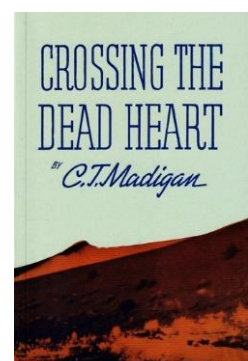
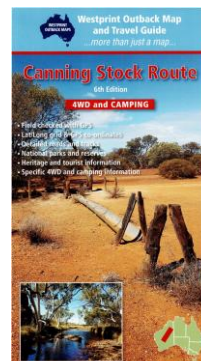
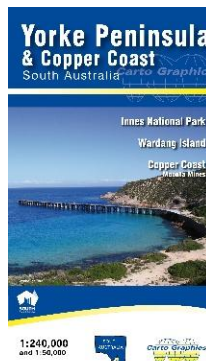
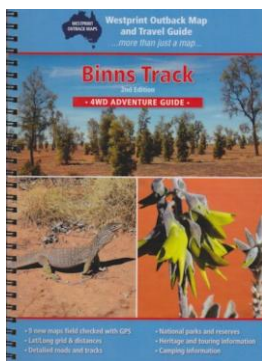
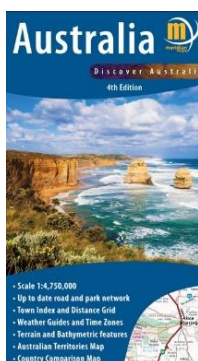




## The Meridian Line - Sunday 30.03.2025

**“Nature gives to every time and season some beauties of its own.” –Charles Dickens**



### **Australia Map – from \$14.95**

This 2025 edition of the 1:4,750,000 scale wall map of Australia features the country's top tourist attractions, national parks, and must-see points of interest. This map is clear, easy to read, and perfect for both business use and planning your next adventure. With detailed insets of Australia's territories, a country comparison with Europe, and handy extras like distance grids, time zone clocks, and weather charts for all capital cities, this map is an essential tool for navigating Australia with confidence. Whether you're plotting a road trip or looking for a stunning reference piece, this map has you covered!

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/australia-map-meridian/>

### **Binns Track – from \$32.95**

The Binns Track is an unforgettable four-wheel drive adventure, winding through some of the Northern Territory's most breathtaking and remote landscapes. Starting at the South Australian border, this epic 2,230-kilometre journey takes you through rugged national parks, stunning camping spots, and off-the-beaten-path outback towns. Named after Bill Binns, a dedicated NT

Parks and Wildlife ranger for 32 years, the track was created to give travellers the chance to experience more of Central Australia's striking beauty—from its vivid red landscapes to its diverse wildlife and awe inspiring rock formations. The journey offers an ever changing backdrop, from arid desert plains to lush tropical regions, each with its own unique ecosystem. With varying road conditions, from smooth bitumen to rough, tyre-shredding tracks, this route demands preparation and skill. While it's a challenging drive, the Binns Track is well-travelled and tackling it with a convoy of two or three vehicles is a great way to enhance both safety and enjoyment. For those seeking true outback adventure, the Binns Track is a must!

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/binns-track/>

### ***Yorke Peninsula & Copper Coast - from \$9.95***

New edition (2025) of the Carto Graphics 1:240,000 scale touring map of South Australia's Yorke Peninsula is the perfect companion for exploring this stunning coastal region. Designed for both road trippers and outdoor adventurers, this detailed map highlights major and minor roads, national parks, conservation reserves, boat ramps, dive sites, and heritage shipwreck locations. It also includes essential road distance and surface information, ensuring a smooth journey. On the reverse side, you'll find detailed inset maps of key attractions, including the Copper Coast area, Innes National Park, Wardang Island Maritime Heritage Trail, Moonta Mines Walking Trail, and Tourist Drive. Whether you're planning a scenic drive, a beach getaway, or an off-the-beaten-track adventure, this map is an essential tool for discovering the best of the Yorke Peninsula.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/yorke-peninsula-map/>

### ***Canning Stock Route 4WD Guide - \$39.95***

The Canning Stock Route was once the world's longest and toughest stock route. Today, its sheer length and isolation make it Australia's ultimate 4WD challenge, drawing adventurers from across the country and beyond. It's a journey that Alfred Canning himself could never have imagined becoming so iconic when he sent his famous 1910 telegram from Wiluna: "*Work Completed, Canning.*" Written by renowned desert explorer and historian Phil Bianchi (OAM), this guide is an essential resource for anyone daring to take on this legendary route. Packed with expert advice on vehicle preparation, permit requirements, travel logistics, and track conditions, it equips travellers with the knowledge needed to navigate this demanding journey. While this guide provides valuable insights, tackling the route requires careful planning, a well prepared vehicle, and reliable communication and safety systems. For those ready to embrace the challenge, the Canning Stock Route promises an unforgettable outback adventure like no other! Combine with our Canning Stock Route Map for total coverage.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/canning-stock-route-4wd-guide/>

