

The Meridian Line - Sunday 31.01.2026

“Live in the sunshine, swim in the sea, drink the wild air.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson



Focus on Five

The Grampians (Gariwerd) Touring Map – from \$15.95

Experience the Grampians region with Meridian Maps' detailed 1:100,000 scale map. Designed for four-wheel drive travellers, touring motorists and holiday-makers, the map highlights a wide range of visitor experiences and key features across the region. It includes the Grampians Way Touring Route, public Indigenous art locations, wineries, rock-climbing areas, camping areas, fishing and hiking locations, picnic grounds and major visitor attractions, all clearly marked on a single map. An extensive network of walking tracks is also shown, including the Grampians Peaks Trail, providing a practical guide to the region's landscapes and recreational opportunities.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/the-grampians-touring-map/>

Big Lap Questions Answered – \$44.95

Big Lap Questions: Answered is a practical, experience-based guidebook designed to help Australian travellers prepare for life on the road. Created by the team behind *The Big Lap Bible*, this 290-page, full-colour book responds to more than 300 real questions asked by travellers from across the country.

Topics range from choosing and setting up a caravan or 4WD to budgeting, finding camps and managing the day-to-day realities of long-term travel.

Rather than focusing on inspiration alone, *Big Lap Questions: Answered* delivers clear, achievable advice grounded in real-world experience. Each section addresses the practical — and sometimes challenging — aspects of travelling full-time, offering straightforward answers, useful tips and insights from people who have completed, or are currently undertaking, their Lap. The book is organised into nine colour-coded chapters that follow the natural progression of a Lap journey, from early planning and selecting the right setup through to life on the road and returning home. It is designed to be easy to navigate and reference, whether used during the planning stages or while travelling. The strength of *Big Lap Questions: Answered* lies in the voices of the travellers who contributed to it. Content is shaped by interviews with a wide cross-section of people, including young families, solo travellers, retirees and off-grid adventurers. Their stories, quotes and practical lists add depth and authenticity, sharing what worked, what didn't, and what they would do differently. Used alongside *The Big Lap Bible*, (<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/big-lap-bible/>) the two books form a complementary resource. *Big Lap Questions: Answered* focuses on how to plan, prepare and solve problems throughout the journey, while *The Big Lap Bible* provides guidance on routes, destinations and camps once travellers are on the road.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/big-lap-questions-answered/>

Nullarbor Plain Tourist Map - from \$9.95

Travel one of Australia's most iconic journeys with this illustrated map of the Nullarbor Plain, covering the route from Adelaide to Perth. Published by Carto Graphics, this double-sided, folded map provides detailed road information and informative notes along the way, making it a practical companion for travelling across the vast Nullarbor.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/nullabor-plain-tourist-map/>

The Six Foot Track - \$22.95

The Six Foot Track is one of Australia's classic long-distance walks. Located in the World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains, this 44-kilometre journey challenges walkers with dramatic escarpments, broad river crossings and long stretches of remote bushland. This second edition is presented in a delightfully quirky and original format. One half of the book provides walking directions from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves; turn it upside down and the directions run from Jenolan Caves back to Katoomba. Navigation and trip planning are straightforward, with full-colour maps and detailed walk statistics covering distance, total ascent and descent, walk grades and estimated times. Along

the way, the book delves into the region's flora and fauna, local history and key points of interest. Learn about the construction of the suspension bridge over the Coxs River, explore activities around Jenolan Caves, and uncover the stories of the people who built the track more than a century ago. Full-colour photography highlights many of the walk's standout features. The Six Foot Track can be tackled in a single-day marathon, completed as a demanding two-day hike, or enjoyed as a more relaxed three-day walk. This guide outlines the logistics for all three options, including accommodation along the route, public transport at each end, and what to carry to ensure a safe and comfortable journey.

