

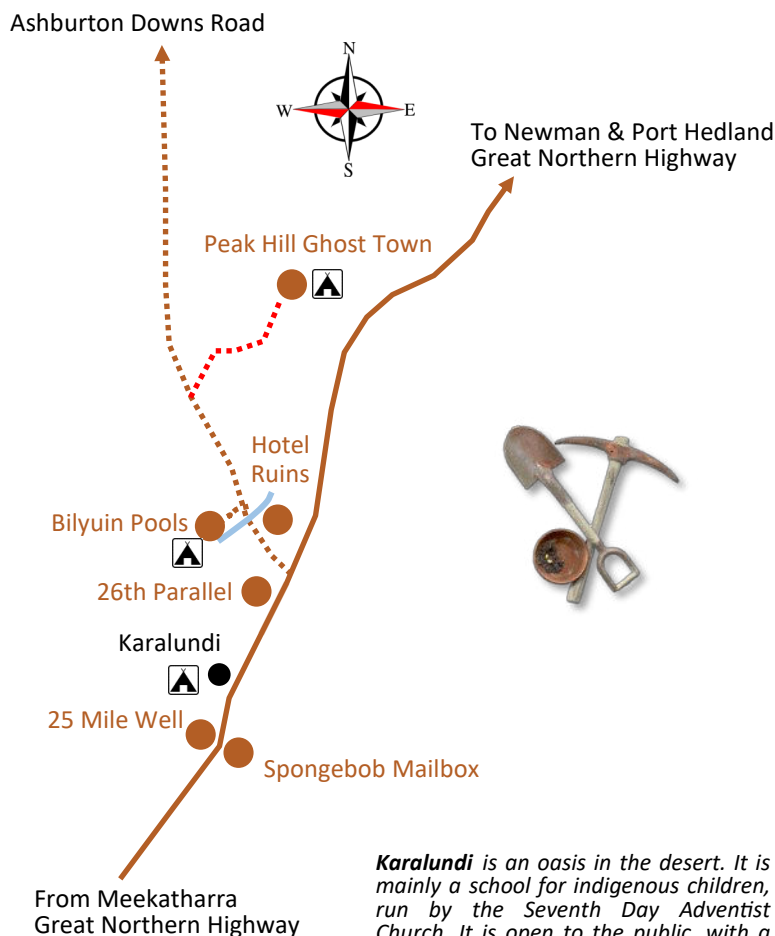
MEEKATHARRA DISTRICT

WWW.MEEKACRC.COM

Traces of the Past
Swimming in Season (after rains)
Camping & Caravanning Wildflowers,
Birds, Animals

1 Hr One Way — 81 km from Meekatharra
Easy Dirt Road from Highway
Deep sandy sections at Bilyuin Pools

No Phone Reception
Take Water
Tell Someone
Risk of Boggling



Karalundi is an oasis in the desert. It is mainly a school for indigenous children, run by the Seventh Day Adventist Church. It is open to the public, with a café serving coffee and fresh food. Accommodation, caravan and camping sites are available and you can replenish your water supply with Karalundi's famous spring water. Visitors should note that alcohol and smoking are NOT allowed at Karalundi, and that it is a religious centre.

Bird watchers will discover an amazing diversity of species at Bilyuin Pools, ranging from aerial predators to tiny bush finches.



GPS COORDINATES:

BILYUIN POOLS

Latitude: -25° 53' 59.99" S
Longitude: 118° 39' 59.99" E

PEAK HILL

Latitude: -25° 38' 16.80" S
Longitude: 118° 43' 26.40" E



Bilyuin Pools

DIRECTIONS

This is a wonderful and easy day trip which also features some great bush camping spots. Take all supplies including fuel and water. The Bilyuin Pools track is accessible to cars and caravans, but there are very sandy sections where you can get stuck. Bilyuin Pools have water for most of the year, but they get low if there has been no rain. Caution for cattle in the area.