### **Crossing The Dead Heart - \$34.95**

Crossing the Dead Heart is a captivating account of a daring 1939 expedition led by C.T. Madigan, aimed at traversing an unexplored stretch of the Northern Territory. This remarkable journey took the team from Charlotte Waters on the South Australia–Northern Territory border, past Andado Bore, across the vast desert to Birdsville, Queensland, before turning southwest to Lake Eyre and rejoining the railway at Marree. Financed by A.A. Simpson, after whom the Simpson Desert is named, the expedition combined bold exploration with meticulous scientific study, shedding new light on this remote and arid landscape. Tragically, while Dr. Madigan oversaw the book's completion, he passed away in January 1947, never seeing its publication. His legacy, however, lives on in this gripping tale of adventure, endurance, and discovery in the heart of Australia.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/crossing-dead-heart/>

### **Meridian Musings**

If you ask anyone about Melbourne's weather, chances are they'll say you can get all four seasons in one day! Well, I'm not sure about all four seasons in one day, but at the recent Outdoor Living and Caravan Expo, we definitely got a taste of all four over the weekend! It was a fantastic weekend! The camaraderie and friendships among the exhibitors were truly heartwarming, with everyone more than happy to share advice, stories, and a helping hand. Once again, it was amazing to meet those who have used Meridian and Westprint Maps on their travels and our regular readers of the Meridian Line. Hearing how much you enjoy the fortnightly read, feel inspired by fellow readers' stories, and get a laugh from the jokes was truly encouraging! A huge heartfelt thank you to our regular contributors – your input is truly appreciated!

We always love hearing your suggestions, and whenever possible, we take them on board. There were plenty of requests for more books on camping and travelling with pets. Be sure to check out the *What's New* section for the latest updates.

I chose this fortnight's inspirational quote because it truly feels like we've transitioned from summer to autumn. The outback's travel season is ahead of us and we've noticed a surge in interest for maps and books on iconic remote destinations like the Simpson Desert, Birdsville, Strzelecki Track, Canning Stock Route, and Corner Country—places that are notoriously tough to traverse in the heat of summer.

If you're heading off on an outback adventure, enjoy every moment, but stay prepared—pack plenty of water, extra fuel, and always double-check road conditions before setting out!

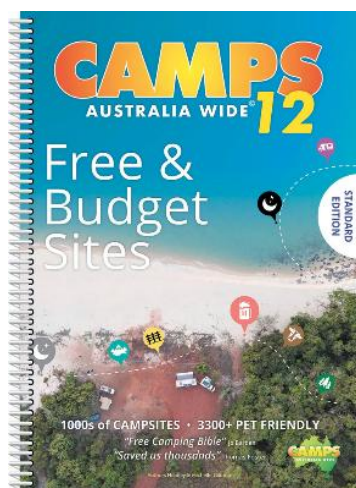
It was also perfect timing to dive into the latest Australian Geographic, which features an article titled “Off the Beaten Track”, chronicling the author’s journey along the legendary Binns Track. A truly epic trek for seasoned 4WD enthusiasts!

### **What’s New To The Website**

A few new things to offer you more travel inspiration!

#### ***Camps 12 Standard Edition Australia Wide - \$82.97***

The Camps 12 soft cover, spiral bound, A4 edition is your go to guide for free and low cost camping across Australia. It’s packed with verified free and budget camps, so you can easily see whether a site is free or paid, including national parks, state forests, showgrounds, pub stays, RV parks, stations, and farm stays. This edition also focuses on remote caravan parks and key outback roadhouses. Each campsite listing includes everything you need to know – from fishing and 4WD access to swimming and boat ramps – and now includes both the address and GPS coordinates. Ideal for campers, caravanners, 4WD enthusiasts, and road trippers, this compact edition is perfect for those who want a simple, easy-to-use guide for planning trips and navigating the road, all while saving money and travelling further.

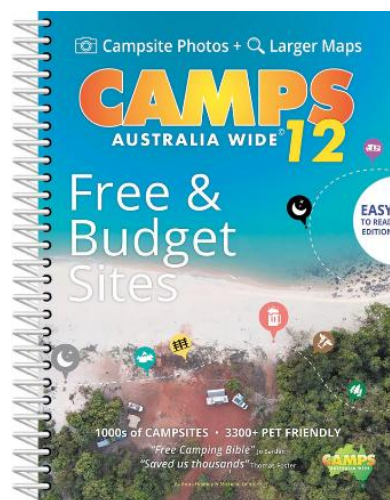


<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/camps-12-standard/>

#### ***Camps 12 Easy Read Edition Australia Wide (B4) - \$109.97***

The Camps 12 hard cover, spiral bound, B4 edition is the ultimate guide for free and low cost camping across Australia, featuring verified free and budget

campers. You'll easily see whether a site is free or paid, with listings for national parks, state forests, showgrounds, pub stays, RV parks, stations, and farm stays, all clearly marked on maps. This streamlined edition includes only remote caravan parks and key outback roadhouses, ensuring you have the essentials. Each campsite listing provides all the details you need – including fishing, 4WD access, swimming, and whether there's a boat ramp. Plus, it now includes both the address and GPS coordinates. This edition is perfect for campers, caravanners, 4WD enthusiasts, and road trippers who prefer larger maps and a more user-friendly layout for trip planning and navigation. It's great for travellers who like to see campsite photos and want a guide that's easy to read. Best of all, it's designed to help you save money and travel further on the road, with a fold-out CAMPS symbol summary for quick reference.