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

Bairnsdale Dargo Omeo Adventure Map – \$16.95

This third edition Rooftop Map covers a broad area of East Gippsland, extending from Paynesville, Metung and Lakes Entrance in the south to Dinner Plain, Omeo and Mount Nugong in the north. The map includes Dargo, Mitchell River National Park, Swifts Creek, Cobungra, Victoria Falls, Cassilis, Deptford, Bullumwaal, Mount Baldhead and Haunted Stream, along with extensive forest areas throughout the region. Key towns shown include Bairnsdale, Metung, Paynesville, Swan Reach and Nicholson. A key feature is the East Gippsland Rail Trail, mapped from Bairnsdale to Colquhoun, south-east of Bruthen. The main map is produced at a scale of 1:100,000. On the reverse is a 1:50,000 scale enlargement titled Dargo – Swifts Creek Forest Activities Map, which includes contour information and highlights locations such as Haunted Stream, the Cassilis Historic Area, Marthavale Hut, the Angora Range, Wentworth Falls, Mount Baldhead and Jones Road. All national parks, reserves and state forests are shown, with more than 6,000 kilometres of roads and tracks plotted using GPS mapping technology.

<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/bairnsdale-dargo-rooftop/>

Meridian Musings

From bushfires to flash flooding, we've been facing some of nature's most extreme challenges. Before you travel, please make sure to check current alerts and follow all official advice.

In a letter received from Bill, he expressed hope that the worst of the fires was behind us. However, with temperatures forecast to approach 50 degrees in parts of Victoria this week and bushfires still burning out of control, this may not be the case. Please take care of yourselves, your families, friends, neighbours and communities, and travel safely.

“My heart goes out to all those hundreds of people who have been through the terrible fires you have been and still are experiencing in Victoria. I personally

know how it is as I was burnt out and nearly lost my life defending my infrastructure (and saving most) in a 2019 Darling Downs Queensland wildfire.

Could not believe my eyes today when I turned on the TV news in time to see a car being washed down a river into the ocean in Victoria after flooding rains and a flash flood. Hope the fire effected areas received some of that rain!!!

Good luck and I hope the worst is over.”

To those heading back to school or about to start school have a wonderful year ahead and remember it is not quite 70 days until the Easter break!

What's New to the Website

Australia Scratch Map - \$79.95

The Australia Scratch Map is a fun and interactive way to plan trips and record your travels across the country. Created in response to popular demand from Hema customers, this all-new map lets you scratch off the places you've visited to reveal a detailed representation of Australia at a scale of 1:6,500,000. It features national parks, Aboriginal land, highways and major roads, rivers and lakes, deserts, and more, making it an engaging tool to explore and learn about Australia's geography. The map is perfect for visually tracking your adventures while also inspiring ideas for future journeys. Each map comes complete with a protective plastic sleeve and a scratch tool for easy use.



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

Tali Karng-Moroka – from \$16.95

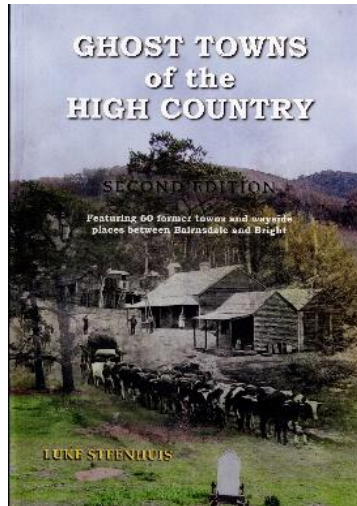
This Spatial Vision guide features a detailed 1:50,000 scale map of the region, highlighting key locations including Dargo and Licola. It covers historic gold mining towns such as Grant and Talbotville, popular walking trails like McMillans Track and a section of the Bicentennial National Trail, as well as stunning bushwalking destinations including Moroka Gorge, Lake Tali Karng, and The Crinoline.



