

## **Burra and Goyder Northern Driving Trail**

### **Trip Report 11<sup>th</sup> July to 13<sup>th</sup> July 2014 by Syd Greig**

Goyder's Trail – what a trip! Coming along were Pat/Frank, Jim/Margaret, Glen/Paul, Zigi/Syd, Les/Lyn and granddaughter Aliah, and Gary. This gave us 6 vehicles to take on the unexpected along the Goyder Northern Trail. Aliah volunteered to be Syd's navigator and technical assistant on the Saturday's drive.

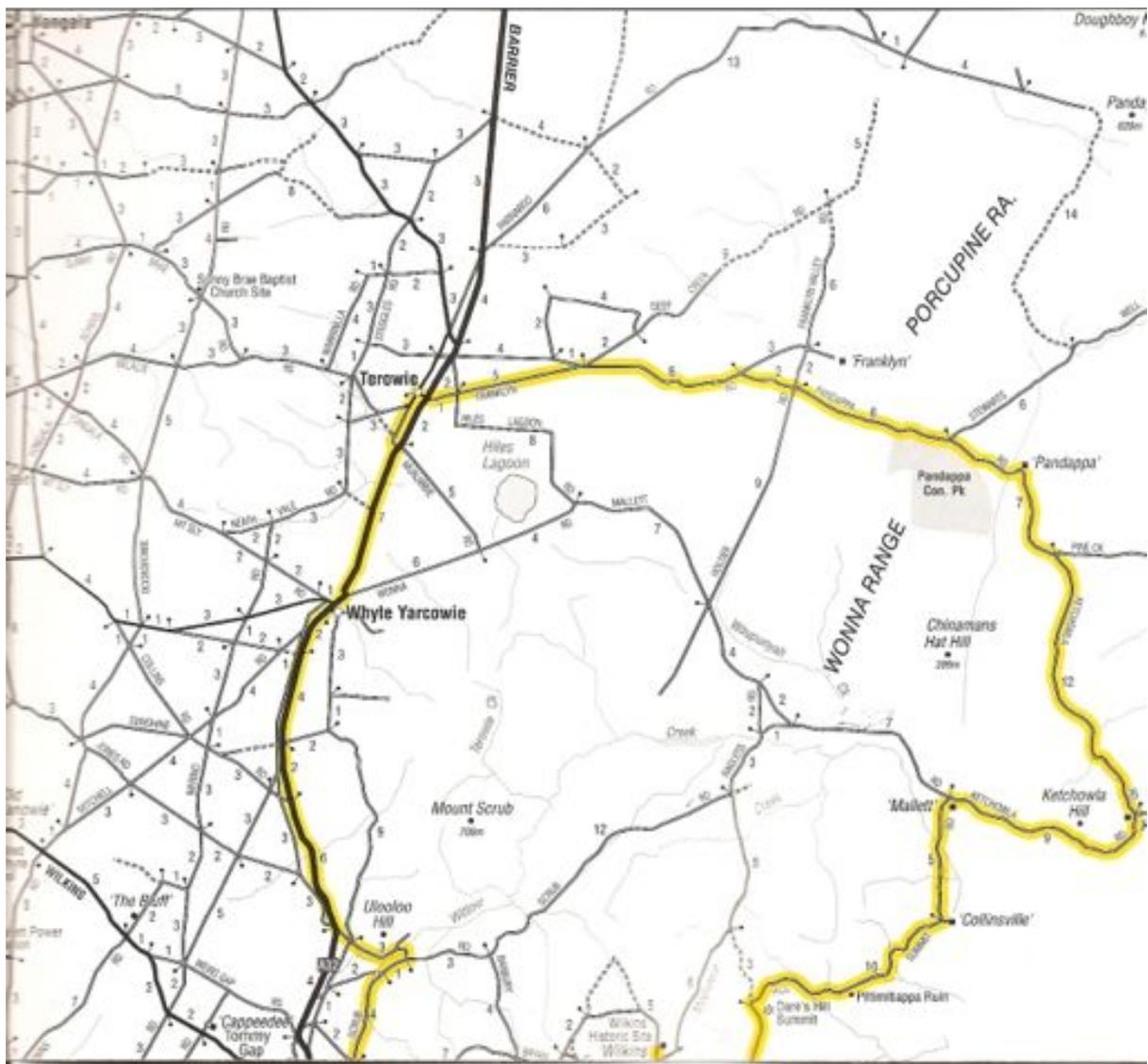
Frank and I decided to travel to Burra on Friday morning along the Barrier Highway. After passing through Saddleworth and Manoora we decided to find our way across to the World's End Road to check out the camping sites at Burra Creek Gorge. Using the GPS we swung across to Black Springs and then onto Emu Downs. The plan was to find the Hallelujah Hills Road to get us onto World's End Road. Apart from driving around in circles and continually ending up at Emu Downs we learnt how to drive and slide caravans and trailers around in the mud. We finally escaped by finding a road to Robertstown which led us to a track going to the World's End Road. At the Burra Creek Gorge the Burra Creek was in flood and the wind was strong and cold. We moved onto Burra and the comfort of the Burra Caravan Park.