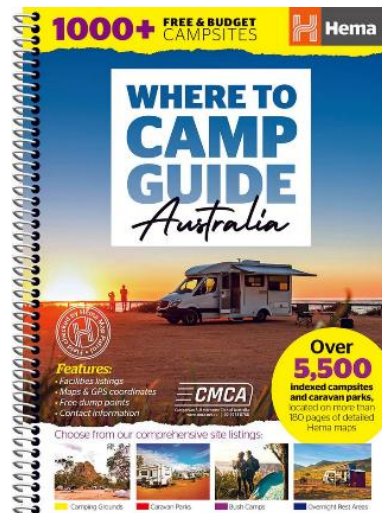


<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/camps-12-easy-read-edition/>

### ***Where to Camp Guide - \$34.95***

Your ultimate guide to hot springs, bore baths, and natural springs across Australia! With over 67 incredible locations to discover, this book will take you on a journey through soothing, mineral-rich waters from coast to coast. From the serene Hastings Caves and Thermal Springs in Tasmania to the healing waters of Innot Hot Springs in Far North Queensland, this guide covers every must-visit thermal destination. Whether you're venturing west to Perth, Monkey Mia, and El Questro, or exploring the south and east with Moree, Lightning Ridge, Boomi, and the Peninsula Hot Springs, you'll have all the details to plan the perfect hot springs adventure. This 7th Edition also dives into the fascinating history behind Australia's thermal springs, exploring the pioneering efforts and drilling techniques that tapped into these natural wonders. Designed for ease of use, the guide features a user-friendly layout, colour-coded sections, and numerical coding, making navigation a breeze. No matter your destination, this is the perfect travel companion for exploring Australia's most relaxing and rejuvenating natural escapes.

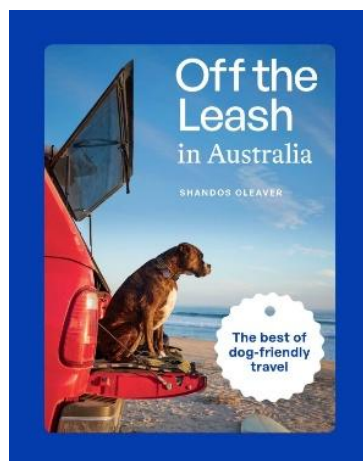




<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/where-to-camp-guide/>

### ***Off the Leash in Australia - \$37.95***

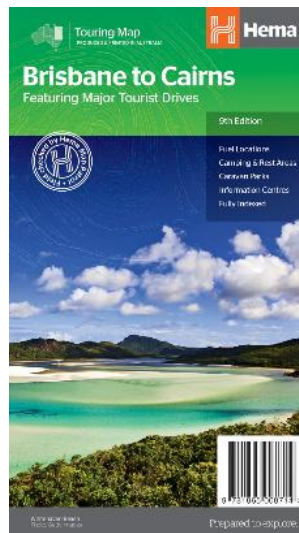
Off the Leash in Australia is the ultimate guide to dog-friendly travel across the country. Written by travel blogger Shandos Cleaver (@travelnuity), who has explored Australia extensively with her Miniature Dachshund, Schnitzel, this book is packed with practical advice for pet-friendly adventures. Planning a trip with your dog can be overwhelming, whether you're an experienced traveller or just getting started. This guidebook highlights the top destinations in each state, featuring recommendations for pet friendly accommodation, must see attractions, outdoor experiences, and unforgettable bucket list trips you can enjoy with your four legged companion.



<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/off-the-leash-australia/>

## ***Brisbane to Cairns Featuring Major Tourist Drives Map - \$15.95***

This Touring Map takes you on an epic journey from Brisbane to Cairns, with a detailed main map (1:1,500,000 scale) and an extra Tourist Drives map (1:3,000,000 scale) for even more adventure. Flip it over to find handy CBD maps of Brisbane and Cairns, plus region-specific touring tips for must-visit spots like the Sunshine Coast, Gympie to Bundaberg, Bundaberg to Gladstone, Mackay and The Whitsundays, Townsville, the Cassowary Coast, and Cairns.



<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/brisbane-cairns/>

## **Seasonal Updates**

Please be aware that road and park closures are constantly changing and it is always best to check for changes before you set out.

For more regular updates on closures, please check our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MeridianWestprintMaps> as we try to include warnings and advice as we become aware of them.