<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/tali-karng-moroka/>

Ghost towns of the High Country – Luke Steenhuis - \$50.00

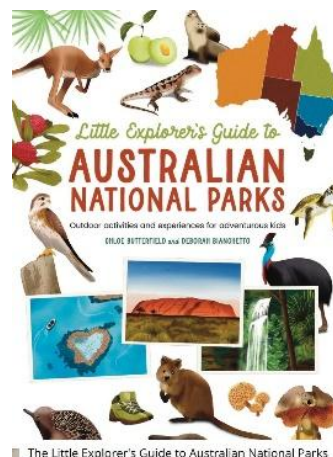
The updated and expanded **2nd edition of *Ghost Towns of the High Country*** by Luke Steenhuis describes more than sixty former towns and wayside settlements. With the exception of the historic Blue Duck Hotel at Anglers Rest, these are all locations that once hosted businesses during the goldfields boom-and-bust era between the 1850s and 1950s. Some are now quiet or abandoned mountain localities, where only fading traces of the past remain, while others have disappeared entirely from modern maps. This edition builds on the first, incorporating newly available information and public records from the internet to expand and enrich the stories of these places. Coverage focuses on the Victorian Alpine region, spanning from Bairnsdale in Gippsland to Bright in North-Eastern Victoria.



<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/ghost-towns-high-country/>

Little Explorer's Guide to Australian National Parks - \$24.99

The perfect book for young wildlife enthusiasts, this guide takes you on a journey through Australia's most incredible wild places—from lush rainforests and vibrant reefs to towering mountains and arid deserts. Step outside and discover adventure in nature! Australia is home to 230 species of frogs, 386 mammals, 917 reptiles, 828 birds, 5,000 fish, and countless invertebrates—and the list keeps growing. Are you ready to explore? Filled with lifelike illustrations, detailed maps, fun activities, and fascinating animal facts, this book is the ideal companion for beginning your journey into the wild—and into discovering yourself. Both fun and educational, it highlights 18 of Australia's top national parks, including Daintree, Whitsunday Islands, K'Gari, Blue Mountains, Kosciuszko, Mungo, Wilsons Promontory, Freycinet, Cradle Mountain, Great Otway, Grampians, Flinders Chase, Ikara Flinders Ranges, Walpole Nornalup, Cape Range, Purnululu, Uluru-Kata Tjuta, and Kakadu. Packed with quizzes, puzzles, activities, and ranger tips, it's designed to inspire curiosity and help young explorers make the most of every visit.



<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/little-explorer-aust-nat-parks/>

Simon's Monthly Spotlight

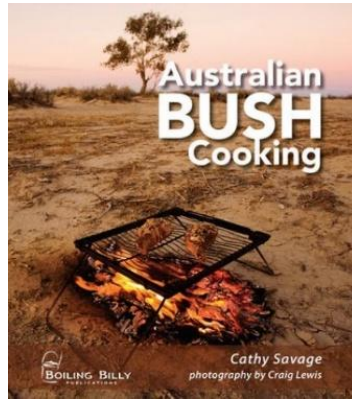
Let me tell you — cooking is not my favourite activity. In fact, I usually do my best to avoid it and it has worked up until now. We have decided that I should try and cook dinner once a week. We have a number of cookbooks on our shelves so why not start with one of those. If they are designed to be cooked whilst on the road, the equipment needed and complexity of the recipes shouldn't be too complex.

I decided to start with *Australian Bush Cooking* by Cathy Savage. The recipes can be cooked over an open fire or easily prepared on a barbecue or standard stove, whether in a caravan or a home kitchen. Cathy has refined these recipes over more than 20 years of travelling around Australia with full-colour photographs which I find to be a helpful source of inspiration.

In flicking through the book, I decided to try *Quick and Easy Tuna Mornay*. I found the recipe easy to follow, with relatively few ingredients, most of which were already pantry staples in our house. Perfect for a novice cook or for someone on the road with a limited pantry or kitchen paraphernalia. The tips included throughout were genuinely useful. In this case, I followed the suggestion to mix the pasta through the sauce, top the mornay with cheese, and bake it in the oven until golden brown.



The end result was delicious and I feel confident that I can put this in my repertoire of dishes that I can cook.



