47

Time to continue on my way! Ready to leave just before 08:00 the car won't start. The battery is flat. This was not unexpected as the car has not been

starting as well as it should for most of the trip and the cold morning finally finishes it.

We jump-start it but now I need to get a new battery in Charters Towers and it is Saturday morning. The first place I try does not have a suitable one and they direct me to another place where they do have one and after almost an hour delay I am able to

drive into the centre of the town and have a look around this historic gold mining town. A very active mining centre in the late 19th C mining declined and the town became an important educational and pastoral centre. In recent years increasing gold prices has made gold mining in the area profitable again and there are a number of mines operating in the district.



Telegraph Office - Charters Towers

I take the opportunity to stroll down the main street and take a few photos of some of the buildings remaining from the gold

mining days and then to drive to the top of Towers Hill for a panoramic view of the town and the surrounding hill. The hill was once the site of extensive mining activities and there are many mine shafts in the area. The remains of mine buildings can also be seen.



Stock Exchange Arcade - Charters Towers



City Hall - Charters Towers

By 10:30 it is time to continue my travels west towards Hughenden, climbing over the Great Dividing Range at the viewpoint for the White Mountains National Park and then descending into the catchment area of Cooper's Creek and Lake Eyre. The countryside is mainly eucalypt forest all the way to Hughenden. However when I turn southwest towards Winton the landscape changes to rolling grassy plains where sheep and cattle graze. There are few trees and plains seem endless and the road is almost dead straight as it follows the rail track.

<http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/projects/park/index.cgi?parkid=128>

Three weeks ago the road from Hughenden to Winton was closed due to flooding. Now it is dry but there are signs of recent flooding along the road.

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/QLDHughenden.shtml>

<http://www.flinders.qld.gov.au/visitors/index.shtml>

<http://www.hughenden.com/Document1.aspx?id=820>

Shortly before a Winton a few small hilly outcrops appear.

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDWinton.shtml>

Winton

The town where 'Waltzing Matilda' was written.

Located 849 km west of Rockhampton, nearly 1400 km north west Brisbane and 186 m above sea level, Winton is the centre of an important cattle and sheep raising region (although the

annual rainfall of 410 mm makes it prone to drought) and, since early settlement, has been a vital transportation point.



Former Bank of NSW Building - Charters Towers

Winton, originally known as Pelican Waterhole, owes its existence to the abortive Burke and Wills expedition and the subsequent expeditions which scoured central Queensland looking for the missing explorers. During the early 1860s a number of explorers including Frederick Walker, John McKinley and William

Landsborough all passed through the area. It was as a result of their reports that the area was first settled in the mid 1860s although there is no formal record of land leases until 1873.



Police Station - Charters Towers



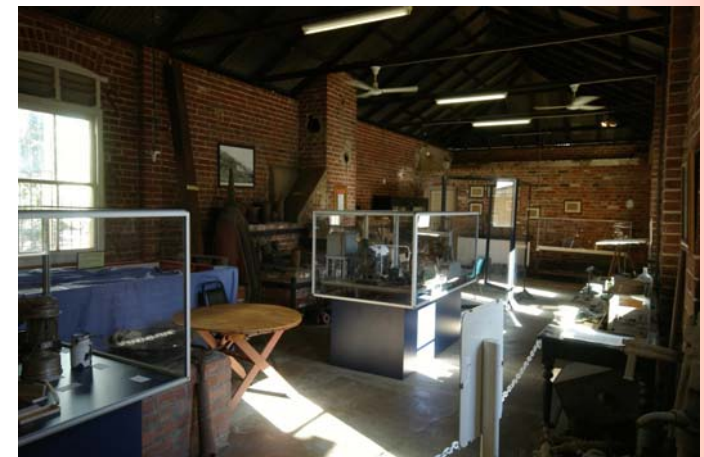
Northern Miner Newspaper Office - Charters Towers

In 1875 Robert Allen arrived in the area and became the postmaster at Pelican Waterhole. The following year the

waterhole flooded and he was forced to move to higher ground. It is said that he got tired of writing the long 'Pelican Waterhole' on letters and so he renamed the town after the suburb in Bournemouth, England where he was born. The town of Winton was duly gazetted in 1879.



Excelsior Library - Charters Towers



Assay Office - Stock Exchange Arcade - Charters Towers

Undoubtedly Winton's greatest claim to fame is its association with 'Banjo' Paterson and particularly with the writing, and first performance of, 'Waltzing Matilda'.

No one knows exactly what prompted Paterson to write his tale of the swaggie who, rather than surrender to the police, decided to commit suicide by jumping into a billabong. However the blurry pieces of the puzzle are intriguing.

On 4 September 1894 the Brisbane Courier reported: 'Information has been received at Winton that a man named Hoffmeister, a prominent unionist, was found dead about two miles from Kynuna. The local impression is that he was one of the attacking mob at Dagworth and was wounded there. There were seven unionists with Hoffmeister when he died. These assert that he committed suicide.'

It is now widely believed that this story was the inspiration for the song although the Winton town history (published in 1975) offers a more romantic version.

Paterson was staying at Dagworth Station (the ruins are located approximately 100

km north west of Winton and can be visited after permission is obtained from the North Australian Pastoral Company on (07) 4657 1957) in 1895 when Christina Macpherson played the tune 'Craiglea' for the guests. Paterson liked the tune and inquired about the words. Macpherson explained that she did not know of any words. This was enough to inspire Paterson.

The lyrics which he wrote were an intermingling of a series of events which occurred while he was staying at Dagworth Station. During his stay Paterson saw a sheep which appeared to have died but on closer examination it had been killed, presumably by a swagman, and portions of it carefully removed to give the impression of natural death. This was possibly the inspiration for 'the crime'.

A second strand to the story focusses on Combo Waterhole. This waterhole on Belfast Station 145 km north west of Winton (it was opened for some years but damage by excessive numbers of visitors saw its closure in September 1989) is clearly the setting for the poem. It is argued that Paterson used the setting after he had been told the story of Hoffmeister at Combo Waterhole by Robert Macpherson. There has been some suggestion that the story Paterson heard was not about Hoffmeister but about an unknown swagman and a stockman named Harry Wood. Wood had beaten an Aboriginal boy named Charlie to death and the Winton police, while trying to locate him, happened upon the swagman sitting by the billabong.

It is also claimed that the expression 'Waltzing Matilda' was first mentioned to Paterson at Dagworth Station by a jackeroo named Jack Carter.

In a letter to The Australian in 1995, at the time of the centenary celebrations of 'Waltzing Matilda', Dr Ross Fitzgerald, Associate Professor of History and Politics at Griffith University in Queensland, stated quite categorically: 'The song was written by Banjo Paterson in January 1895 just 14 weeks after an armed battle at Dagworth woolshed in September 1894 between striking shearers and the station owners, the Macphersons. In the 'Battle of Dagworth' 140 lambs were burnt to death, while one of the sixteen striking insurrectionists, Samuel 'French' Hoffmeister died, supposedly by committing suicide, beside a billabong near Macpherson's Dagworth Station.

'Banjo visited the homestead shortly after the battle. While the site of old Dagworth Station where Banjo stayed is now a heap of rubble, thanks to Richard Magoffin's brilliant detective work Samuel Hoffmeister's grave at Kynuna Station, on the southern side of the Diamantina River, has been discovered, and a stone cairn placed beside the billabong. The three policemen involved have been revealed to be Senior Constables Austin Cafferty (number 420), Michael Daly, (89), and Robert Dyer (175).

'It is clear that Miss Christina Macpherson, who had heard the Scottish tune Craigilee played by a band at the annual Steeplechase race meeting at Warrnambool Victoria in April 1884, met Paterson when he visited her brother, Bob Macpherson, at Dagworth. There being no piano at the

homestead, the tune that Christina had memorised she played to him on an autoharp, which is like a zither. To this tune, as Magoffin and Clement Semmler demonstrate, Banjo added the words to the song Waltzing Matilda, just 14 weeks after the Battle at Dagworth Station.

'It is important to note that in the original verses the swagman was camped in, not by, the billabong and that there were three policemen, not - as one theory has it - one fictitious trooper 'number 123'....Contrary to the sanitised version of the so-called 'jolly swagman', which did not exist in Paterson's original version, Waltzing Matilda is actually a powerful political allegory based on the 1894 Shearers' Strike.'

Things to see:

North Gregory Hotel

Whatever the real origins of the events and the images Paterson wrote the song and it received its first public performance at the North Gregory Hotel in Winton. The current hotel is the fourth North Gregory (the other three either burned down or

were destroyed) but it is still on the location of the original pub. From photographs the original North Gregory was a modest building with little more than bark walls and a corrugated iron roof.



Charters Towers



White Mountains National Park

The Jolly Swagman



Emus



Grand Hotel - Hughenden

The swagman has been immortalised, albeit in fibreglass, beside the swimming pool over the road from the Waltzing Matilda Centre. Appropriately he sits near a very healthy looking coolibah tree. However the more impressive display is at the centre where the entire billabong scene is recreated.