The latest Desert Parks Bulletin has been uploaded to our website. For this and other Desert Pass updates, please go to <https://meridianmaps.com.au/deserts-pass-update/>

### **Kati Thanda - Lake Eyre National Park, SA:**

Public Access Route 13 Halligan Bay Point – Closed for Public Safety Reasons, Public Access Route 2 Level Post Bay – Open to 4WD

### **Innaminka Regional Reserve & Malkumba Coongie Lakes National Park, SA:**

15 Mile Track – Open to 4WD  
Merninie Loop – Closed due to flood damage

Cullyamurra Waterhole – Closed due to flood damage  
Burke's Grave – Open to 4WD  
Queerbidie – Open to 4WD  
Policemans – Closed due to flood damage  
King's Marker Campground – Closed due to flood damage  
King's Marker Day Visitor Area – Open to 4WD  
Ski Beach Campground – Open to 4WD  
Wills Grave – Closed due to flood damage  
Minkie Waterhole Campground – Closed due to flood damage  
Coongie Track Innamincka to Kudriemitchie Campground – Open to 4WD  
Coongie Track Kudriemitchie Campground to Malkumba-Coongie Lakes Nat Park – Open to 4WD  
Old Strzelecki Track (on Innamincka Regional Reserve only) – Open to 4WD  
Bore Track North – Open to 4WD  
Bore Track South– Closed indefinitely  
Public Access Route Number 16 Walkers Crossing – Open to 4WD

**Witjira National Park, SA:** Tracks open to 4WD

**Munga-Thirri – Simpson Desert National Park, SA:** Tracks open to 4WD

**Kennedy Range National Park, WA:** Kennedy Loop Track is currently closed due to a bushfire in the area.

**Dirk Hartog Island National Park, WA:** Some sections of the access track along the beach to Louisa Bay campsites are damaged by storm surge erosion.

**Francois Peron National Park, WA:** The access track from the Francois Peron National Park entry station to the Peron Heritage Precinct is temporarily 4WD only - until road maintenance has occurred. It has temporarily become too sandy for 2WD access.

Many National parks in Queensland have scheduled re-openings in late March 2025 following ex-cyclone Alfred. Some have an extended closure period.

**D'Aguilar National Park, QLD:** Temporary closure due to Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. Anticipated re-opening Friday 11 April 2025.

**Bunyaville Conservation Park, QLD:** Mountain Bike Track Closures due to Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. Anticipated re-opening Friday 11 April 2025.

**Mapleton National Park, QLD:** Temporary closure as a result of severe weather damage. Anticipated re-opening Friday 11 April 2025.



**Palmer Goldfield Resources Reserve, QLD.** Wet season closure has been extended due to continued wet weather. Anticipated re-opening Friday 11 April 2025.

**Inskip Peninsula campsite M.V Natone, QLD:** Temporarily closed due to severe weather damage. Anticipated re-opening 15th of October 2025.

**Tasman National Park, TAS:** Three Capes Track will be closed from 28 April to 11 May 2025 for planned burn operations and annual maintenance.

**Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park, TAS:** The Overland Track between the Horse Track and Crater Lake will be closed until Monday 14 April 2025 for essential maintenance works.

At the time of writing, there was major flooding occurring along the Bulloo River to Quilpie. Roads around the south west were closed due to flooding. Check closures before travelling [qldtraffic.qld.gov.au/](http://qldtraffic.qld.gov.au/) . Winton shire has also closed many roads due to flooding or water over the road. The roads may be open again so please check the conditions at:  
<https://www.winton.qld.gov.au/downloads/download/55/road-conditions>

There were also road closures in far west NSW as a result of water over the road. These included:

The Cut Line (Tibooburra to Borrona Downs)  
The Cut Line (Borrona Downs to Wanaaring)  
Cameron Corner Rd (Tibooburra to Fortville Gate)  
Toona Gate Rd  
Wompah Gate Rd  
Narriearra Rd  
Waterbag Road  
Monolon to Borrona Downs Rd  
Gum Vale to Hewart Downs Rd

Check for changes to conditions before travelling: [www.livetraffic.com](http://www.livetraffic.com)

The Plenty Highway is closed between Harts Range and the QLD border due to flooding. Conditions can change rapidly. Motorists are advised to always check [roadreport.nt.gov.au](http://roadreport.nt.gov.au) before travel.

*Disclaimer: These events were correct at the time they were added to the Meridian Line; however, this may have been some time before the actual event. Please make your own enquiries before travelling to an event.*

## What's On

If you have an event which you would like to see included in the What's section, please send me the details at [rochelle@meridianmaps.com.au](mailto:rochelle@meridianmaps.com.au).

**April 5: Nungarin Vintage Rally and Search Light Party 2025** in Western Australia. Annual Vintage Rally in Nungarin where everything is vintage from the cars, trucks, tractors, army tanks and even your hosts! Stay on after dark to see what 800,000 candela looks like when we rev up the WWII Anti-aircraft Searchlight! It's a fully immersive event... the sound, smell and piercing beam of light breaks into the heavens and takes you back to the 1940's when these machines were used in Kings Park to keep lookout for enemy aircraft.