<https://meridianmaps.com.au/product/australian-bush-cooking/>

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/3>

The Department of Infrastructure and transport in South Australia have a website that details their outback unsealed roads grading program which advises on the repairing and reconstruction of unsealed roads in the Outback that are affected by traffic and weather events. To access this information, please visit their website:

<https://www.dit.sa.gov.au/infrastructure/projects/statewide-road-improvement-and-renewal-works/outback-unsealed-roads-grading-program>.

Road and park closures in Victoria are constantly changing due to existing bushfires and the threats of bushfires. Please follow any directions given in relation to these closures. If you do not need to be in these areas, please avoid them.

Before you travel, please check the emergency websites for up to date information: <https://emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/>

Due to escalated fire risk, the Great Otway National Park is closed.

Alpine National Park – closed north of Briagolong, east of Arbuckle Junction including Mount Howitt to Wabonga and south of Abbeyard, west of the Great

Alpine Road and to the west of Dargo – due to the Dargo Wonnangatta complex fires in the area. Closed east of Mt Buller, South of Mt Buffalo and West of Mt Hotham – due to the Dargo Wonnangatta complex fires in the area.

Munga-Thirri Simpson Desert NP and Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre NP, PAR No 15 K1 Warburton, PAR No 16 Walkers Crossing, PAR No 2 Level Post Bay and PAR No 13 Halligan Bay Point are closed from 1 December 2025, re-opening 16 March 2026.

Significant falls of rain and flooding in the far north have resulted in the full closures of Innamincka and Malkumba – Coongie Lakes National Parks

Daintree National Park – Upcoming wet season closure – Manjal Jimalji (Devil's Thumb) trail is closing for the wet season – 26 Jan – 1 April.

Diamantina National Park – temporary closure due to severe weather impacts and continued wet weather conditions. Expected to reopen 20 February.

Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park - The following four locations are closed seasonally to protect nesting birds.

Closed until 1 March 2026:

- Woody Island on Low Islets Reef
- The beach adjoining Taylor Cay on Taylor Reef
- The beach adjoining Sisters Island on South Barnard Islands

Closed until 1 April 2026:

- The beach adjoining Eagle Island at Eyrie Reef

During the closure period, access to these locations and airspace up to 500ft above the ground or water is prohibited unless authorised.

Birdsville Inside Track and Birdsville Track – Cooper Creek Causeway are closed until further notice

Strzelecki Track - Della/Dullingari Rd junction to Moomba – currently closed.

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

6 – 8 February - Gnoo Blas Classic in Orange, NSW. An annual three-day event to be held on the second weekend in Orange for enthusiasts and like-minded supporters of Classic Vehicle of all makes and models.

<https://gnooblas.com/2026-gnoo-blas-classic/>

6 – 8 February – National Multicultural Festival in Canberra. Three days of music, dance, food and culture.

<https://multiculturalfestival.com.au/>

14 February – Lunar New Year Festival at Bendigo Chinese Precinct in Bendigo. Celebrate Lunar New Year with multi-cultural food and entertainment at this free-to-enter family event

<https://bendigochinese.org.au/events/>

15 February – Victorian 4WD Show in Warragul. explore the exhibit of products such as 4WD accessories, vehicle modifications, camping gear, off-road camper trailers, fishing equipment, and much more..

<https://lardnerpark.com.au/event/victorian-4wd-show/>

21 February – Gulgong Show – in NSW. Competitions for horses, cattle, sheep, poultry, cooking, art, vehicle show, photography, the dog show and much more.

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

21 February - Undalup Bunuru Festival in Western Australia. A celebration of the South West's rich Aboriginal cultural heritage designed with children and families in mind, the festival offers a packed program of live music, workshops, kids activities, food trucks and stalls.

<https://www.margaretriver.com/event/undalup-bunuru-festival/>

21 – 22 February - 2026 Evandale National Penny Farthing Championships in Tasmania. A program of Penny Farthing bicycle racing featuring the National Penny Farthing Championship. Food trucks, entertainment and exhilaration from those miraculous riders!