Communication Tower breaks the Endless Plain - Hughenden to Winton Road

The Waltzing Matilda Centre

Completed in 1998 at a cost of \$3.1 million the Waltzing Matilda Centre combined Winton's existing Qantilda Museum with an impressive range of new attractions many constructed around the story of the swagman as told in 'Banjo' Paterson's 'Waltzing Matilda'. There is a Billabong Courtyard in which lifesize characters (ie the troopers and the swaggie) and caught

in action under a full-size coolabah tree. The centre also is home to the Outback Regional Art Gallery which concentrates on both historic and contemporary images of Australian outback and rural life.



Dinosaur - Hughenden



Unusual Shelter - Hughenden

The Home of the Legend component of the Centre has a number of famous Australians singing and talking while visitors watch holograms of the past.



Station Homestead in an Endless Plain - Hughenden to Winton Road



Corfield Hotel (Closed) - Hughenden to Winton Road

The Qantilda Museum, now renamed Qantilda Pioneer Place, is a typical collection of memorabilia of the area including displays of old machinery, a recreation of Christina Macpherson playing 'Craiglea' and an extensive display of Qantas material. There are over 5000 items in the collection which includes a special Aboriginal section and a good reading room.

Corfield & Fitzmaurice

Winton has a number of tourist attractions but none quite compare with a visit to the store of Corfield & Fitzmaurice in the main street. Corfield arrived in the area in the late 1870s and established a general store. The original store was replaced in 1916 and the current building, now listed by the National Trust, is one of the most perfectly preserved old-style general stores in Australia.

Winton Club

Winton is the birthplace of Qantas. On 16 November 1920 the Queensland and Northern Territory Air Service was registered as a company with its headquarters in the town. The first official meeting of Qantas took place at the Winton Club on 10 February 1921. The Club still stands on the corner of Oondooroo and Vindex streets one block north of the main street. It is open to visitors.



Distant Low Hills - Hughenden to Winton Road

The caravan park is full but as usual they can squeeze in a few more.

The local pub puts on a moderately priced roast dinner around a campfire and a local bush poet, Long John Best, entertains the campers. It is a good evening's entertainment.

It looks like being a cold night.



Hills at last - near Winton - Hughenden to Winton Road

Sunday 22th July 2007 – Winton to Longreach

Day 48

It was a cold night!

There is no hurry to get up this morning as I plan to visit some of the attractions, particularly the Waltzing Matilda Centre and explore the town so I stay in bed until the sun is up and starting

to warm things a bit. A leisurely breakfast and pack up sees me ready by about 09:00 to start exploring Winton.

<http://www.matildacentre.com.au/AboutWinton.html>



AB (Banjo) Patterson - Matilda Centre - Winton

The Waltzing Matilda Centre lives up to all that is said above. The presentation in the Billabong Courtyard of the way Banjo Patterson's poem has become the song of choice for many Australians is very well done as the ghost of the swagman recounts the place the song has had in many events in recent Australian history from wars to Olympic Games.



Plaque at Site of QANTAS airfield - Winton



Musical Fence - Winton

The collection of memorabilia and equipment from the early rural days is one of the best I have seen. One of the volunteers told me that over 30 years ago they visited stations in the area and asked them to preserve early equipment and other items for inclusion in the museum when a suitable building became available. As a result many items are in very good conditions

and sets of equipment, such as a saddler's set of tools, are complete.



'Once a Jolly Swagman' - Matilda Centre - Winton



Jeffrey Quad 4WD - Matilda Centre - Winton

Among the many well preserved items so machinery is a Jeffrey Quad 4WD Truck, designed and built for use in WWI.

There is also a display of the early Qantas memorabilia. Qantas was started in Winton but soon moved it's head quarters to Longreach.

After about two hours in the Centre and the associated Qantilda Pioneer Museum it is time to have a look at the historical buildings in the town such as the Winton Club where the first Qantas board meeting was held.

On the outskirts of Winton is a memorial to the airfield built with local and Queensland government funds to permit Qantas to operate commercial flights to Winton. There is plaque commemorating the 80th anniversary of the formation of QANTAS at Winton on 16th November 1920.

After spending the morning in the town I head off towards the Bladensburg National Park to have a look at the old homestead and the landscape.

Once a sheep station the park embraces a range of landscapes. I do not have time to drive to all the places but I do set out

along the Scrammy Drive to explore the flat channel country. The channel country is very flat with shallow drainage channels that in this area flow towards the Diamantina River and Lake Eyre. When it rains in January to April this country is often flooded.



Stencils for Branding Wool Bales - Winton



Tattersall's Hotel - Winton



Corfield and Fitzmaurice General Store - Winton



Winton Club

Along the way I do spot some *Spinifex* pigeons with their very large crests.

Returning to Winton it is time to head off to Longreach about 170km away. The road follows the rail track from Winton to Longreach and for the most part is very straight. The railway

carries cattle to Rockhampton and this morning a cattle train rumbled through Winton.

I am still travelling through the wide flat grasslands of the channel country, crossing from the Diamantina River catchment to the Cooper's Creek catchment along the way. Approaching Longreach there are more trees and finally the road crosses the Thomson River, and tributary of Cooper's Creek, on the outskirts of Longreach.

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDLongreach.shtml>

Longreach

Major centre in western Queensland and home to the Stockman's Hall of Fame.

Located 1184 km from Brisbane and 676 km west of Rockhampton, Longreach is the largest town in central Queensland. Situated on the Thomson River 191 m above sea level it is the centre of one of Queensland's most prosperous wool and beef areas.

Longreach was named as a description of the 'long reach' of the Thomson River which passes near the town. The river was discovered and named by the explorer Edward Kennedy in 1847. He named it after Sir Edward Deas Thomson (1800-1879), a notable member of the NSW Legislative Council.



St Paul's Church - Winton



Bladensburg Homestead - Bladensburg NP



Watchful Kangaroo - Bladensburg NP



Grave of 8-month old Delia Dalrymple - Bladensburg NP

The area around Longreach was first explored by William Landsborough and Nat Buchanan in 1861. Landsborough subsequently gained a lease to approximately 2000 sq. miles of land. In 1863 sheep and cattle were overlanded into the area and the mighty 'Bowen Downs' station was established.

By the early 1870s the Mount Cornish outstation (named after the first general manager of the 'Bowen Downs') had been established and Longreach grew up as a camp for teamsters who carried supplies to the property. It was officially gazetted as a town in 1887 and the following year land lots were sold. By 1892 the railway from Barcaldine and the coast reached the town.



Quentin Scott - Gunnadoo Caravan Park - Longreach

The success of wool in the 1920s saw the town boom. Later that year Qantas established a booking office (a model of it is now the Information Centre at the east end of the main street) which became the centre of their operations. The company, known at the time as the Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services Ltd. was set up on 16 November 1920 by Hudson Fysh and Paul McGinniss. Local graziers funded the airline and in 1921 a hangar was built. It subsequently became an important maintenance depot and in 1926 it was converted to a workshop where seven DH50 biplanes were constructed. The hangar, which is nothing but a large shed, is located at the airport opposite the Stockman's Hall of Fame south of the town.



Stony Watercourse - Bladensburg NP

Things to see:

Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame

In recent times the \$12.5 million 'Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame' has generated a level of tourist activity which has made

Longreach the premier destination in central Queensland. It is easy to be cynical about the Stockman's Hall of Fame but, in spite of its high prices and its carefully created commercialism, it really is worth visiting. The name is actually something of a misnomer. It would more accurately be called 'The Australian History Timeline'. Its exhibitions include a model of Aboriginal cave paintings, the first fleet (with a computerised list of all the people on the first fleet), the early settlement in Sydney, the major explorations, the early pioneers (with a model slab hut, a hawker's van and a blacksmith's shop) the pastoral expansion, and then a focus on life in the bush up to the present day. It is impossible to see it all in under two hours and many people will spend four or five hours wandering along the time line. It uses the latest audio visual techniques to great effect.



Spinifex Pigeon - Bladensburg NP

Qantas in Longreach

The first commercial flight by Qantas in an Avro 504K took off from Longreach on 7 February 1921 at 10.30 am and took 3 hours and 10 minutes to reach Winton.

The town is still proud of its aviation past. The first Qantas booking office, a small wooden building, is located in Qantas Park

in Eagle Street and is currently used as the Tourist Information Office. Behind the office is Qantas Park which contains an engine which dates from 1924.

The original Qantas hangar is located over the road from the Stockman's Hall of Fame. For many years it was nothing more than an old hangar. In recent times it has become the Qantas Founders Outback Museum and provides visitors with a unique

insight into the early history of aviation in Australia. It is well worth visiting. For more details contact (07) 4658 3767.

In the evening at the campground campers are entertained with stories and poems of the outback by Quentin Scott.

