MEEKATHARRA DISTRICT

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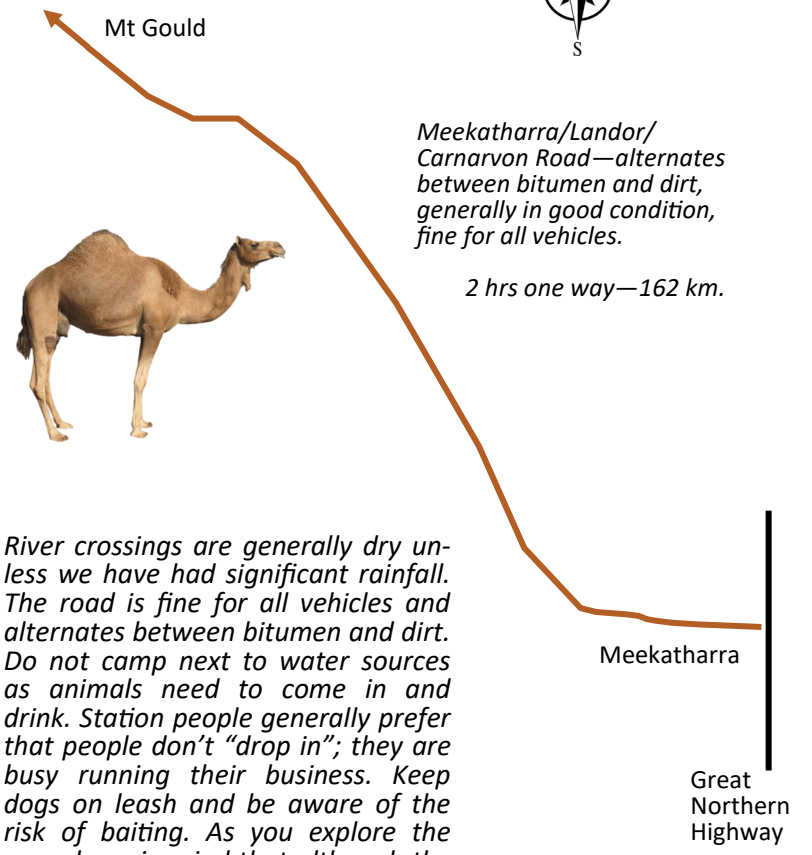
MT. GOULD - BELELE STATION - MURCHISON

Scenic drive, stations & wildlife
Swimming in Season (after rains)
Camping & Caravanning Historic jail & residence

2 hrs one way—162 km from Meekatharra
Bitumen and dirt sections
Suitable for all vehicles

Patchy Phone Reception
Cattle , Baits, Stock on Road
Do not go on to stations



River crossings are generally dry unless we have had significant rainfall. The road is fine for all vehicles and alternates between bitumen and dirt. Do not camp next to water sources as animals need to come in and drink. Station people generally prefer that people don't "drop in"; they are busy running their business. Keep dogs on leash and be aware of the risk of baiting. As you explore the area, keep in mind that although the traces of their history may not be visible, this area was a rich rangelands home to Aboriginal people who had many sites of importance, water sources and bush tucker here prior to pastoral times.

On this drive, you may see flocks of budgies, groups of camels, plenty of roos and many native birds.

GPS COORDINATES:

Latitude: -25.803716
Longitude: 117.312966

DIRECTIONS

Built in 1888, the Mt Gould police station and lockup is a reminder of the area's harsh past—see over for the history. Nowadays it is a good spot for camping and picnicking. This drive from Meekatharra is very easy and there are several points of interest, including (safe) river crossings, Mt Gould itself, historic Belele Station and plenty of wildlife and flora. This is a good stopping point on the way to Mt. Augustus.

From Main Street, Meekatharra, take the Carnarvon/ Landor Road west.

- Continue for 0.7 km / Trip Meter 0.7

On your left, the Lookout (not suitable for caravans)

- Continue for 0.9 km / Trip Meter 1.6

On your right, turnoff to Peace Gorge.

- Continue for 3.2 km / Trip Meter 4.8 km

Buttah Windee community. No entry without prior permission.

- Continue for 11.6 km / Trip Meter 16.4 km

Creek crossing, pools in season.

- Continue for 9.6 km / Trip Meter 26 km

Bitumen ends here and is "on and off" for the rest of the journey.

- Continue for 18.7 km / Trip Meter 44.7 km

Another river crossing, usually dry, nice place for a ramble or picnic. Caution for cattle. No pools.

- Continue for 15 km / Trip Meter 59.7 km

Belele Station. No entry but you can stop at the roadside and take photos. See over for more information.