<https://evandalevillagefair.com/>

Do you have a story?

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

I love reading Wily Wanderer's road trips and although this one almost finished before it started!! Sounds like it was an amazing trip once the new alternator was on board!

A FEW DAYS AWAY - JULY 2015

Once again I get the opportunity to go away for a few days. The wife is off to Sydney to help out with grandchildren minding duties for the first week of the

school holidays and I'm up to date with the work around the house. I phone up my old mate in Sydney. He's won the battle with cancer a few years back and is keen to get out and have a look about the country. "Where will we go?" he asks. Well, I've been most places and he's hardly been anywhere, so thinking on the back foot I say "What about the Pub With No Beer? I think there might have been a delivery since Slim was there. We'll sit in the pub, roll out the maps and decide where we're going to go." Okay. The only problem I can see is that if we sit in the pub and roll out the maps we might not go anywhere!

So my mate drives his bright red Holden SS up the expressway again and we pack up the camper trailer ready to go. This camper is different to the one we used before. It's smaller and easier to handle. In fact, it folds up so easily that it nearly ate me! My mate has visited his sister in Tinonee, parked and secured the SS and organised and packed up the camper and it is after midday before we get away. We won't go straight to the pub now because I don't know if we can camp there and we'll probably have a couple of beers. I head for Boulton's Crossing, a camp site I know of on Warrel Creek, east of Macksville. I camped there years ago and there's a toilet block and town water. We always carry our own firewood anyway.

The weather is deteriorating and as soon as we get camp set up it starts to drizzle. We got the fire going but the rain half quenched it so we put the plate over it for protection. It turned out to be a good cooking temperature with half doused fire one side and spitting sprinkle on the other. We were just tucking into dinner when out of the dark this lovely lady shows up. We thought we had a dinner guest but all she wanted was to separate each of us from \$6 for the camping fee. It was a cold, wet and miserable night and we hit the sack early, At least the camper didn't leak.

Up early on a sunny morning (before the sun). The rain had gone but everything was wet and when the sun finally poked through our site was shaded by tall trees. But all is well. We pack up our gear and hook the 'Cruiser up to the trailer and take off. But Whoops!! Why are all the warning lights on on the dashboard?? We check what fuses we can but can find nothing wrong. Everything is functioning – especially the warning lights! There's nothing else for it but to head into Macksville and find an auto electrician. The bloke at the servo says "Yeah mate! A couple of clicks south of town in the industrial area". Great. When we finally get there he tells us in no time at all that the alternator has packed it in. "You wouldn't have one on the shelf would you mate?" I didn't really think so. Then, the two blokes working the shop spent over half an hour searching the internet and catalogue books for the right one. (Why do they make so many different types?) Finally they get the info. There's one in Brisbane and there's one in Dubbo. Ouch! I suppose this is one of the problems of driving an old vehicle. But why did it have to choose this week to chuck it in? So we can get the one down from Brisbane overnight. It'll be here about midday tomorrow.

It looks like we're staying over. We can't go too far as my Landcruiser's a petrol motor and without the alternator we're relying solely on the battery for all the functions. But we reckon we'll make out to Boulton's Crossing and back again in the morning . We get back to the very spot we vacated in the morning and set up again. It's overcast again and night comes in early. We're early to bed again and snoring when there's this scratching at the canvas door. Then a female voice. It's the \$6 lady again. We'd told her last night we were only staying one night so she thinks she's caught us out. And she's not going away. I'm staying in bed. I'm warm and comfortable. I'm not getting out of bed on a cold night in my undies to give money away! But my mate drags himself out. We haven't got twelve dollars in the camper. He's got to get dressed, find the keys, open the car, find the money, pay the nice lady.... I call out to make sure he gets a receipt. He's very polite to the lady, under the circumstances, but certainly not to me ! What are mates for ? ?