Monday 23rd July 2007 - Longreach

Day 49

Today I have only two objectives in mind: to visit the Qantas Founders Outback Museum and the Stockman's Hall of Fame and as all I have read suggests this will take all day I will need to stay another day to see other places of interest in Longreach.

Both are quite close to the caravan park so I leave the car and walk, deciding to visit the Qantas museum first.

In addition to an excellent display tracing the early history of Q.A.N.T.A.S in the outback, including models of early planes circling on a track overhead, there is a full size replica of their first plane.

<http://www.qfom.com.au/>



Original QANTAS Hangar - QANTAS Founders Outback Museum - Longreach

Qantas gave the museum a Boeing 747-200, VH-EBQ, the City of Bunbury, when it was decommissioned. This plane normally requires a runway twice the length and twice the width of the Longreach runway. However by reducing the weight to the absolute minimum and landing with only two engines the pilot,

who had trained for six months in the simulator, successfully landed the aircraft and brought it to a halt in less than half the length of the Longreach runway. He is now training to be one of the pilots for the new A380 aircraft to be introduced shortly to Qantas's fleet.



Boeing 747-200 - City of Bunbury - QANTAS Founders Outback Museum - Longreach

<http://www.qfom.com.au/collections/virtual/vh-ebq/stats.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qantas>



Flight Computer Bay - City of Bunbury - QANTAS Founders Outback Museum - Longreach

The museum has also recently received the restored Boeing 707 which was the first sold to Qantas and the first sold to an airline outside the US. The plane, the City of Canberra, VH-EBA, is parked beside the 747 and looks tiny by comparison. 47 years ago it was the frontline of civil

aviation aircraft. Restoration took 15,000 hours of work by volunteers.

<http://www.adastron.com/707/qantas/eba-special.htm>



Boeing 707 - City of Canberra - QANTAS Founders Outback Museum - Longreach



Flight Recorders - City of Bunbury - QANTAS Founders Outback Museum - Longreach



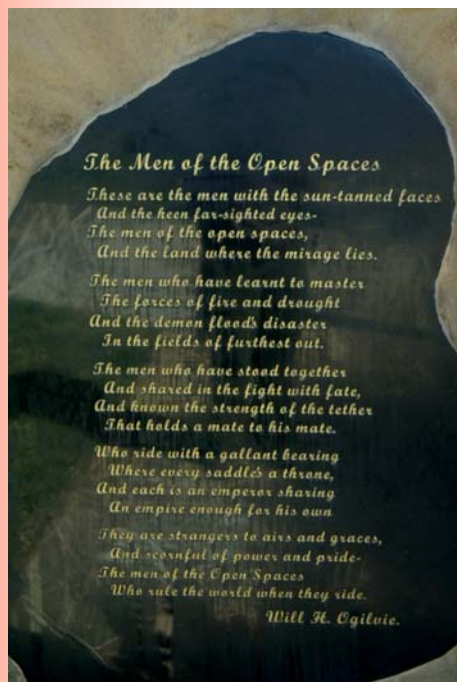
Galley - City of Bunbury - QANTAS Founders Outback Museum - Longreach



Flight Engineers Instrument Panel - City of Bunbury - QANTAS Founders Outback Museum - Longreach

There is also a DC3 VH-EAP. This aircraft had a chequered history having served in WWII and been operated by QANTAS under VH-EAP and VH-EBY.

<http://www.dc3.adastron.com/ozcensus.htm>
<http://www.ruudleeuw.com/dc3-vhbp-history.htm>



Stockman's Hall of Fame - Longreach

Tours of the 747 are available and one of these includes a walk onto the wing from the cabin. I decide this is my only chance to walk out onto the wing on an aircraft like this and pay the extra. What I didn't know as the wing walk option also includes a visit to the cockpit, the area below the passenger flow where all the

computers and navigational equipment is housed and the cargo areas and a look into the tail at the tail control gear. This tour took over 90 minutes and by the time I had looked at all the displays I had spent nearly four hours in the museum.



On the Wing - QANTAS Founders Outback Museum - Longreach



De Havilland DH60 Moth - QANTAS Founders Outback Museum - Longreach



QANTAS Empire Airways DC3 - VH-EAP - QANTAS Founders Outback Museum - Longreach



Replica of QANTAS's first plane - QANTAS Founders Outback Museum - Longreach

Across the highway is the Stockman's Hall of Fame and here the history and exploits of different aspects of settlement of the Outback.

THE WOMEN OF THE WEST

George Essex Evans

— HEY LEFT THE wine-washed outlaws
and the cavaliers on the hill,
The houses in the happy distant where life is more still.
The pleasures of the city, and the friends they cherished best,
For love they found the wilderness — the Women of the West.

The rain, and rush, and fever of the city died away,
And the old-time joy and force — they were gone for many a day;
In their place the laughing coach-wheel, or the shrieking bullock-chain,
Or the everlasting sentence of the never-ending prison.

In the dash-bells, steel-clad homestead of some eastern plain,
In the tent beside the back-sight of a railway just begun,
In the huts on new settlements, in the camps of men's unrest,
On the frontiers of the Nation, live the Women of the West.

The red sun rolls their beauty and, in weariness and pain,
The slow years steal the battles that never return again;
And there are loaves men cannot touch, and words men cannot say,
The nearest woman's face may be a hundred miles away.

The wide high lands, the waters of their fanning and fanning,
When the white stars in reverent light their hem altar fires,
And silence, like the smelt of God, sinks deep into the breast-
Parchment his knots and underwrite the Women of the West.

For them on treacherous sands, the call, no gun gives his cry:
They only hear the hoating of their gallant, loving hearts,
We hear keen song with silent lips the songs all songs show—
The halcyons of empires, the dignity of love.

We heard one hold one father's creed. We call has passed us by,
We feared and fought the wilderness, we sent our sons to die,
And we have hearts in the old days — we are all the west,
The hearts that made the Nation were the Women of the West.

The displays are excellent and show with great clarity the lives of people in the bush. However it is the stories of the Unsung Heroes on boards throughout the Hall that make the most fascinating reading.

There are so many of these stories that it is hard to take them all in and after 3hours in the museum it was time to make my way back to camp.

This evening the campers are entertained around the campfire by singer-songwriter Tom McIvor.



A large, rustic wooden cabin or house, likely a historical reconstruction, displayed in a museum setting. The structure is made of horizontal wooden planks and has a steep, gabled roof. It is surrounded by other exhibits, including a large map on the wall and other smaller structures.

130



Coolibah Tree - Longreach Town Common

It is a fairly leisurely start to the day, as I don't have to pack camp. By 08:45 I am at the little railway museum at the Longreach Railway Station. The display features some of the record books kept by stationmasters, uniforms and tools used to maintain the track. It does not take long to look it over but the station is historic and rather photogenic so I spend a little time

taking photos before heading into the centre of town to photograph some of the buildings in the main street.



Longreach Railway Station



Railway Museum - Longreach



Replica of QANTAS Office - Longreach



The Station Store - Longreach

The visitor centre is a reconstruction of the original Q.A.N.T.A.S ticket office and there are several buildings from the early days.

About halfway down the street is the Station Store owned by Kinnon and Co. who also conduct coach rides in replica Cobb & Co coaches.



Gas Producer - Powerhouse Museum - Longreach

The store stocks all sorts of outback clothing, including boots and hats. I have become sick of wearing the jogger style of shoes, as they are heavy and very hot so I take the opportunity to try on some elastic sided boots. They are very comfortable and I decide to buy a pair; not cheap. I

also buy a new hat. The owner offers me a free ride on the afternoon Cobb and Co coach which I accept. The ride includes a ride through the streets of Longreach and across the common, including a short gallop, scones and tea and an old Australian movie.



Kangaroos - Longreach Town Common



Gin Creek - Longreach Town Common



Longreach Common



'Long Reach' - Thompson River - Longreach

Having bought the boots I decide to test them with a 4km walk through the Iningai Nature Reserve on the Longreach Town Common. The park is named after the traditional owners of the area. Overuse had severely degraded the Mitchell Grasslands and destroyed the trees but since the park was established the trees and grasslands have regenerated. Although I saw only a

few kangaroos and birds the walk through the trees beside the Gin Creek was interesting as many of the plants were labelled so they could be identified.



Diesel Generating Set - Longreach Power Station Museum

Having successfully tested my new boots I then drove to the 'Long Reach' on the Thompson River. This long straight section of the River is what gave Longreach its name. Dinner cruises are available.

It is now almost time to return to the Cobb & Co ride, however before that a few more photos in town and a little shopping for supplies.



Powerhouse Museum - Longreach



'Cobb & Co' Coach - Longreach

The coach ride proved great fun as the coach with nine passengers trundled through the streets and onto the common.

Incidentally the Longreach Town Common is 30000 acres. The scones and jam and cream were delicious and the feature film was Smiley with Chips Rafferty and some other well known Australian actors some of whom have passed away.