<https://www.australiasgoldenoutback.com/products/nungarin-vintage-rally-and-search-light-party>

**April 11 – 12: Dirranbandi Show & Campdraft** in Queensland. Horse, cattle and sheep competitions, fashion parades, entertainment, arts & crafts, cooking, preserves, floral arrangements, wool and cut flowers.

<https://www.dirranbandishow.com.au/>

**April 18: Black Opal Bull and Bronc Ride** in Lightning Ridge NSW. An action-packed night watching the Toughest Sport on Dirt! Black Opal Bull and Bronc Ride is fun for the whole family.

<https://www.facebook.com/lightningridgerodeo/>

**April 18 – 21: Beechworth Golden Horseshoes Festival** in Victoria. A weekend filled with a grand parade, family fun, bustling markets, and live entertainment. Admission is free!

<https://www.beechworthgoldenhorseshoes.com.au/>

**April 18 -21: Back O' Bourke Easter Festival** in Bourke, NSW. A whole bunch of fun, featuring wool bale rolling competition, colourful Easter Markets, and Easter Sunday Back O' Bourke Picnic Races and the colour run!

<https://www.visitbourke.com.au/products/back-o-bourke-easter-festival>

**April 19 – 21: Julia Creek Dirt n Dust Festival** in Queensland. Celebrate the spirit of the Queensland Outback with dirt, dust, sweat, beers, and tears. Warm up for our new DnD Adventure Race, scrub up for the Artesian Express Race Day and Fashions on the Field, and gear up for the nightly bull rides and live concerts.

<https://dirtndust.com/>

**April 19 – 21: Balonne Branch ASH Campdraft & Show** in Queensland. The Australian Stock Horse Society (ASH) conserves and promotes the Australian Stock Horse's bloodlines by organizing competitions, activities, and promoting the breed in the horse industry.

<https://www.stgeorgeregion.com.au/event/balonne-branch-ash-campdraft-show/#intro>

**April 25 – May 4: 2025 Bright Autumn Festival** in Victoria. A ten day celebration of the wonderful autumn colours and autumn produce of the valleys of Victoria's Alpine High Country. Key events of the festival are the Wandjina Festival, the Open Gardens, Historical Tours and the Autumn Art Exhibition at the Bright Art Gallery.

<https://www.brightautumnfestival.org.au/>

**May 3: Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Australia Swap Meet** in Cabramatta NSW. Once a year opportunity to make or save money on second hand 4WD parts and camping gear. Trade your unwanted parts and accessories for cash or just come along to pick up a bargain.

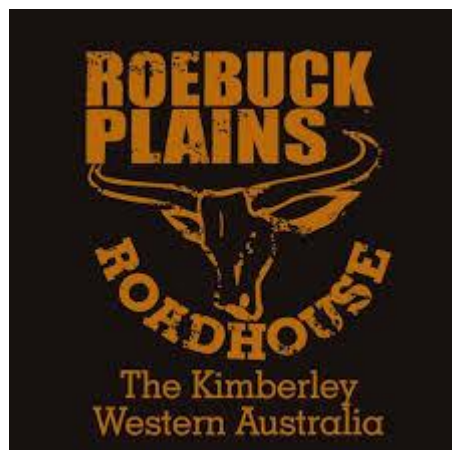
**Further information: Email: [bushman14@bigpond.com](mailto:bushman14@bigpond.com)**

### **Do you have a story?**

This edition, we continue the adventure sent in by Edward or as he signs off his adventures Wily Wanderer! This is the third instalment of his adventure and tracks from Broome to Kununurra in Western Australia.

#### **FORTY MILES OF BAD ROAD**

220 km of first class bitumen highway takes our two vehicle family group from beautiful Broome to Derby. A stop for lunch was in order at the Roebuck Roadhouse, which is owned by the Tanami Cattle Co. Here we eagerly devour fresh bread rolls and equally fresh prawns from Broome. A most enjoyable lunch.



Just outside Derby the Boab prison tree reminds us once again of the rough and ready pioneering past of this far flung area. It is a huge boab tree (commonly spelt 'boab' for ease of pronunciation), reportedly 1000 years old and with the huge bulk of the tree's bole hollow and split on two sides. One split a natural doorway, the other, higher up, a natural window. In the past it was here, in the hollow bole of this ancient tree, that prisoners were held over by the police, awaiting trial in nearby Derby. Up to twenty people were crammed in here at a time awaiting their turn for justice.



Those days are long gone and Derby now boasts all the facilities of a modern town. It is a port on King Sound, here broad shallow and muddy from the constant discharge from the mighty Fitzroy River which empties into the Sound, along with its load of sediments, which it carries in raging torrents all the way from the King Leopold Ranges in the Kimberley. Derby's port has seen its last commercial liner but the wharf facilities now cater for ore ships which are loaded here and carry the raw materials overseas for processing.



Derby, with its horseshoe shaped wharf, boasts the largest rise and fall of tides in Australia at 10.8 metres.