- Continue for 6.8 km / Trip Meter 66.5 km

Information sign about the stock route across this once-busy pastoral area.

- Continue for 17 km / Trip Meter 83.5 km

Pass the turnoff to Koonmarra Station. It is not advised to enter stations without prior permission. Do not turn off here, continue straight.

- Continue for 33.8 km / Trip Meter 117.3

Yalgar River crossing. A lovely spot for a ramble, usually some water/pools, birds, camping.

- Continue for 11.4 km / Trip Meter 128.7

Murchison River crossing. No camping. Great photo spot, fine for a ramble. Close to Moorarie, a working station visible on the west side, no camping, caution for cattle and working vehicles. There is an information sign about transport through the ages on the southwest side.

- Continue for 24.7 km / Trip Meter 153.4 km

Pass the turnoff to Mt Gould Station, do not turn off here but continue straight on.

- Continue for 8.3 km / Trip Meter 161.7

Mt. Gould historic police station & lockup. You will find historic signage, a dam, creek, windmill, pools, birds, wildflowers and views of Mt. Gould. Look for the grave of Phil Connor, "who died hereabouts aged 50-60". Take a moment to consider the cruelty and grief experienced by aboriginal people who were locked up here and made to walk to Carnarvon just for taking a sheep on their own land. For many, this was a death sentence; many never returned. Mt Gould itself has been a beacon for "gold fever" ever since newcomers arrived, with local folks still retaining an interest in its tenements, dreaming of a big find "one of these days".

Mt Gould Lock-up—A Hell of a Place

The Mt Gould police station and lockup commenced operation in 1888. There were four police officers and a number of Aboriginal trackers based here, with horses and camels being the main mode of transport. With pastoralists moving in onto the fragile rangelands and badly affecting local water supplies, wildlife and bush tucker, Aboriginal people of course took to “sheep stealing” in order to feed themselves and their families.

This is why there is a lockup in the middle of nowhere. Aboriginal people were chained to the iron bars still visible in the old buildings, and either served out a sentence on the premises, or were literally marched on foot to prison in Geraldton or Carnarvon. It is unimaginable today. For many, of course, this was a death sentence; many never saw their families again.

Nowadays this is a pleasant, scenic stopping point of historical interest; you can find the grave of Phil Connor, who was a gardener and cook for the lockup. After rain, this area boasts a plethora of wildflowers and birds, particularly flocks of budgies, zebra finches and birds of prey.

Mt. Gould itself is part of the Yilgarn Craton, a very old landscape relentlessly explored for iron ore, rare earths and of course gold. It has been a beacon for “gold fever” ever since newcomers arrived, with local folks still retaining an interest in its tenements, dreaming of a big find “one of these days”. You can glimpse traces of old buildings and structures associated with exploration among the folds of this ancient feature. Crosslands Resources dug a trial pit on one of the ridges.

This region was heavily travelled back in the day. Camel trains did most of the hard yakka, with horses and bicycles being predominant. People also had dog and goat drawn carts. Prior to the invasion of pastoralists, entrepreneurs and gold prospectors, this rangelands country offered a rich nomadic existence for the Aboriginal inhabitants.

There are still traces today of incredible petroglyph sites feature engravings of megafauna, and stone and rocks laid out to provide pointers towards water and cultural sites. Sadly, most of the knowledge has been lost due to the fracturing of Aboriginal communities and families, so the stories and purpose behind many of these sites are no longer known. The location of most of these is kept quiet to prevent theft and damage. As many as possible are being recorded with the aboriginal heritage sites groups.

Man Found Near Mt. Gould.

Whilst travelling through the the bush about sixteen miles this side of Landor Station on the 13th Mr. Attey, representative of the Vacuum Oil Co., and Mr. Firman of the Gascoyne Hotel, Carnavon, heard cries of distress and on looking back saw a man stripped of all clothing lying near the road. The man is Jack Downing an old prospector of these parts, who had reported at Mt. Gould several days previously. He was journeying north on foot and after many miles of tramping found that his water bag had sprung a leak and not being able to find water was unable to continue farther. Thus he lay for several days and finaily collapsed. His body was shockingly blistered from the effects of the sun and hot ground. Despite all his sufferings he would not let them bring him into Meekatharra for treatment, so after sparingly doling out sips of water and cooling his body generally they made him comfortable and reported the case at Mt Gould outcamp.

On Tuesday he was brought into Meekatharra by the mail car and Dr. Rice on examinaticn orderd him into the Meekatharra Hospital for treatment. Mr. Downing is progressing favourably.