A high clearance vehicle is advised if you decide to continue on to the 18km Peak Hill section due to some rough sections, and there may be wet creek crossings. If you encounter trouble, stay with your vehicle. Someone will come along. CARRY PLENTY OF WATER. Peak Hill is a hazardous former gold mining area; you enter at your own risk. You must be cautious for holes and unstable ground. Do not let kids or dogs wander throughout the area, there can be old mine shafts.

From Main Street, Meekatharra, follow the Great Northern Highway north.

- Continue for 34 km / Trip Meter 34 km

On your right: Spongebob Mailbox (Munarra Station) and on your left, 25 Mile Well commemorating the Afghan cameleers and stock route travellers.

- Continue for 21 km / Trip Meter 55 km

Karalundi campground, cafe, Seventh Day Adventist school - beautiful place with caravan & camping sites.

- Continue for 12 km / Trip Meter 67 km

26th Parallel. Turn LEFT (west) on to the Ashburton Downs ROAD (dirt). Can be busy with mining trucks.

- Continue for 14 km / Trip Meter 81 km

Creek crossing. Slow right down. Pull over before the creek crossing, and wander on the northeast side (your right) to discover traces of the old hotel—broken bottles, iron bedstead pieces and stone foundation remnants. One of the hotel owners had a piano and composed "The Bilyuin Waltz" and other songs about her tame magpies who hung around the hotel.

Get back in your vehicle and cross the creek. Look on your left for the bush track; it is almost hidden by bush until you are right on it. This short winding track wanders along the Bilyuin Pools & free camping areas. You can do a loop by crossing dry areas and come back along the other side, but be careful - it can be easy to get bogged in mud or sand, especially after rain.

Alert visitors are bound to discover tiny traces of the past whitefella community that used to live here. There are signs of aboriginal use of the area, but these are subtle and you would need to ask an elder where you are allowed to go and what is to be seen.

To carry on to Peak Hill, get back on the Ashburton Downs road and continue north. See the Peak Hill map for detailed directions.

This is a cattle farming area. Do not let dogs loose as there may be baits. Cattle can be aggressive.

The pools are generally safe to swim and play in, but be aware that cattle poo and other bacteria can be present; locals who swim tend not to put their heads

People Used to Live Here - An Outback Community

The Bilyuin Pools are part of the upper reaches of the Murchison River. They are mostly seasonal, although even in dry weather there is usually a small amount of standing water. The pools are used by cattle and native animals - they tend to be shallow and muddy in colour but are considered generally safe to swim in. You may feel yabbies (small crayfish) or tiny river fish nibbling at your toes! They are most likely native mud minnows or pygmy perch.

You may be amazed to learn that Bilyuin Pools was once a busy little community at the turn of the century. Records are sketchy, but according to local recollections, the hotel was still operating into the late 1940's or even later. The Garland family ran the hotel for many years, and there are local Meeka folks who can still recall Mrs. Garland's pet magpies. Bilyuin Pools had its own race club, and was one of the stops on the mail run to Peak Hill and points north.

The pools were of course populated well before the "colonials" came tramping along in search of gold and pastoral land - you may find evidence of stone spear tips. Like most of Australia, you are standing on very ancient land, and it is not uncommon to come across fossil evidence from the dawn of time - the tiny first creatures to populate the inland seas.

The vegetation around here are mainly mulgas, eremophilas and cassias. Cassias put out stunning small yellow flowers in season, and if you look closely you can often see delicate flowers, seed pods and other growth features on these tough trees and bushes. Many types of birds come here, including budgies, honeyeaters, robins, whistlers, Number 28 parrots, spoonbills, crows, desert doves, birds of prey, cormorants, ducks and more - sit quietly and watch the life around you. Camels and dingoes, kangaroos, bungarras and emus - they all live out here, and an alert eye will reveal all kinds of animal tracks underfoot. There are also many types of snakes, pythons and small lizards - we use caution of course but it is unlikely you will encounter any of these. Most are more active at night, when small mammals such as dunnarts (which look a bit like a mouse crossed with a kangaroo) are on the hunt for insects. Other night creatures include tawny frogmouths, boobooks and nightjars - all are types of owls native to this area. Night is also the time for our delightful, tiny native microbats.