Our accommodation that night was a cabin which had its own 500 year old boab in the garden. These trees only grow in a relatively small area of the northwest. Of course, Africa is the home of the boab and it is unknown whether the seeds somehow travelled across to Australia a long time ago, or whether they are a remnant of a much older situation when all the continents were supposedly joined together. In this part of the world the word “prehistoric” takes on its true meaning.

Derby is the starting point on the western end of the Gibb River Road, originally formed as a stock route to bring cattle to market from the newly opened up grazing lands of the Kimberley. The route in recent years has been upgraded to cater for the more modern and expedient form of cattle transport – the road train. The whole region is now available to 4wd drivers but only the most very experienced should ever leave the main tracks. This is wild and rugged country. It is over 700 km from Derby to Wyndham and although nowadays a lot of cattle stations along the track have supplies available for travellers there are a lot of miles in between and a lot of rough going.

The Kimberley opens up to the traveller the wonders of Nature and the work she has done over the millions of years, apparently trying to erode the whole country flat.

After 120 kms of track a 20 km detour takes us to the first wonder – Windjana Gorge – and it sets the scene for the rest of the awe inspiring trip through the Kimberley. Here at Windjana the flow of water has carved a huge gorge through the 200 million year old granite rock of the Napier Range.





We walked the gorge. Once again we experienced that overbearing feeling of human insignificance. The now lazy waters during the dry season are home to many freshwater crocodiles, themselves a throwback to the dinosaur era, as they bask in the shallows between the towering walls of the gorge. The slow process of erosion has formed many caves and crevices in the rock walls, and, like much of Australia's natural formations, the late afternoon sun plays a colourful light show as the rocks reflect the luminance of the last rays of the day.

In this area the Napier Range rises as a huge escarpment directly from the plains and another 35 km along the length of the sheer rock walls brings us to a place called Tunnel Creek. Here the flow of water has eroded a tunnel, now at ground level, right through a narrow up-thrust of the range. Those adventurous enough can walk the tunnel, and I can tell you, it's exciting. It's 900 metres, which is only two par fives on a golf course, but it's a long way through that tunnel!



To enter the tunnel, you have to negotiate the boulder strewn entrance of the creek bed and once inside, a strong and reliable torch is essential. Sand and rocks on one side and water the other. At times we are waist deep in water, it's dark and we are well aware of the possible presence of freshwater crocodiles. Even if they don't eat humans, I'd hate to step on one.

All the way there is evidence of stalagmites and 'tites which have grown over the years and been broken by the surging waters and have grown again. About half way a cave-in has opened the roof and gives us a respite from the darkness but we push on into the gloom of the remainder of the tunnel. Emerging at the end of the tunnel and coming back into brilliant sunshine feels like entering a new world. There is a beautiful glen complete with rippling water over creek stones into a natural swimming hole with birds singing and dragon flies flitting at the surface.

A dip in the cool water is most pleasant and relaxing and after a short stay we re-entered the watery tunnel with the brevity of experience.

I sometimes wonder if my children's children will be able to have the same experience I had at Tunnel Creek. There are so many places I've been and seen in their natural state that are now barricaded off to the public. There are now directions, fences, ropes, footways, even "Keep off the grass" signs. Pictures of what's to be seen if only you were allowed to. Sometimes it only takes one slight injury to a person for the powers-that-be to declare an area off limits for the sake of the so-called safety of the masses. It's a complex problem.

I suppose they have to tread the compromise path between preservation and having a delicate ecology tramped under the feet of a tourist boom. A close



friend and intrepid traveller once said to me “If a bus can go there, forget it!” At the time I thought this was an overreaction, but after seeing many places myself I now know what he meant. It’s sad in a way that aware and environmentally conscious people have to conform to the same standards as the mass produced tourist who, rightly at times, must be kept on the other side of the fence.

Our National Parks and Wildlife Service does a terrific job in this country and they do have a mammoth task. This place is so big and the environment is so harsh and yet so delicate one wonders how much of it, if any, can be preserved in its natural state. Any single natural element of the environment usually relies on another, diverse and sometimes indistinct, for its own survival.

Enough of this! Suffice to say that I hope everyone who breaks new ground holds a healthy respect for its creation.

The Gibb River Road is like an artery through the Kimberley. For the first 400 km or so, there are track turn-offs on either side. The wonders of Nature abound. Some gorges and station homesteads are only metres from the road whilst others are miles. You could lose yourself comfortably for weeks in this place. The days are hot without being too hot and the nights are cool not cold. August is beautiful over here.

One gorge well worth a visit is Bell Gorge. Don’t be fooled by the name of the camping area some 5 km short of the gorge. It is called “Silent Grove”. By this time, we had camped for weeks as we went along and every morning we woke to the call of the inevitable crow. Silent Grove was the noisiest of all. There was a veritable cacophony of bird calls in the morning. We reckoned that every crow along our route from the east coast must have followed us to Silent Grove for a party!