The remaining venue to visit is the Powerhouse Museum. The write up concentrates of the social history aspects of the museum. However this was once the powerhouse for Longreach and most of the engines and generators are still in place and because it had been expanded to meet demand there is a diverse collection of engines ranging from the four eight cylinder gas engines to large diesel engines. The earliest engines were driven by charcoal gas produced from coal using gas producers on the site.



Crossley-Premier Gas Engine - Powerhouse Museum - Longreach

The social history section features an old control room from the airport and a schoolroom along with the usual collection

of domestic items common in early settlement homes.

In the grounds are items of machinery, from graders to pumps.

Tom McIvor is the entertainer again tonight.

Wednesday 25th July 2007 – Longreach to Charleville

Day 51

After two interesting days in Longreach it is time to move on again and make my way to Charleville.



New 'Tree of Knowledge' - Australian Workers Heritage Museum - Barcaldine



Tent - Australian Workers Heritage Museum - Barcaldine

The route takes me through Ilfracombe, Barcaldine and Blackall.

Ilfracombe has a large collection of farm and road making machinery displayed between the rail line and the highway. Everything has been cleaned up and painted.

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/queensland/ilfracombe/2005/02/17/1108500203415.html>

Barcaldine was settled as Barcaldine Downs station by Donald Charles Cameron in 1863.

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/QLDBarcaldine.shtml>

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/Queensland/Barcaldine/2005/02/17/1108500202092.html>



Ash Street Bore - Australian Workers Heritage Museum - Barcaldine

The town acquired fame and notoriety in 1891 as the centre of the Shearers Strike. Thirteen of the leaders were gaoled for 3 years. This banding together of the shearers lead to the

formation of unions as voice for workers and ultimately the formation of the Australian Labour Party.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1891_Australian_shearers'_strike

<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~natinfo@ozemail.com.au/1shearer.htm>



Tree of Knowledge - Ready for Removal - Barcaldine

A Ghost Gum, the Tree of Knowledge, outside the railway station commemorated the events. Unfortunately it has died as

the result of it being poisoned, but a cutting taken some years ago is thriving in the grounds of the Australian Workers Heritage Museum.



Post Office - Australian Workers Heritage Museum - Barcaldine



School Room - Australian Workers Heritage Museum - Barcaldine

<http://www.australianworkersheritagecentre.com.au/>

The tree is being removed next weekend and will be transported to Brisbane for preservation.

<http://www.heritageaustralia.com.au/news.php?id=61>

Barcaldine's Tree of Knowledge removed

The historic Tree of Knowledge in the central west Queensland town of Barcaldine has been removed, but will be replaced by a memorial.

The 200-year-old ghost gum was poisoned and declared dead last year. It has now been removed as a public safety hazard.

The Tree of Knowledge was the site of an historic shearers' meeting in 1891, where it was agreed to strike against their employers. The shearers' strike was one of the key early union movements which ultimately resulted in the establishment of the Australian Labor Party.

The tree trunk will now be chemically preserved in Brisbane to protect it against borer damage and splitting before it is returned to Barcaldine, where it is set to feature prominently in the new memorial.

The museum is set in very pleasant gardens around the Ash Street Bore from which artesian water still flows. A number of buildings and a huge tent houses displays showing the activities of workers in a number of industries. Whilst the industries

involved are ones that have been closely linked to the industrial union movement the displays focus on the activities of the workers and not on the role of the union. Some special displays focus on the political aspects of the Labour Movement.

Overall it is an interesting museum

Having spent an hour and a half at the museum it is time to take a quick tour of the town. The lifeless Tree of Life is being excavated from its position in front of the Railway Station.

100km south is Blackall, another important pastoral centre, where fine merino wool was the main agricultural pursuit. A small local history museum is interesting, but it is made more interesting by the local people who care for it and are prepared to talk about their experiences. A bit of a trap as one can easily spend a long time chatting.

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/QLDBla ckall.shtml>

Blackall also claims to be the site of the original Black Stump.



Commercial Hotel - Barcaldine



'Black Stump' - Blackall

Blackall' s main attraction is the steam driven Wool Scour. Built by the 5 wealthiest station owners in the district in 1908; it operated until 1978.

<http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/projects/heritage/index.cgi?place=600033&back=1>

<http://heritagetrails.qld.gov.au/attractions/blackall.html>

It is the only one remaining of, I think, eighty that once dotted the wool growing landscape.



Steam Scour - Blackall



Bore - Steam Scour - Blackall



Shearing Stands - Steam Scour - Blackall

The equipment has been restored to working order by the local people and is operated during tours of the Scour. These days they are unfortunately unable to raise steam in the original boilers fire by the wood of the gidgee tree, but make do instead with an oil fired package boiler.



Scouring Tanks - Steam Scour - Blackall

On this section of road there are many kangaroos that have been killed by passing traffic and from time to time there are roadside kangaroos. They are stupid animals when it comes to traffic; they turn and leap across the road in front of oncoming vehicles and I saw this several

times. A kangaroo beside the road is a reason to slow down, as you have no idea what they will do.

It is 17:15 when I arrive in Charleville and tonight the camp has red wine beef stew around the campfire at 18:00 so I choose not to cook tonight.



Dryer - Steam Scour - Blackall

Thursday - 26 July 2007 - Charleville

Day 52

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDCharleville.shtml>

Charleville

Interesting township in western Queensland.

Located 750 km from Brisbane and 300 m above sea-level, Charleville is an attractive town on the banks of the Warrego River.

The area around Charleville was first explored by Edmund Kennedy during his 1847 journey through the area. At the time he was trying to solve the riddle of the rivers. His expedition succeeded in establishing that the waterways in Central Queensland, particularly the Barcoo, which Thomas Mitchell had called the 'Victoria', flowed south into the Channel country

rather than north into the Gulf of Carpentaria. During this expedition Kennedy passed within 10 km of the present site of Charleville.



Stiger Vortex Rainmaking Guns - Charleville

By the 1860s the area was being settled and as early as 1866 a pub and a general store had appeared on the site of modern-day Charleville.

In 1868 William Alcock Tully, the then Queensland under-secretary for public

lands and chief commissioner for crown lands, surveyed the town and named it after his boyhood home in County Cork, Ireland. The name had originally come from France.



Graham Andrews Parklands - Charleville



Historic House Museum - Charleville



Historic House Museum - Charleville



Rail Ambulance - Historic House Museum - Charleville

By 1888, when the population had grown to 1470, it was a thriving centre with a number of hotels, a brewery, a cordial factory, four sawmills and three butcheries.

Prior to the arrival of the railway in 1888 (and even until the early 1900s) as many as 500 bullock teams passed through each year, carrying woolclip to the railhead at Roma.



House - Charleville



Courthouse - Charleville

The location of the town at a permanent waterhole meant that it was on major stock routes through the area. By the 1880s it had become an important stopover

point for Cobb & Co who established a major coach-building factory in the town in 1893. It employed over 40 people (blacksmiths, wheelwrights, trimmers, painters and coach builders) and a sawmill was built to cater specifically for the timber needs of the factory. It was closed down in 1920.

In the 1920s the town was at the forefront of the country's infant aviation industry. On 2 November 1922 the first regular Qantas service took off from Charleville with a 400-pound payload and 160 letters. It was bound for Cloncurry.



Corones Hotel - Charleville

I start the day with a visit to the Visitor Centre and the Graham Andrews Parklands. Besides an interesting walk through a trail of native trees there is also two of the six Stiger Vortex Rainmaking Guns set up by meteorologist Clement L Wragge. They failed!

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/topic/story.cfm?c_id=1500883&objectid=10439253

Why spend a day in Charleville, the relics of its early days have mostly disappeared and only historical markers record the sites of significant buildings?

Nevertheless the town has many interesting buildings from the 1920' s and the Corones Hotel built in 1929 is testimony to the grand life of an era of great wealth in the pastoral industry of Queensland.



Corones Hotel - Charleville

The Historic House Museum in Alfred Street was once the Queensland National Bank. It houses a collection of rural memorabilia and is run by the Charleville Historical Society. Like so many of these local historical collections its lacks the presentation that a modern museum needs to interest and excite the visitor. Nevertheless the shears sharpening machine and the rail ambulance were things

I had not seen before. Rooms furnished in the style of the early days of the great sheep stations are also interesting. Despite the hardships and remoteness these people tried and succeeded in maintaining an elegant lifestyle.



Warrego River – Charleville

Having walked the main streets and viewed the buildings, most of which dated from the 1920' s and later I set out on the driving Heritage Trail.

The trail takes you to the sites but in many cases all there is a plaque, nothing of the significance remains.

The plain where Ross and Keith Smith landed on 23rd Dec 1919 during their historic flight from London to Melbourne is marked with a plaque.

<http://www.airwaysmuseum.com/Vickers%20Vimy%20G-EAOU%20crew.htm>

http://www.centennialofflight.gov/essay/Explorers_Record_Setters_and_Daredevils/Australia/EX9.htm

The Ward River is a tributary of the Warrego River. Neither is running at the moment, but when they do the

feed into the Darling River. The Ward River waterholes are popular fishing spots.