Back we go to the industrial area and the workshop where we drop the trailer off in the carpark in anticipation and settle down to await the courier from Brisbane. We spend some time chatting to some locals. One young fellow from a town up the track was expounding the virtues of his latest purchase. A brand new twelve year old Subaru. I'm glad he was happy with it. It even came with a spare bottle of oil in the boot!

The courier arrives and I put the 'Cruiser in the workshop. We've only got 30 clicks to go to get to the Pub With No Beer at Taylors Arm. But alas. The look on the electrician's face tells us something is wrong. The alternator don't fit. We've discovered the right one at Coffs Harbour, but we've just missed the courier. It will be here around midday tomorrow. Great! Now we're not going anywhere. There's a grassed area alongside the workshop and we manhandle the trailer over there and set up for a nights camp in the industrial area of Macksville. This is definitely not where we planned to camp when we left home and three nights at Macksville is eating into our time away. Three days and we still haven't got to the pub !

The alternator arrived the next day and these blokes had it in and going in ten minutes. They were great. Considering that we just blew in off the street with a problem, they went out of their way to get us going again. They didn't know us from Adam but they were polite and professional and we both appreciated their honest and forthright approach to our problem.

Finally we leave Macksville and head for Taylors Arm and the Pub With No Beer.



But we are disappointed. It's about 11.30am and there is no atmosphere. No country music blaring. I'm really not sure what I expected but we took in all the memorabilia on display and read lots of interesting stories of Slim Dusty and Gordon Parsons, (whom incidentally, my mate had met years ago having a beer in Como hotel). After a couple of lovely schooners and lunch we left Taylors Arm for Bowraville. But the Bowraville/Bellingen road was closed by landslides and we returned to the highway and headed north to the Waterfall Way

Then there was Bellingen. The town was jumping. People everywhere, and a traffic snarl. We've just arrived on a Friday afternoon in a town that's hosting a music festival. The showground where we had planned to camp was already half full of campers. On show it seemed, was every different type of camping apparatus known to man. From pup tents to fifth wheelers. We had come to the showground via the side gate and so had not paid any fees. We really didn't mind but the ablution block was protected from the likes of us by a numerical key pad. No problem. A friendly hippy camper happily trotted out the code for us, 6492. Presto. So it was a big night in town and the next morning it was full of happy people again. All the shops were open and food and coffee were being served up by the bucket load.

But we had to move on. Just before Dorrigo we turned right into the New England National Park. This is a 'must see'. Perched atop the Ebor Escarpment is a beautiful tourist stop, complete with souvenir shop, local history, coffee shop and a TREE TOP WALK! Sticking out from the very edge of the escarpment this timber walkway juts out about fifty metres straight out over the tree tops. From the end of the walk you can look out over miles of hills and valleys all filled with natural forests. On a good day you can see all the way to the coast.

We hit Dorrigo and ducked just out of town to the Dangar Falls, then talked to the lady at the tourist information centre and picked up some good local maps, pushed on to Ebor and through town to the Ebor Falls. It was while we were at

the falls that the afternoon chill started to set in. We realised that all day we had been going uphill. All the way from the Pacific Highway the road had been climbing. How high are we here? How cold is it going to get tonight? So with the combined wisdom of our years we backtracked to that hotel/motel we saw in Ebor.



Ebor Falls

Saturday afternoon and we were the only ones in the place. It was all one building. Hotel with bar and the inevitable pool table at one end and motel rooms at the other. It sported a wood fire and a publican. We organised a beer, a room a feed and a breakfast in that order, parked the car and camper around the back and settled in. We got the impression the publican would rather read his paper so we left him to it but had some company later when three carloads of people pulled into the pub. They had all been to the music festival and were on their way home to Tingha. In typical country style, it's freezing outside and they're wandering around in shorts and t-shirts! Just as well cars have heaters. They refreshed themselves and were on their way.

Our room was sufficiently warmed by a small instant gas heater, but whilst the air was warm you daren't touch the open brickwork of the feature walls. And in the morning everything was totally white with a heavy frost. I'm glad I had the presence of mind the night before to pull the wipers forward and off the windscreen.