The driving conditions along the Gibb River Road are quite reasonable, considering not long ago this was a stock route. When we reached the turn-off to Kalumburu it became obvious the road trains went to Broome and not Wyndham. From this intersection it is 300 odd km to Kalumburu in the north. From here north of the Gibb River Road and west, there are huge tracts of land never been set foot on by white man. A wild and rugged area larger than the land mass of Tasmania. We didn't travel the Kalumburu Road but I've heard it's pretty rough. But also, very rewarding if you're that way inclined and your vehicle can handle it.



As soon as we passed this intersection we fell into the worst corrugations I have ever seen. And there was miles of them. This is the sort of horror stretch for drivers and vehicles that people talk about. To generalise and say the Gibb River Road is rough does it an injustice. We were over half way along before we hit the rough stuff, and that's a lot of road.

This stretch of the road holds less for the sightseer but certainly demands more driving application. After some time, the corrugations fall behind somewhat, but there are more tests to come – river crossings. Dry but deep. The road lulls you into a safe 80 kph or so, then, comfortably sailing along, it suddenly drops away in front of you into a crossing. You are immediately riding the ruts on the way down and hauling off enough speed without sliding, to navigate the bottom of the dip with safety. A couple of these beauties needed first gear to walk over the boulders as the road surface changed into river bed for a while ..... if something busts, you're a long way from a garage.

Welcome to Jack's Waterhole. Now, "waterhole" in this instance is misleading. Jacks is a stretch of permanent water in the Durack River, hundreds of metres across and kilometres long. A beautiful sight to behold. Acres and acres of clear blue fresh water with a backdrop of rugged cliff face. This was a great place for a camp. If you ever travel the Gibb River Road this place is a must. This was also the place where we found that a scorpion had crawled into one of our towels while we were having a dip. Another reminder that Nature is never very far away.



Leaving Jacks Waterhole, the road traverses close along the New York Range and the scenery is quite exhilarating. Here we climbed a craggy escarpment – in the vehicles – and took in a vista where far to the north was the confluence of the Durack and Pentecost Rivers. We imagined we could see all the way to Wyndham. Later we crossed the Pentecost River and were aware now that we were coming into salt water crocodile country. The water might still be fresh but that doesn't worry the salties ..... and they're the ones to stay away from. The swim in the Pentecost was a short one!

Then we strike the turn to El Questro Station. Now we had all heard about El Questro and even seen documentaries on the place. It's an interesting story and the owner must be envied by many, me included. El Questro has everything. Permanent water, gorges, palm groves, grazing country, escarpments, you name it! The station welcomes everyone and caters for everyone, from the pauper to the prosperous, from camping to four star --- all are welcome to share in the natural beauty of the area. It was here we swam in the cool river under shady palm trees, indulged in cold beer from the canteen and even patted a roaming camel



El Questro is our last stopover on the Gibb River Road. 33km from the turn-off we will hit bitumen again and when we cross the King River we know we're getting close. The bitumen comes into view and we know we have done the Gibb River Road. Oh! To go back and do it again! I hope I will one day.

The memories and sights along that road are etched into my brain. There was so much! Can I possibly ever recall all of it? I have travelled many places in Australia but that track through the Kimberley beats them all. I have never seen such a diverse array of ruggedness and beauty. Every visitor to the Kimberley must be moved by the remoteness, the vastness, the natural splendour and the ancient majesty of this mysterious area of Australia's north west.

We had travelled through this area in modern 4wd vehicles and seen the remnants of ranges from five different geological eras. Hundreds of millions of years old and still defying the ravages of nature to wear them down. This place will still be the same in hundreds of millions of years from now. Whether or not humans will still be around I know not.



Left on the bitumen leads to Wyndham, 50 km away and Western Australia's northern most port on the Cambridge Gulf ..... but we turn right and head for Kununurra.

If you've got a trip or tips to share, we'd love to hear from you - [rochelle@meridianmaps.com.au](mailto:rochelle@meridianmaps.com.au) .

## Meridian Mirth

Thank you to Rob, Vince and Simon for sending in these jokes. Hope they were able to bring a smile to your face. To share your jokes, please send them to [rochelle@meridianmaps.com.au](mailto:rochelle@meridianmaps.com.au).

Dana Perino (FOX News) describing an interview she recently had with a Navy SEAL. After discussing all the countries that he had been sent to, she asked if they had to learn several languages?

"Oh, no ma'am. We don't go there to talk."

A little girl goes to a pet shop. She says:

"I'd like to have a fwuffy bunny wabbit, pwease."

The clerk looks at her, condescendingly, and says:

"A bwown fwuffy bunny wabbit, ow a bwack fwuffy bunny wabbit?"

The girl replies:

"Do you weally fink my pyfon minds?"