Norden Bomb Sight Vault – Charleville

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norden_bombsight

Friday 27th July 2007 – Charleville to Bourke

Day 53

Today I continue my way south along the Warrego River to Bourke. My first stop is at Cunnamulla. This sleepy little town owes its existence to Cobb & Co. It is now the administrative centre for Paroo shire.

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/QLDCunnamulla.shtml>

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/Queensland/Cunnamulla/2005/02/17/1108500202284.html>

A statue of the Cunnamulla Fella, a tribute to Slim Dusty, stands outside the Shire Offices.

The road to Burke is one with few turns; I am travelling over the flat plains of southern Queensland and northern NSW. There are cleared areas of grassland but much of the country is lightly

wooded. Today there are emus beside the road, not necessarily much brighter than kangaroos when it comes to road traffic.

I reach Bourke at about 13:45 and find the Mitchell Caravan Park and set up camp and then venture out to explore.



**Beside the Warrego River -
Cunnamulla**

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/N/SWBourke.shtml>

Bourke (including Wanaaring)

**Substantial township on the Darling River
in far western New South Wales.**

Located 789 km north west of Sydney, Bourke is situated on the Darling River 110 m above sea level. It is, by any measure, a thriving country town with a

population around 3500 and a sense of prosperity which is the result of its geographic importance as the centre of a large wool, cotton and citrus area.



Warrego River - Cunnamulla

The prosperity of the town belies the assessments of the first Europeans who travelled through the area. When Charles Sturt passed through the district in 1828 he thought that the whole area was 'unlikely to become the haunt of civilised man'. Sturt, accompanied by Hamilton Hume, reached the Darling River (Sturt named the river after Sir Ralph Darling, Governor of NSW at the time) about 30 km north of the present town site and they followed the river downstream for about 100 km. They had arrived in the area during a period of drought and, although Sturt was to refer to the Darling as that 'noble river' he was to stop travelling down it because, at the time, it was saline and very low. He returned to Sydney with less than glowing reports of the area. Certainly he did nothing to encourage settlement.



Cunnamulla Hotel



Memorial Fountain - Cunnamulla

It wasn't until 1835 that Sir Thomas Mitchell returned to the area and constructed a fort about 13 km south of the town site. Mitchell had bad relations with the local Aborigines and he felt a fort was suitable protection against their attacks. It was named Fort Bourke after the governor of NSW, Sir Richard Bourke

(1777-1855). Eventually the district and later the town came to be known by this name.



The Cunnamulla Fella - Cunnamulla

Fort Bourke was short-lived but it did establish the possibility of settlement in the area and over the next decade pastoralists (some of them speculators) moved into the area. It was marginal land and few prospered. However the history of the district changed dramatically when, in 1859, Captain W. R. Randall sailed the Gemini up the Darling from South

Australia. Suddenly Bourke and Brewarrina and other centres along the river became vital transport nodes. For decades Bourke was the transport centre for the whole of southwest Queensland and western NSW. Its port was the only efficient way to transport wool to the coastal markets and at its height in the late 1800s over 40 000 bales of wool were being shipped down the Darling annually. The river transport continued until the last commercial riverboat in 1931.



Corrugated Iron House - Cunnamulla

In 1862 the township was surveyed and the first businesses - 'Bourke Store' and 'Bourke' Hotel - were established. That same year, the town's first court case - a bushranging charge - was conducted in the open air. This was a boom time for the town with large landholdings being taken up by optimistic graziers. The unreliability of the rainfall - it averages 340 mm but is likely to vary from 150 mm one year to 800 mm the next - forced many of the optimists out of the area.



New High Set House - Cunnamulla

Things to see:

Historic Buildings

There is so much to see of historical interest in Bourke. The town's history is genuinely interesting and the places of historical importance have been well preserved. The common sense first stop should be at the Tourist Information Office. The Tourist Information Office provides an excellent brochure, complete with a detailed map, which highlights the town's most interesting and important buildings.

The most interesting buildings in Bourke include the 'Lands Building', now Government Offices, which was built between 1863-1865 as the town's first Court House. It served the town for only a decade before the second courthouse was built in 1875. Today the first Court House has been beautifully restored

and is one of the most attractive buildings in the town. It is located in Mitchell Street one block west of Richard Street.

One of the town's most impressive buildings, and certainly one of the most photographed, is the Court House at 51 Oxley Street which was built in 1899 - a true Federation building. The Court itself, which is open for inspection, is beautifully preserved and has an appropriate air of solemnity. This Court House must be one of the first 'project' court houses in the country as it is almost identical to the Wagga Court House which the architect, Walter Vernon, designed at the same time.

A little further down Oxley Street (the main street of town) is the Post Office which was built in 1879 with the upper floor being added some years later. It survived the 1890 flood (the town's worst flood when the river broke its banks and the levees which had been built) by building its own levee bank.

Much is made of the Carriers Arms Hotel (on the Mitchell Highway two blocks from Richard Street) in which Henry Lawson reputedly wrote some stories and which

was a popular Cobb & Co stop off point. Built in 1879, the building is now singularly unimpressive. When compared to the large number of old and interesting buildings in town it is a great disappointment.



Lock and Weir - Bourke



PS Jandra - North Bourke



North Bourke Bridge

Afghan Mosque/Bourke Cemetery

Bourke Cemetery has the graves of several Afghan camel drivers, as well as the corrugated-iron shack they used as a mosque. The local camel drivers once stationed over 2000 camels at a site just south of the town's present showgrounds.

The Bourke Weir

The Bourke Weir (it can be reached by driving west along Anson Street and following the signs) was opened in 1897 and was designed to maintain a reasonable level of water in the river near the town. The lock was nearly 60 metres long and 11 metres wide and was the only one built on the Darling. It was concreted and converted into a weir in 1941.

Mud Map Tours



St Ignatius Catholic Church - Bourke

The Mud Map Tours, a brochure which is freely available around the town, offers a number of suggested tours around the area. Of all these the short journey out to Fort Bourke Stockade is probably the most interesting. On the way out to the stockade stop at the cemetery (the section closest to town is the oldest) where there are a number of graves of Afghan camel drivers. They are easy to identify because, unlike the Christian graves, they are all pointing towards Mecca. About 50 metres further across is the grave of John

McCabe, a local policeman who was shot by bushranger Captain Starlight in 1868. The highwayman was captured nearly three months later and held in Bourke where he was charged before being tried in Bathurst (see [Enngonia](#) for further details).



North Bourke Pub

Fort Bourke Stockade

Ironically the trip out to Fort Bourke Stockade is actually more interesting than the reconstructed Stockade. About 15 km out of town the road passes around a wildlife refuge which is extraordinarily beautiful. The actual fort itself is nothing more than a few logs in the middle of nowhere. The argument, which is true, is that there is no accurate information about what Mitchell's stockade looked like but it is reasonable to assume that it looked nothing like this re-creation which would barely hold a single man for half an hour and certainly wouldn't have deterred the 'hostile natives' that Mitchell was so afraid of.

There are seven mud maps in the brochure with trips around the town which range from fishing to wildflowers and a trip out through the cotton growing areas. The map relating to Midnight's Grave is inaccurate (see [Enngonia](#)).

Cobb & Co Heritage Trail

The historic inland coaching company, Cobb & Co, celebrates the 150th anniversary of its first journey in 2004 (and the 80th anniversary of its last, owing to the emergence of motorised transport). The trailblazing company's contribution to Australia's development is celebrated with the establishment of a heritage trail which explores the terrain covered on one of its old routes: between Bathurst and Bourke.



Reconstructed Wharf - Bourke

Cobb & Co's origins lay in the growing human traffic prompted by the goldrushes of the early 1850s. As the Heritage Trail website states: 'The company was enormously successful and

had branches or franchises throughout much of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Japan. At its peak, Cobb & Co operated along a network of tracks that extended further than those of any other coach system in the world its coaches travelled 28,000 miles (44,800km) per week and 6000 (out of their 30,000) horses were harnessed every day. Cobb & Co created a web of tracks from Normanton on the Gulf of Carpentaria and Port Douglas on the Coral Sea down to the furthest reaches of Victoria and South Australia in all, a continuous line of 2000 miles (3200km) of track over eastern Australia from south to north, with a total of 7000 miles (11,200km) of regular routes' (see www.cobbandco.net.au).

As a major terminus on the coach line, Bourke has many Cobb & Co sites. These include the blacksmith's workshop and residence in Oxley St, which are largely unchanged. The workshop still bears the soot of its working days and a 19th-century grapevine can be seen by the house. The Carriers Arms Hotel (1879) was once a booking office for the coach

service to Hungerford and Queensland and the old company foreman's residence can still be found in Hope St. Other extant buildings thought to be connected to Cobb & Co are the Fitzgerald Hotel (1888) in Oxley St, the post office (1879), the Telegraph Hotel (now the Riverside Motel) and Bourke Cemetery. Other Cobb & Co related buildings have disappeared, such as Richardson & Bennett's wagon and coach factory, which became the Cobb & Co stables, Sam Doughty's livery stable, the City Coach & Buggy Works, and the Steam Coach and Wagon Factory.