We had brekky and warmed the old girl up. From here we were going bush, armed with the maps from Dorrigo. Our first look-see was Cathedral Rock National Park. Lots of forest and granite boulders, but, interestingly enough, it is the highest point in NSW north of the alps! How about that?



Back on the other side of Waterfall Way we were looking for Point Lookout. We found it after 20-odd kilometres of well-maintained dirt road and good signposting by National Parks and Wildlife. It is a breathtaking view. High on the edge of the Ebor escarpment with the sandstone cliffs falling away at our feet we look out over a vast area of heavily timbered hills and valleys almost as far as you can see, and the whole area is shrouded in that misty blue haze of the Australian eucalypt. For anyone travelling in the area it is well worth the diversion just to come and gaze at this great vista.

Tearing ourselves away from Point Lookout we are now keen to have a look from another spot further down our track – we are planning to head south on this forest road and intersect with the Armidale/Kempsey road and make our way back to the coast, having shortened our trip with an overly lengthy stay in downtown Macksville - Here we come across a fork in the road and I immediately take the left fork. After all, we're looking for a lookout and it's going to look out to the east. But alas. After a couple of hundred metres the track starts to drop. And drop. It's too narrow to turn around and we are going down the face of the cliff at a very steep angle. It was a brave man who sat the bulldozer to cut this road out! We finally found a spot where we could shove the trailer out over the edge and back and fill with the bullbar into the cliff face, jack-knifing her until we got the nose uphill. It was then we realised the true steepness of our descent. We went up a long way in first gear. She wouldn't even hold second.

Back to the fork in the road and only one click down the track we come to the second lookout, only thirty metres off the road. It became obvious while standing there looking out over that magnificent view that where we were previously was right below our feet now. On a signboard map is shown an area not taken over by the National Park. I reckon our road down the cliff face was the access track to this piece of freehold land at the bottom of the escarpment. A long way down and an awful long way back up again!

We leave the hidden valleys, which I suspect are the watershed of the Bellinger River, and head along Forest Way to intersect the mountain road about 70km out from Armidale. This is another way to cross the mountains although it is dirt and very winding. Because of this it is a very long drive. But the roads are in pretty good condition considering the terrain and I think they might be kept up to scratch to accommodate the logging trucks.

After a long drive down the mountains, with a lunch stop at a beautiful grassy spot overlooking a running creek, and a mandatory stop at Bellbrook pub, we finally got to Kempsey, albeit too late to watch the footy on TV. We settle into a motel and the owner, with typical country hospitality, gives us a lift into town to the RSL where we have dinner overlooking the water. The Macleay River.

We are now only an hour and a half from home but we're not going straight there. First to Crescent Head where we take in the headland sights and partake of coffee and cake on the footpath at the local café and meeting place. Then it's down the track of the Maria River which drains all the flat land between Crescent Head, Telegraph Point and Port Macquarie. Through here we pass acres and acres of tea tree plantations, (melaleuca) obviously harvested for tea tree oil. Soon we are looking straight at a beautiful waterway. It's the Hastings River just upstream from Port Macquarie, and there's a vehicular ferry to take us across. Although the driver takes ten dollars for the privilege!

Back down the highway we come and turn off at Moorland. After seeing the Ebor escarpment I'm starting to think of our own Lansdowne escarpment with renewed interest and am heading for Vincents Lookout. We stop here at the lookout and have a lunch beside the radio towers whilst gazing out to Taree and beyond and Harrington on the coast. You can almost see my place from here. Having said that, we'd better get down there.

Working down through the scrub to the Coopernook road and towards Lansdowne we can look back up at where we were atop the sandstone cliffs. It crosses my mind that this 35km almost circular depression, edged by the Lansdowne escarpment, is thought to be the caldera of an ancient giant volcano. Another line of thought considers it could also be the crater of a meteor strike a very long time ago.

We'll probably never know. I'll just continue to live here and enjoy the ambience.