Unknown to us Les also decided to cut across to World's End Road and found real mud tracks to travel on which caused the caravan to slide and drift in the mud. When Les finally arrived at Burra his 4WD and caravan were covered by layers of serious mud. To any visitor Les's 4WD and caravan looked like he had just driven the Goyder Northern Trail.

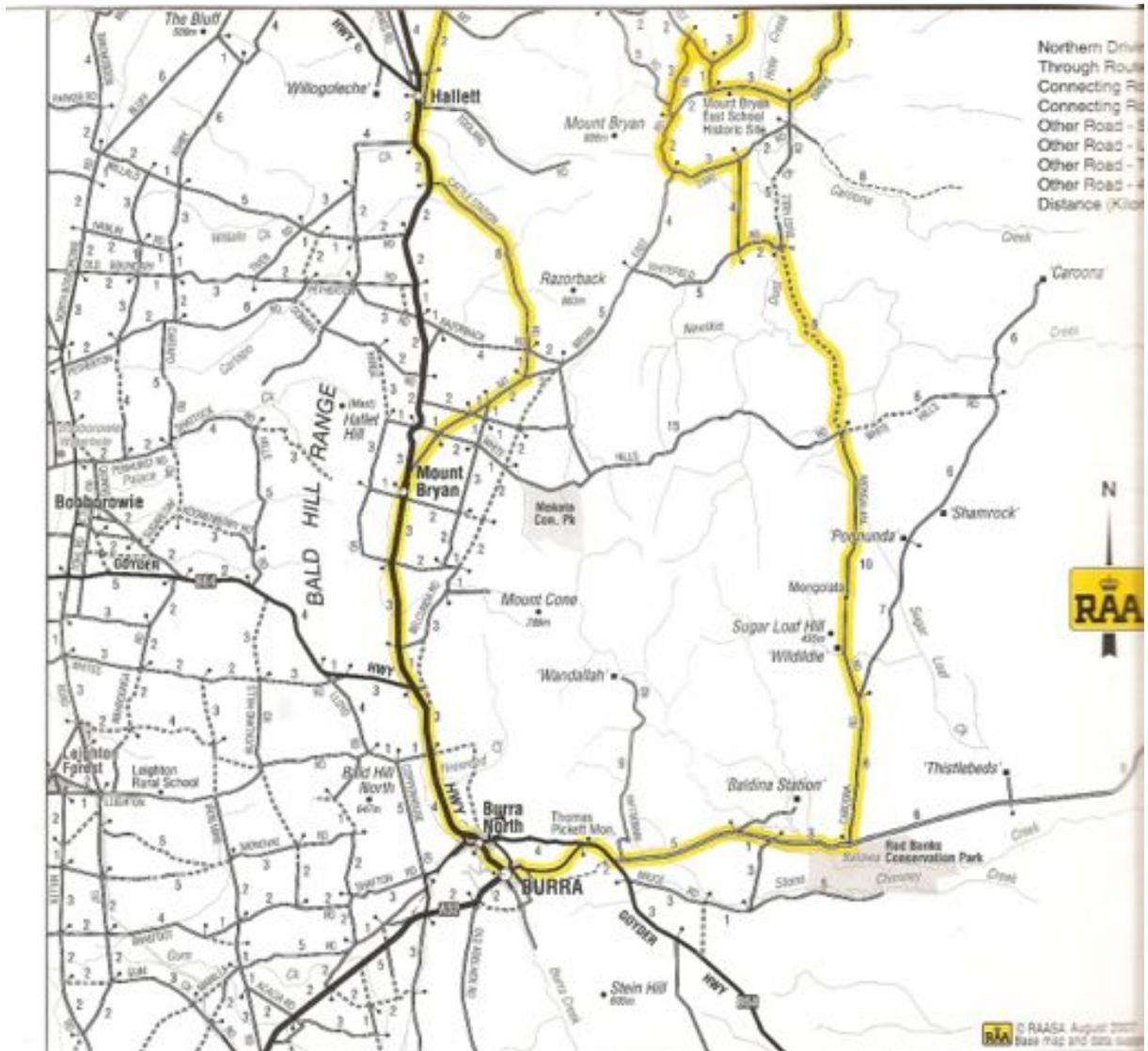
The Camp Kitchen facilities were excellent and we all sat around a camp fire which we were permitted to have in half of a 44 gallon drum. We enjoyed pre dinner drinks and nibbles and joked about the short cuts to Burra Creek Gorge. We enjoyed a shared BBQ meal and watched the rain come in.