Ancient Red Gums - Bourke

Further afield are such sites as the remains of the Dry Lake Hotel, the Warrego Pub (built on the site of the Salmon Ford Pub, which was once a Cobb & Co change station), Mount Oxley, where there was once a changing station (and where it is now possible to camp with a key and permit from the Bourke

Information Centre), the North Bourke Billabong, where distinguished coach driver, Billy Armstrong, died after overturning his coach, the North Bourke Bridge (the second lift bridge in NSW), the ruins of the old changing station at Curraweena, the former site of the Pink Hills Pub, Wanaaring (which once received a Cobb & Co coach each week), Wangamanna Station, where Cobb & Co once obtained camels to pull their coaches during a drought, and Yantabulla changing station.

As I plan to stay only two nights and there is many things to see in the surrounding district I have no choice but to limit my sightseeing to the achievable and this afternoon I make good use of the Mud Maps to visit the historic lock and weir, the sight of the port and wharves, the maritime heritage area across the river and the old bridge across the Darling River at North Burke and drop in for a beer at the Back O' Bourke Hotel.

http://www.mdbc.gov.au/about/basin_statistics

<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/geography/murraydarlingriver.htm>

<http://coombs.anu.edu.au/SpecialProj/ERIC/stats.html>

The Murray-Darling Basin covers 1,058,000 square kilometres or approximately one-seventh (14%) of the total area of [Australia](#)(7,682,300sq.km).



Crossley Diesel Engine - Bourke

<http://bourke.localinfo.org.au/ourtown.htm>

<http://www.cottonnews.com.au/index.cfm?slD=38&iID=244&aID=659>

This morning I have booked to do a tour of the town and the local rural area. The tour is run by Stuart, a local with a passion for Bourke as a place to live and for the irrigation provided by the Darling River.

The tour commences with a short tour of the town and then we head out to North Bourke for a morning tea break and a visit to Jen' s Gallery to look at some of her landscapes of the district. Fortunately none caught my fancy.



Innovative use of Scrap Metal - North Bourke



Picking Oranges - North Bourke

Next stop was a citrus orchard and vineyard that had gone into receivership because its water right had been slashed by 60% thus reducing the equity the owners had and the banks had foreclosed.



Farmhouse - North Bourke



Cotton Gin - North Bourke

The seven years of drought have severely impacted both the citrus and cotton irrigators. Cotton farmers have had several years of no crops. Stuart claims the water used by the cotton growers is a small proportion of the Darling Rivers average annual flow and that as the river has

flooded every two to three years for most of the last century there has been very little impact. He also stated that the growers use their water efficiently and that cotton is one of the most productive crops/megalitre of water in Australia.



Joba Trees - North Bourke



Old Hospital - Bourke

This may be so and cotton and citrus farmers use sophisticated monitoring equipment to optimise the use

water. Nevertheless the cotton farmers pump their allocation of water from the river to very large, shallow storage dams and with evaporation rates of up to 3m per annum in this region huge volumes of water must be lost.

<http://bourke.local-e.nsw.gov.au/about/1004/1013.html>



Modern Hospital - Bourke



Old London Bank - Bourke



Fitzgerald's Post Office Hotel - Bourke



Convent - St Ignatius Catholic Church

Rains in March in the Darling catchments have created the present river flows and although the flow has reached Bourke it has not yet reached the storages at Menindie. The flows from the rains on the western side of the Great Dividing Range in Queensland in June have not yet reached Bourke.



Old Towers Drug Co Building - Bourke



Lands Department Building of 1895 - Bourke

The reason for the long time for water from Queensland to reach Bourke and towns down river is the very flat country.

Here at Bourke it is only 110m above sea level and it is almost 2000km along the river to the sea, a fall of about 5cm per kilometre.

The tour was interesting for the information Stuart provided and the opportunity to visit the citrus, cotton and jojoba farms.



Afghan Mosque - Bourke Cemetery



Afghan Graves - Bourke Cemetery

The afternoon was spent wandering the town photographing some of the buildings from the days of the paddle steamers, visiting the cemetery with its Moslem section dating from the days of the Afghan

Camel Drivers and the corrugated iron mosque and Fred Hollows grave.

<http://www.hollows.org/content/TextOnly.aspx?s=44>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fred_Hollows



Fred Hollows Memorial - Bourke Cemetery



Mt Oxley

Finally I took a short drive out of town to where I could otherwise endless plain.
get a photo of Mt Oxley, the only significant feature in an

<http://www.outbackonline.net/MysteriousOxley.htm>

Sunday 29th July 2007 – Bourke – Wilcannia - Hay

Day 55

This morning I am underway at 08:00 to Wilcannia via Louth along the east bank of the Darling River. Occasional views of the river reveal the river at the bottom of the 10m deep trench through which it flows.

Louth is a small settlement at a river crossing. Its main claim to fame these days is an annual race meeting.

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/NSWLouth.shtml>

The countryside along the river is incredibly flat and it is little wonder Darling River floods can extend for 50km. Despite recent rains there is little feed on the plains, nevertheless they are green and there are groups of cattle and flocks of sheep grazing on the short grass.

Despite the flows that have brought some water to Bourke and Louth, 200km downstream at Wilcannia the river is a

series of pools. Water from June rains may reach Menindie further downstream.

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/NSWWilcannia.shtml>



Tiny Church - Louth

I had intended to overnight in Wilcannia. In its heyday Wilcannia was an important Darling River Port and there are many historic buildings. After refuelling I drove around and took some photos.

There is no recognised caravan park at Wilcannia and the riverside camp area was unoccupied. Whether or not the reports of problems with the local indigenous people are

accurate there are a lot of vandalised buildings and I was not prepared to camp alone on the river bank and so decided to press on to Ivanhoe and Hay along the Cobb Highway.



Louth Post Office Building

This is also the route of the ' Long Paddock' from Wilcannia to Moama along which graziers drove their stock during droughts, seeking food and water.

<http://www.thelongpaddock.com/>

Ivanhoe is a small service town. The town was originally situated on a well-used route across flat, western New South Wales between Wilcannia and both Balranald and Booligal.

Today Ivanhoe is a railhead and service centre for the surrounding pastoral industry and a stopover for those travelling on the Cobb Highway.

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/NSW/Ivanhoe.shtml>

At Booligal I cross the Lachlan River.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lachlan_River

This river ends in a swamp that connects to the Murrumbidgee River and rarely does water from the Lachlan reach the sea.

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/NSW/Hay.shtml>

Hay (including Oxley)

Substantial and historic service centre in the heart of the Riverina.

Hay is an important pastoral town of the Riverina area. Located 728 km west of Sydney via the Great and Mid Western Highways it is situated alongside the Murrumbidgee River at the junction of the Sturt, Cobb and Mid Western Highways, halfway between Sydney and Adelaide. 94 m above sea-level and with a population of 2817 it is surrounded by completely flat, open, treeless saltbush plains. Indeed the road from Hay to Maude is as flat as western Queensland or the Nullarbor Plain.



Darling River - Louth

Joseph Furphy, who lived in Hay while bullock carting about the region in the 1870s, set much of his famous novel *Such is Life* (1903) within the district. This descriptive passage from the novel provides some insight into the terrain about Hay: 'the dark boundary of the scrub country disappears northward in the glassy haze, and in front, southward, the level black-soil plains of Riverina proper mark a straight sky-line, broken here and there by a monumental clump or pine-ridge. And away beyond the horizon, southward still, the geodesic curve carries that

monotony across the zone of salt-bush, myall and swamp box; across the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee and on to the Victorian border.'



Obstruction

This flatness makes the tree-lined streets of Hay (very attractive in autumn) ideal for bicycles, which are a common sight around town. Hay is also the centre of an area which is known as the best medium merino wool region in Australia. Some of the local studs are famous in pastoral circles - Mungadal, Uardry and Cedar Grove. Mungadal lies west of town adjacent the Sturt Highway. The Uardry property supplied the image of the ram for the former Australian shilling.

The introduction of an irrigation scheme in the 1950s expanded the range of production. Today Hay has rice and feed crops. Other sources of local income include the market gardens, grains, legumes, cattle and fat lambs.

The Ngiyambaa or Nari-nari Aborigines inhabited the area prior to white settlement. Charles Sturt explored the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers in 1829-30 passing by the future townsite in his whaleboat. There is a monument in Sturt Park (Lachlan St) to commemorate his journey.

