



# HSNT DAY TRIP SOUTHPORT TO ADELAIDE RIVER SUNDAY 20 JUNE 2021

by Bev Phelts

On Sunday 20 June, 25 members and 11 vehicles met at Southport for a 4WD trip that ended at Adelaide River. (map of trip at end of document). The Southport Progress Society was celebrating 150 years of the founding of Southport at Mira Square. There were history and photographic displays, food stands and activities for the kids. So this was an opportune time to join in the festivities before we headed off.



An historical display on Southport  
Photograph courtesy Jane Munday



Stalls at Southport celebrations

First stop was at Tumbling Waters at the remains of a WW2 bridge that was built across the river to allow access to Mandorah.



Remnants of the WW2 bridge



Pylons - WW2 bridge



From here we crissed crossed the 1880s and 1970s railway line all the way to Batchelor. The Gamba grass was so tall that it was difficult to locate the Rum Jungle Siding and Hotel. Glimses of the railway line and bridges could be seen through the long grass.



Driving through the Gamba grass



One of several railway bridges



Stop at White Hawk Jungle. Bullock teams would be watered at the creek which runs alongside the road. The road runs on the old railway corridor.



Crossing over the Finnis River



Lunch was at Batchelor Museum. The museum has a fantastic display on the history of the area including WW2 displays.



Derek Pugh, Jane Munday, Allan Mitchell & Ian Anderson



Brian Reid, Pam O'Neil & Lyn Reid



Richard & Paula Chappel & Barry Russell



Beautiful Turkey Bush was in full bloom



After lunch we stopped at the Stapleton Creek site (1873-1920s). There used to be a siding, hotel, camp and a cemetery. There are no footings of anything left. A plaque lists the names of the 16 souls who are buried in the cemetery but there are no markings on the graves. Only one mound stood out as possible grave. We found a beer bottle dump but most of the bottles were of a later era.



The group reading the Stapleton Creek Cemetery sign



List of people buried in the cemetery



A mound that is possibly a grave



Beer bottle dump



Our final stop was at Snake Creek WW2 Armament Depot. It was constructed between 1943 and 1945 after the Navy identified the need for a semi-remote magazine. The design included a road system and a 2.85 km rail loop from the North Australia Railway, an ammunition storage area capable of storing 3,500 tons of high explosives, and related facilities. A total of sixty-nine structures were built, some into the hill slope and some entirely above ground. The whole complex was camouflaged against aerial observation. The RAAF controlled the facility between 1953 and 1962.<sup>1</sup> There is a lot to see at this site.



Allan Mitchell & Bev Phelts



There are several of these facilities which stored bombs, ammunition & explosives.



<sup>1</sup> [http://users.tpg.com.au/borclaud/ranad/about\\_snake\\_francis.html](http://users.tpg.com.au/borclaud/ranad/about_snake_francis.html)



Map of the trip (in blue) - from Southport to Adelaide River (Snake Creek)



## **Thanks**

Thanks again to Matt James who organised and undertook 4 reccie runs for this trip.  
It was a fabulous day, paradise weather complimented with no mechanical or flat tyre issues.

## **Participants**

Matt, Earl & Wendy James , Allan Mitchell, Bev Phelts, Jane Munday, Brian & Lyn Reid, Pam O'Neil, Kevin Coonan, Vida Goodvach, Daniel & Barbara O'Brien, Derek Pugh, Rosemary Chalmers  
Barry Russell, Paula & Richard Chappel, Stuart Lane, Ian Anderson, Mike Nichols, Trevor & Jan Riley, Graham & Susan Hiley