The land as you see it now is much eroded from pastoral use - these "rangelands" still hold pockets of paradise like this, where there is abundant food, water and life to be found.

The joyous cry of the twenty-eight parrot and its cheeky tail wagging meant that it was always welcomed as a bringer of happiness by the Noongar people, who called the bird Darlmoorluk. It kept the camp safe from evil spirits, and was only hunted in desperate times. Across Australia it is commonly called the ring-necked parrot, but its nickname is WA is due to its call, which some say sounds like it is crying "twenty-eight."



WESTRALIANA



**A fair jockey flaunted unorthodox
cerise-coloured "silks"**

When Bobo Won The Cup

BACK in the boom days of the North Murchison Goldfield, Bilyuin Pool had its own race club. Bilyuin Pool lies halfway between Meekatharra and Peak Hill and the race club was largely a one-man show. Harry Grey, mine host at the Pool's bush hostelry, was chairman, secretary, treasurer and committee all rolled into one—and a good job he made of his many duties.

The Bilyuin Pool Cup meeting attracted bookies from Geraldton and even far-away Perth, for it was held in the heyday of the Goldfields. Among the Meekatharra notables to be seen on the "lawn" or swapping reminiscences at the bar were Charlie Connolly, Jack Butler, Bill Sampey, Jack Eamer, Bill Baker, Fred Connaughton, Bill Borwick, Syd Chambers, Billy Wilson, Frank Davies, Bill Matthews, Andy Roberts and many others.

One race will live in the memory of many of the old hands. There were ten starters listed for the Bilyuin Pool Cup—the big race—but as the horses

commenced to go down to the starting post, no jockey could be found for Bobo, a big up-standing 17 hands bay.

Perhaps it would be more correct to say that no jockey could be found capable of riding, for Bobo's intended pilot was too full of enthusiasm and grog to remain aboard—and the same applied to all the other jockeys not already mounted.

Finally a woman rider was roped in to fill the bill. She was rather reluctant to ride the equine bulldozer especially when she really got an eyeful of Bobo but after a few "nerve-tighteners" she tucked her skirt and petticoats into a pair of cerise-coloured bloomers, was

duly "legged" up on to her 17-hand mount and reached the post safely.

All the horses left the "machine" in a line, but Bobo and the bloomers were the first to show out. It was a six-furlong race and Bobo ploughed his bulky way through mulga sticks, stones and dust to come thundering down the straight like a "cock-eyed Bob."

Urged on by the horse's backers, his fair rider "Darby Munrood" him along in fine style and the cerise-coloured bloomers passed the post two lengths ahead of anything else in the race.

It was a great win for Bobo but a better win for Harry Grey when he "panned off" his till in the early hours of the next morn, for in true Goldfields style there were some hectic celebrations by the winners and lots of liquid consolation consumed by the losers ere everybody headed homeward to start preparing for the next Bilyuin Pool Cup.

The Westraliana Thursday
27 September 1951

Mrs. J. G. Monks returned to Meekatharra last Wednesday, after an enjoyable visit to Bilyuin Pool Hotel where she was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. W. Lee.

North Murchison and Pilbarra Gazette
Friday 28 June 1935

Following closely the novel Victorian wheelbarrow marathon comes one of more local interest. "Jumbo" Stokesbury, of Peak Hill, has challenged Bill Spencer, also of that town, to push him from Peak Hill to Meekatharra in not more than ten days. The wager is for four cases of beer and if "Jumbo" wins free beer for a week. Stokesbury tips the scales at fifteen stone and Spencer at fifteen stone. Cushion and a zen of beer to be replenished at Bilyuin Pool is the only luggage allowed.

Meekatharra was the rendezvous of sportsmen last week-end, when visiting cyclists, footballers and tennis players pitted their ability against local representatives. The Cycling Carnival opened on Saturday afternoon followed by a football social at night, fights and the annual tennis ball; more cycling on Sunday morning; tennis throughout the day; football in the afternoon and more fights. The last of the visitors departed on Monday morning and the town has once more settled down to normal life, with the hope that the next few months will bring another equally enjoyable week-end.