Well we have concluded another uneventful, eventful sojourn into a small part of our giant backyard. It comes to me that you don't have to go very far, or for very long to find interesting places and interesting people.

Having said that, before the SS heads off south for the Big Smoke, there is certain talk of heading off up the Cape...

Wily Wanderer

Meridian Mirth

To share your jokes, please send them to rochelle@meridianmaps.com.au. Many thanks to Rob, Paul and Vince for their contributions!



An Irishman goes to a building site in London and asks the foreman if he can have a job. "Are you Irish?", said the foreman. "Well sor, that I am", replied the Irishman. "Well", said the foreman, "I don't want no more Irish on this site, because they don't know nuffink. Last week we had one here who didn't even know the difference between a girder and a joist. Can you tell me the difference between girder and joist?" The Irishman thought for a little while, and then replied, "Well sor, I tink that Joyce wrote Ulysses and Goethe wrote Faust."



I have achieved all my 2025 Goals

1	Buy a houseplant
2	Run 0.10 km
3	Get F ^a t
4	Medi ^c ate Daily
5	Invest in s ^t ocks'

Mr. Wilson comes home one night, and his wife throws her arms around his neck. "I have great news. I'm a month overdue. I think we're going to have a baby! The doctor gave me a test today, but until we find out for sure, we can't tell anybody."

The next day, Mrs Wilson receives a telephone call from AEC (Atlanta Electric Company) because the electricity bill has not been paid. "Am I speaking to Mrs Wilson?"

"Yes. Speaking."

AEC guy, "You're a month overdue, you know!"

"How do YOU know?" stammers the young woman.

"Well, ma'am, it's in our files!" says the AEC guy.

"What are you saying? It's in your files. HOW?"

"Yes. We have a system of finding out who's overdue."

"GOD! This is too much."

"Madam, I am sorry. I am following orders. I have to inform you are overdue."

"I know that. Let me talk to my husband about this tonight. He will speak to your company tomorrow."

That night, she tells her husband about the call, and he, mad as a bull, rushes to AEC office the next day morning. "What's going on? You have it on file that my wife is a month overdue? What business is that of yours?" the husband shouts.

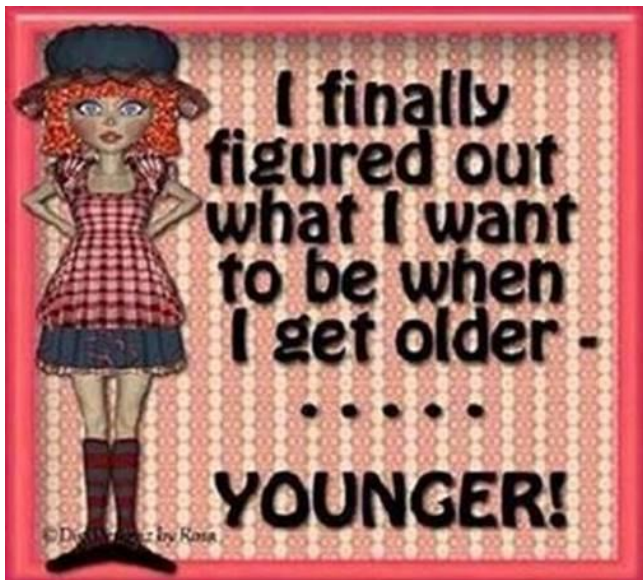
"Just calm down," says the lady at the reception at AEC, "It's nothing serious. All you have to do is pay us."

"PAY you? And if I refuse?"

"Well, in that case, sir, we'd have no option but to cut yours off."

"And what would my wife do then?" the husband asks.

"I don't know. I guess she'd have to use a candle."



I'm gonna quit my job and travel the world until I run out of money!

I estimate I'll be home again around 10 PM this evening...

Mick is on the phone to his mother and she tells him how well his brother Paddy is doing in the army, she says "he has only been in the army for three months and they have made him a court marshal already and they are sending him away to spend 6 months with his majesty the king. I'm so proud of him".

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