We planned to leave at 9:00am because the day's trip could take up to 8 hours (longer if someone got bogged). Paul and Glen had been flooded out during the night requiring them to dry their clothes in the laundry's clothes dryer. We eventually got going by 9:20am. Prior to the trip Jim had been hoping for days that there would have been lot's of rain. Three days prior to our visit to Burra they had snow at Hallett and over an inch of rain in the Burra area.

### Goyder Northern Trail Map 1



# Goyder Northern Trail Map 2



We started by driving east along an old stock route via the Balinda Creek. We drove past the Red Banks Conservation Park and turned into Caroona Road. We drove through mallee and saltbush country and eventually met a junction with Mongolata Road. Instead of turning left we kept driving along Caroona Road.



*We are not lost! We have simply come along this extra track for 20KM to find a toilet and to stop for morning tea.*

The tracks ran out at a shearing shed but it was a handy place to stop for morning tea. As we drove back down the track we met a farmer who was surprised that we were where we were. We found the White Hills Road track which got us back to Mongolata Road. We were back on track and then we missed a sharp right turn onto Dare Road (which was later reported as a very muddy track – well worth missing).



*Throughout the area there has been a lot of water erosion.*



*Some interesting creek crossing were encountered.*

At Newikee Creek a very steep crossing was encountered and there was also a Chicken Track for those not game to take it on. Along the way we had some spectacular views.



*There are lots of old ruins around the area.*

**Some of the countryside.**







We eventually met up with the Bryan East Road which led us up to the Mount Bryan East School and Church Historic Site. The School complex comprised a single classroom and an attached 3 room residence. It operated from 1885-1919. The building has been renovated and is now used as overnight accommodation by mountain bikers and bushwalkers who are travelling along the Heysen Trail. Long drop toilets and picnic tables made this an ideal place to stop for lunch.



*Mount Bryan East School*



*Mount Bryan East Church*

Leaving Mount Bryan we travelled along Dare's Hill Summit Road. There were panoramic views to the east from the summit. After a steep descent we passed by the old ruins of the Ketchowla Homestead and other old buildings.





As we passed by the Pandappa Conservation Park you could see parts of the old rabbit-proof fence and old telegraph lines in the midst of lots of saltbush. We finally reached an almost deserted Terowie. Paul and his dog managed to wake up one of the local's dogs on the other side of a high fence. Suddenly there was a large explosion of sound including swearing and shouting by the dog owner. We needed to leave town as quickly as possible.





We travelled south to Whyte Yarcowie along the highway. Here in Fifth Street is the site of reputedly the smallest church in Australia, seating 21 people. This church is commemorated by a silhouette placed on the fence line.



Leaving Whyte Yarcowie we continued south and then back onto a track to Ulooloo Hill where we passed through spectacular countryside on the way to Hallett. Back on the highway and then a detour via Cattle Station Road to Mount Bryan which included muddy tracks and a flooded causeway. The final run was along the Barrier Highway to Burra. We totalled 242KM for the day (on a trail measured at 205KM). We arrived back at Burra around 4:00pm after a trip of almost 7 hours. Because we took almost 4 hours to get to Mount Bryan East we cut short some extra exploration on offer. Our Trip Leader was concerned about how long it was going to take to get back to Burra.

The next morning we had to cope with a frost and freezing temperatures. Frank had to remove a large slab of ice from the top of his tent trailer. When the slab of ice broke on the ground the pieces looked like clear broken panes of glass. My dog's bowl of water was frozen solid. Departure time was 10:00am so there was a lot of activity with people packing up wet canvass awnings and tents. I travelled back to Adelaide with Jim and Gary via Burra Creek Gorge and Eudunda passing through lots of flooded paddocks. Following a compulsory lunch stop at the Kapunda Bakery we arrived safely home. It was a great trip that other club members should consider doing in the future.

PS Photographs by courtesy of Pat Austin.