Squatters followed in Sturt's wake. The 'Illiliwa' run, established in the 1840s, contained the land on which northern Hay would later be built. The neighbouring station was owned by John Tooth. Hay South would develop on land that was part of the 'Eli-Elwah' run of William Guise and the Mungadingadal (now Mungadal) run was occupied by the Lang Brothers. On their property was an important river crossing. At such locations stockmen, headed south to the Victorian markets, or north to pasture, would rest themselves and their cattle before fording the river. Consequently, the locale was initially known to Europeans as Lang's Crossing.

River-steamer captain Francis Cadell (see entry on Jerilderie) built a store at the crossing in 1858. When American Henry Leonard set up a punt service then built a hotel, a local squatter pulled a section of it

down with a bullock team. It was Leonard's appeal to the government for assistance that led to the opening of the Murrumbidgee Punt Hotel and the establishment of the township, which was gazetted in 1859. The initial title of 'Waradgery' was abandoned and the town was named after local parliamentarian John Hay.



Wilcannia

The first courthouse was erected in 1860 on the site of the present post office. Cobb & Co, made Hay the headquarters of their Victoria and Riverina operations from 1862 to 1896. The arrival of the company's coaches, feed wagons, 20 drivers, 103 horses, plus cooks and ostlers was greeted with a brass band. They set up a coach factory at the corner of Lachlan and Simpson streets in 1877.

Hay was also a major river port for the Lachlan squatting district. It was declared a municipality in 1872.

The years between 1865 and 1900 saw the population swell from 300 to 3000. The town's importance was apparent when it was chosen as the site of the procathedral and base of operations for the bishop when the Goulburn diocese was divided in 1884 to form the Riverina diocese.

In World War II Hay was used as a POW and internment centre. The process got under way in 1940 with the construction of three internment camps. The first arrivals, unfortunately, were 2036 Jewish internees from Nazi Germany and Austria - mostly professionals who had simply fled for their lives - along with 451 German and Italian POWs. They were transported from England on-board the 'Dunera,' hence the moniker 'the Dunera Boys,' which was applied, in particular to the Jewish refugees.

Conditions on the ship were appalling. The passengers were not allowed to leave the ship during stopovers and were rarely permitted on deck and, when they did, the British crew scattered bottles in their path to deter them. Conditions were also unsanitary.

In circumstances reminiscent of events in recent years, the refugees (and POWs) were transported to Hay via train and then placed in the camps behind barbed wire. They remained active, holding physical education courses and concerts, teaching the children and printing their own money. All of these internees were moved to [Tatura](#) in May 1941.

A few weeks later, about 2000 Italian POWs arrived from the battlefields of Egypt. They worked at farming practices, making

the camps largely self-sufficient. Only one escaped and he spent six months in Melbourne before being recaptured.

In December of 1941 Japanese internees were conveyed to the camp from [Cowra](#). Unfortunately, a number of them were merely Australians from Broome who were descended from Japanese stock; some of whom had never been to Japan.

The repatriation of the POWs was carried out in 1946 and the camp was dismantled and all building materials auctioned in 1947.

There was a reunion of these internees in 1990 and a memorial has been placed on Showground Rd, opposite the Hay Town Bush Fire Headquarters (past the showground). More recently an interpretive centre on the subject has been set up at the old railway station.

Ironically, after the war, Italian migrants arrived in Hay and established market gardens.

Things to see:

Visitors Information Centre



Wilcannia



Wilcannia

The visitor's information centre at 407 Moppett St, near the corner with Lachlan St (the Cobb Highway), has pamphlets which will take you on heritage walks about the town. They also have hot showers, toilets, baby-change facilities and electronic tourist information, all available 24 hours a day. Nearby, in the

coach pavilion, is 'Sunbeam', a Cobb & Co. coach. Built locally in 1886 it ran on the Deniliquin to Wilcannia line and was used in the Mad Dog Morgan film in 1975. On the other side of Moppett St, on its original site, is an ornate, cast-iron fountain given to the town in 1883 by its mayor, John Witcombe.



Wilcannia

Historic Buildings

Heading south along Lachlan St, between Moppett and Bank Sts are several public and commercial buildings which make a fine contribution to the main street. The shire office (1877), with its stout verandah posts, was originally the town's second courthouse. The lands office (1896), also notable for its verandah posts, as well as for the railing and windows, was one of the first such buildings to be designed for the outback climate. The post office (1881), with its multiple arches and beautiful cast-iron railing along the second storey balcony was designed by James Barnet. It is situated on the site of the town's first courthouse and lockup. The clock tower was added

in 1901. The Westpac Bank building, erected in 1877, originally housed the A.J.S. Bank. Opposite the post office is Japp's Pharmacy, again with attractive turned timber posts and some highly ornate cast-iron lacework along the upstairs balcony.

Take the right into Bank St. About halfway along the block is St Andrew's Presbyterian Church. The oldest known building in Hay it went up in 1872; the vestry and schoolroom were built in 1892. Take the first right into Pine St and, on the corner with Orson St, is the old Presentation Convent. Built in 1900 it has a beautiful front door of painted glass, French tiles on the roof and Wunderlich panelling inside.

Back at Moppett St is the substantial and stately brick courthouse. The town's fourth it was built in 1892 with some alterations made in 1920. The original slate roof has been replaced with tiles and the interior panelling replaced with Queensland maple but the whole has been carefully restored. There are stained-glass windows, marble fireplaces and furniture dating back to 1818. The verandah is of solid brick with

arches. On the other side of Pine St is the old Masonic Lodge (1878).



Manara Hills

North along Pine St, across Moppett, is St Paul's Anglican Church (1885), the procathedral for the diocese of the Riverina. Opposite is Hay Park with children's playground, aviary, duck pond, barbecue and picnic facilities and beautiful Morton Bay fig trees.

Continue north to Murray St. On the southern corner is the old Terminus Hotel. Built before 1880 it served railway passengers from 1882 until it was delicensed in 1940. Over the road is the elaborate Victorian bonded brick railway station (1882) with ornate ridges hanging from the roof. Both these and the platform verandah columns are of cast iron. The central section is two storeys high, the surrounding area has been landscaped and the whole has been returned to its original heritage colours. All up it is an impressive and generally intact landmark.

Railway cottages built for porters, drivers and tappers are located at 429-439 Murray St. Also dating from 1882 they are considered good surviving examples of low-cost government housing in the late Victorian period. The station master's residence, like the station itself, was built by Charles Hardy in 1882. The last train ran in 1983.



Murrumbidgee River - Hay

Hay Gaol Museum

Turn back along Pine St and take the second left into Church St. Over Piper St, to your left, is Hay Gaol Museum. The gaol complex was built in 1879 to replace an earlier prison (probably dating from 1871) and has had an interesting history. Despite architecturally inappropriate additions and alterations it remains a good example of a Victorian country-town gaol. It was mostly used for short-term offenders from the district. Closed in 1915 it became a maternity hospital from 1921. It resumed operations

as a prison again in 1930, doubling as a lock-up for those waiting to have their sanity assessed. Those found sane were released, those found insane were sent to a mental hospital.



Hay Post Office

In World War II the gaol was used in connection with the POW camps. After the last POWs were repatriated in 1947 it was largely abandoned. Then, in 1961, it was made into an experimental centre for incorrigible girls. Ringleaders from the Parramatta detention centre were sent to

Hay for three months of constant surveillance, supervision and extremely tight disciplinary, dress and behavioural codes. This phase of the building's existence ended in 1974. Hay Gaol now operates as a museum and cultural centre where artifacts of local history are stored and displayed. It is open from 9-5 daily (03 6993 1003).



Charley Brown's Saddlery Building - Hay

Shear Outback, Australian Shearer's Hall of Fame

Located on the Sturt Highway at Hay and called Shear Outback this new tourism initiative, opened in 2002, describes itself as providing "visitors with a contemporary and innovative museum experience. Showcasing the stories, artefacts, technology and culture of the Australian shearing industry, the facility comprises an iconic 'purpose built' interpretative centre and an historic woolshed relocated from the banks of the Murray River." Shear Outback is a complete experience of shearing and sheep. There are five separate aspects of the experience

starting with The Shearer's Hall of Fame which honours the achievements of shearers and the sheep industry. There are also an interactive experience, a Murray Downs shearing shed and an extensive historic archive. The Museum is open 9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. daily. The attractions include shearing demonstrations at 10.30 a.m., 1.00 p.m., and 3.30 p.m. although these times can vary depending on weather conditions and visitor numbers. Admission to the museum costs: Adults \$15, Concession \$10, Children (under 12) \$8, Family \$35. Group bookings are available upon application.

Hay Prisoner of War and Internment Camp Interpretive Centre

Situated within two restored train carriages, at the old railway station in Murray St, the display relates to the internment camps in Hay. The process got under way in 1940 with the construction of three internment camps. The first arrivals, unfortunately, were 2036 Jewish internees from Nazi Germany and Austria - mostly professionals who had simply fled for their lives - along with 451 German and Italian POWs. They were transported from England on-board the 'Dunera,' hence the moniker 'the Dunera Boys,' which was applied, in particular to the Jewish refugees.