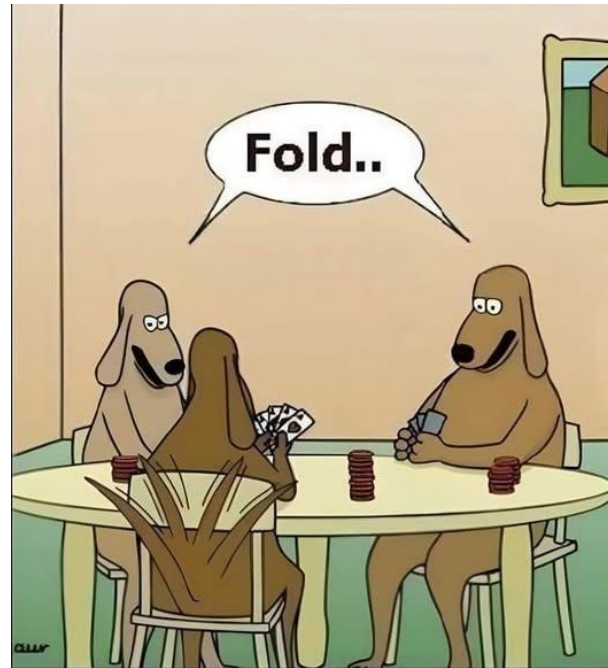
"Hold still! I have to get a photo to show you were delivered."



"The instructions say we have to soak the spare tire in warm water for two hours until it swells to its usable size."



... and that is **WHY** the chicken crossed the road.



Writing Home From Kapooka Army Camp

Dear Mum & Dad,

I am well. Hope you are. Tell me big brothers Doug and Phil the Army is better than working on the farm - tell them to get into the Army quick before the jobs are all gone.

I was a bit slow in settling down at first, because you don't get outta bed until 6am. I like sleeping in now, but all you do before brekky is make ya bed and shine your boots and clean your uniform. No cows to milk, no calves to feed, no feed to stack-nothing.

Men must shave, but it's not so bad, coz there's hot water and a light to see what ya doing.

Breakfast has cereal, fruit and eggs but there's no kangaroo steaks or possum stew. You don't get fed again until noon, and by that time all the city boys are buggered because we've been on a 'root march' just like walking to the windmill in the back paddock.

This will kill Doug and Phil with laughter. I keep getting medals for shooting - dunno why. The bullseye is as big as a bloody possum's head and it doesn't move and it's not firing back at ya like the Johnsons did when our bull got their cow pregnant before the Easter Show. Alls ya gotta do is make yourself comfortable and hit the target - piece of cake. You don't even load your own cartridges - they comes in boxes and ya don't have to steady yourself against the rollbar of the roo shooting truck when you reload.

Then ya gotta wrestle with the city boys and I gotta be real careful coz they break easy - it's not like fighting with Doug and Phil and Jack and Boori and Steve all at once like we do.

Turns out I'm not a bad boxer either and it looks like I'm the best the platoon's got, and I've only been beaten by this guy from 5RAR - he's 6 foot 8 and 13 stone and I'm 5 foot six and seven stone, but I fought to the end.

I can't complain about the Army - tell the boys to get in quick before word gets around how good it is.

Your loving daughter, Sally

(to be read in an Irish accent!)

Paddy and Mick worked together in St. John's and both were laid off, so they went to the unemployment office.

When asked his occupation, Paddy answered, "Panty Stitcher. I sew the elastic onto ladies cotton panties and thongs."

The clerk looked up panty stitcher on his computer and finding it classified as unskilled labour, he gave him \$80 a week unemployment pay.

Mick was next and when asked his occupation replied, "Diesel fitter."

Since diesel fitter was a skilled job, the clerk gave Mick \$160 a week.

When Paddy found out he was furious. He stormed back into the office to find out why his friend and co-worker was collecting double his pay. The clerk explained, "Panty Stitchers are unskilled and Diesel Fitters are skilled labour."

"What skill?" yelled Paddy. "I sew the elastic on the panties and the thongs. Mick puts them over his head and says: "Yep, diesel fitter!"

On the first day, God created the dog and said, "Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. For this, I will give you a life span of twenty years."

The dog said, "That's a long time to be barking. How about only ten years and I'll give you back the other ten?"

And God saw it was good.

On the second day, God created the monkey and said, "Entertain people, do tricks, and make them laugh. For this, I'll give you a twenty-year life span."

The monkey said, "Monkey tricks for twenty years? That's a pretty long time to perform. How about I give you back ten like the dog did?"

And God, again saw it was good.

On the third day, God created the cow and said, "You must go into the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer's family. For this, I will give you a life span of sixty years."

The cow said, "That's kind of a tough life you want me to live for sixty years. How about twenty and I'll give back the other forty?"

And God agreed it was good.

On the fourth day, God created humans and said, "Eat, sleep, play, marry and enjoy your life. For this, I'll give you twenty years."

But the human said, "Only twenty years? Could you possibly give me my twenty, the forty the cow gave back, the ten the monkey gave back, and the ten the dog gave back; that makes eighty, okay?"

"Okay," said God, "You asked for it."

So that's why for our first twenty years, we eat, sleep, play and enjoy ourselves. For the next forty years, we slave in the sun to support our family. For the next ten years, we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren. And for the last ten years, we sit on the front porch and bark at everyone...

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