Conditions on the ship were appalling. The passengers were not allowed to leave the ship during stopovers and were rarely permitted on deck and, when they did, the British crew scattered bottles in their path to deter them. Conditions were also unsanitary.

In circumstances reminiscent of events in recent years, the refugees (and POWs) were transported to Hay via train and then placed in the camps behind barbed wire. They remained active, holding physical education courses and concerts, teaching the children and printing their own money. All of these internees were moved to [Tatura](#) in May 1941.

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The repatriation of the POWs was carried out in 1946 and the camp was dismantled and all building materials auctioned in 1947. There was a reunion of internees in 1990. The Centre is open weekdays from

9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and entry is currently \$2, tel: (02) 6993 4045 .



The Australian Joint Stock Bank Building - Hay

Bishop's Lodge

If you head east at the roundabout at the southern end of town, along Moama St (the Sturt Highway), you will find, to your left, Bishop's Lodge, the former residence of the first Anglican bishop of the Riverina, Sydney Linton, who supervised its construction in 1888. Somewhat unusual architecturally this Victorian villa was built of corrugated iron and timber, with sawdust for insulation. It has been restored and the exterior paintwork returned to its original colours. Surrounded by a magnificent nineteenth-century garden it is currently open for inspection from 2-4 every Saturday for tours and at other times by appointment (02 6993 1861). The Lodge is also available as an exhibition and conference centre. Just up the road, to the right, is Ruberto's Winery.

Water Activities

There are several large sandy beaches along the river for swimming, boating, canoeing, waterskiing and fishing for golden perch, silver bream, Murray cod, redfin, catfish, Murray crayfish and yabbies. Sandy Point Beach at the end of Water St has a boat ramp. Soap Works Beach, 1 km down the road to Maude (Cadell St), has a picnic area and is a safe swimming spot. 13 km along this road is Hay Weir which has picnic and free electric barbecue facilities. Just downstream is a fishing spot known as Fisherman's Palteau.



The Union Bank Building - Hay

Sturt's Marked Tree

4 km east of Hay, on the Mid Western Highway, is Sturt's Marked Tree, a box tree famous for the markings which Charles Sturt carved upon it in 1829. There is a nature track which follows the river around Hay and just out of town is Hay

Wetlands Nature Reserve which is home to an array of waterbirds, best seen either at dawn or dusk, especially in springtime when the birds nest.

One Tree Hotel

The One Tree Hotel is 38 km north on land that was originally a pastoral holding. It was built in 1862 as Finch's Inn and served as a staging post on the Cobb &

Co. run between Hay and Wilcannia until that service ended in 1914. Here the passengers would disembark for lunch and a rest while the horse team was changed. William Clark bought the hotel off Alexander Finch and he leased the huge government tank nearby which watered up to 12,000 sheep at a time. Horse and bullock teams of up to a thousand in number were watered at the charge of a penny per head. The inn was purchased by the McQuade family in the 1880s who still own it. Although the original structure burned down in 1901 the insurance claim stated that recompense could only be made if the building was rebuilt exactly as it had been so the current

hotel is a replica. The license lapsed in the 1940s when it became a private residence. It is currently derelict but worth a look. One Tree was proclaimed a village in 1885 though it never grew and the old building is a lone sentinel on the plains today.

One Tree is halfway to Booligal, made famous by 'Banjo' Paterson's poem 'Hay, Hell and Booligal'. It is thought that the 'Hell' refers to Hells Gate, a property which lies between Hay and Balranald.

Monday 30th July 2007 – Hay to Melbourne

Day 56

Not having to pack up I am on the road south as the dawn is breaking, heading for Deniliquin, Echuca and home.

On the way I call on Nell and Bob Brown at Avenel and stay for light lunch. It is

good to see green grass on their property after a number of years of nothing and cattle (and kangaroos) grazing.

Home at about 14:00! Now comes the cleanup and dealing with the accumulated mail.

Overall a very good trip!

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http://www.corporate.qr.com.au/history/common_carrier/common_carrier.asp
http://www.search.com/reference/History_of_rail_transport_in_Australia
<http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/chims/placeDetail.html;jsessionid=7f00000130d58e003b30fc2d4143bcfdce9c42139d34.e34NaN8SbNyKci0Ma38Mb0QbNeSe6fznA5Pp7ftolbGmkTy?siteId=15681>
<http://www.sandgate.net/~dunn/usarmy/41stdiv.htm>

Moreton Telegraph Station

<http://www.moretonstation.com.au/history.html>
<http://www.aic.gov.au/conferences/hcpp/richards.pdf>

Mary Kathleen Mine

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/QLDMaryKathleen.shtml>
<http://www.uic.com.au/mku.htm>

Morgan

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/SAMorgan.shtml>
<http://www.morgan.org.au/history.htm>

Mount Isa

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDMountIsa.shtml>
<http://www.queenslandholidays.com.au/destinations/outback/things-to-see-and-do/mount-isa-underground-hospital-and-museum/>
<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/extras/federation/CMFedNWHospital.htm>
Discovery date was 1995 not 1977 as stated in this article.

Mt Hypipamee National Park

http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/find_a_park_or_forest/mount_hyipamee_national_park/

Mt Surprise

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/QLDMountSurprise.shtml>

Normanton

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDNormanton.shtml>
<http://www.savannah-guides.com.au/page2-4.html>
<http://www.gulf-savannah.com.au/carpentaria-general.html>
<http://www.gulf-savannah.com.au/carpentaria-places.html>

Zinifex Century Mine

http://www.zinifex.com/index.aspx?link_id=18.763

<http://www.gulf-savannah.com.au/mining.html>

Gulflander

<http://qroti.com/longdistance/gulflander/>

Painted Hills and Painted Desert

<http://www.southaustralia.com/OutbackLandscapes.aspx>

http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/heritage/shas/sha_arckaringa.html

Pine Creek

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/NTPineCreek.shtml>

<http://www.southaustralianhistory.com.au/pinecreek.htm>

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<http://walkabout.com.au/tales/Travellerstales00044.shtml>

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Punsand Bay

<http://www.punsand.com.au/>

Somerset

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<http://gutenberg.net.au/ausexplore/ausexpl1-11.html>

<http://gutenberg.net.au/ausexplore/ausexpl0-chaptsummaries.html>

Tennant Creek

<http://www.tennantcreek.nt.gov.au/home/home>

<http://www.tennantcreek.nt.gov.au/council/content/view/full/215?PHPSESSID=96a34e1ba8b4d037b>

<http://ozpedia.org/Tennant+Creek,+Northern+Territory>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennant_Creek

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/NTTennantCreek.shtml>

Tennant Creek Telegraph Station

<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks/find/tennantcreek.html>

The ' Long Paddock'

<http://www.thelongpaddock.com/>

Thursday Island

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDThursdayIsland.shtml>

<http://www.heritagetrails.qld.gov.au/attractions/thursday1.html>

<http://home.st.net.au/~dunn/horn01.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thursday_Island

Greenhill Fort

<http://www.gga.com.au/services/interpret/interpret.html>

Undara

<http://www.undara.com.au/geo/>

http://volcano.und.edu/vwdocs/volc_images/australia/undara/undara.html

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/QLDUndara.shtml>

Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs Conservation Park

[http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/cgi-](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/cgi-bin/parkabout.pl?WabmaKadarbuMoundSpringsCP)

[bin/parkabout.pl?WabmaKadarbuMoundSpringsCP](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/cgi-bin/parkabout.pl?WabmaKadarbuMoundSpringsCP)

<http://www.gabcc.org.au/index.aspx>

<http://www.gabcc.org.au/tools/getFile.aspx?tbl=tblContentItem&id=24>

Weipa

<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDWeipa.shtml>

<http://www.riotintoaluminium.com/localcommunities/296.asp>

Wentworth

<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/NSWWentworth.shtml>

<http://www.wentworth.nsw.gov.au/history/>

Old Wentworth Gaol

[http://www.australia.travelmall.com/travelmall/attraction/Riverina+and+the+Mur+ray+\(NSW\)/The+Old+Wentworth+Gaol](http://www.australia.travelmall.com/travelmall/attraction/Riverina+and+the+Mur+ray+(NSW)/The+Old+Wentworth+Gaol)

Perry Sand Hills

<http://www.wentworth.nsw.gov.au/tourism/view.php?iid=56>

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<http://walkabout.com.au/locations/NSWWilcannia.shtml>

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<http://www.wrightsair.com.au/lake.htm>

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<http://walkabout.com.au/fairfax/locations/QLDWinton.shtml>

<http://www.matildacentre.com.au/AboutWinton.html>

Bladensburg National Park

<http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/projects/park/index.cgi?parkid=139>

Jeffrey Quad 4WD

<http://www.4wdonline.com/ClassicTrucks/Jeffrey.html>

White Mountains National Park

<http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/projects/park/index.cgi?parkid=128>

