

COORDINATES FOR AIRSTRIP AT DIG TREE

Dirt Airstrip: 1,000 Metres between White Markers

Overrun of 300 Metres North East End

Overrun of 100 Metres South West End

Co-ordinates

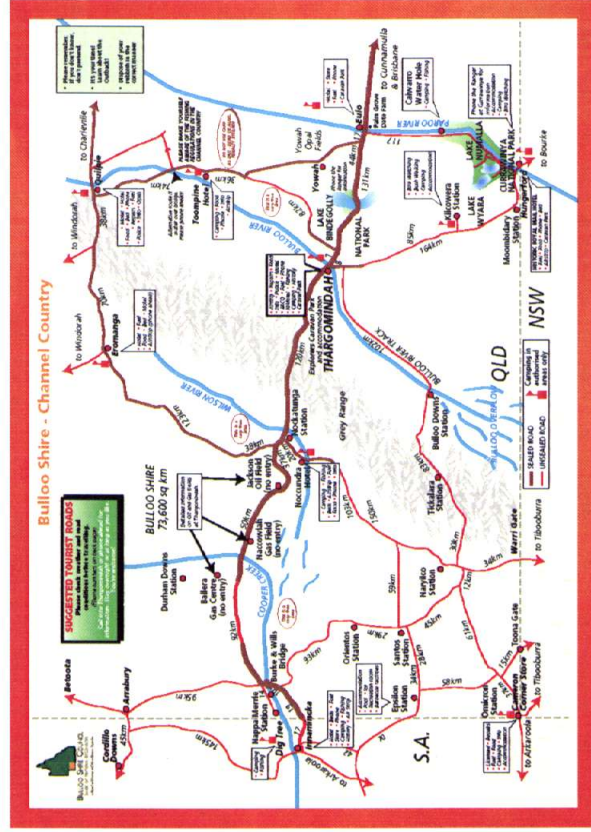
South: 27 Degrees 37 Minutes .436

East: 141 Degrees 04 Minutes .549

Dig Tree Location

Information Shack 60 Metres from Airstrip

Dig Tree is 400-500 Yards from Airstrip



For all Brochures, Road Reports, Accommodation, and information relating to attractions in the region please contact or visit:

Thargomindah Visitor Information Centre

Cnr McGregor & Eccles Street

PO Box 46

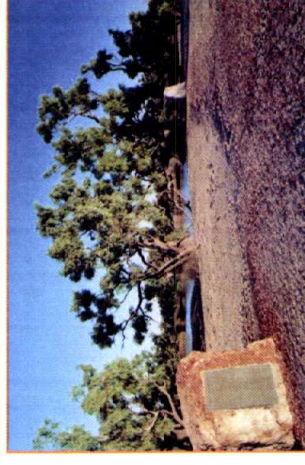
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THE 'DIG TREE' NAPPA MERRIE STATION



HISTORY OF "NAPPA MERRIE"

A.C. Gregory was one of the first known Europeans to pass through the Nappa Merrie area in search of the lost Leichardt expedition and consequently traced the entire course of Cooper Creek from Strezlecki Creek in the south to the Thomson and Barcoo Rivers. "Nappa Merrie" station was first settled by John Conrick in 1873. Conrick was an overlander in his earlier years and later an established pastoralist. Only ten years after Burke and Wills traveled through the region, John Conrick and his five companions, who were all under the age of 21, drove over a thousand head of cattle from Warrambool (Victoria) and took up the original "Nappa Merrie" holding.

The early history of "Nappa Merrie" was dominated by sheep (1892-1937), with the remnants of the old wool scour near the homestead site. Some of the old sheep fences still occur through the landscape. Prior to 1945, cattle grazing was largely confined to the channels and lake systems which are a feature of the property. In 1945, permanent bores began to be established away from the channel systems and this opened up large areas for livestock grazing.

Nappa Merrie is owned by Santos, and is currently leased to Kidman & Co. The Station runs up to 15,000 head of cattle on an area of 740,600ha.

BURKE AND WILLS

In 1860, the government of Victoria, then Australia's richest State, decided to sponsor a lavish expedition to make the first south-north crossing of the continent to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Eighteen men, twenty camels, and over twenty tons of provisions started out from Melbourne in August on their ill-fated trip led by Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills.

The party reached Cooper Creek by December and having built a stockade, Burke and Wills started north, along with Grey and King, with four men remaining at the Stockade camp. They followed the Corella River into the Gulf and found vast salt marshes lay between them and the sea. Disappointed they left the Normanston area in February 1861 and headed back south. Their progress was slowed by the wet season and food was running out. On the evening of April 21, they staggered into the Stockade camp, which had been decamped only that morning. They tried to walk south and reached the Innamincka area where they were fed by aboriginals, but by September when a rescue party had tracked them down, only King was still alive. Burke's grave may be seen further downstream near Innamincka.

THE 'DIG TREE'

The Burke and Wills 'Dig Tree' is one of Australia's national icons and an enduring reminder of our pioneering spirit. Stanbroke is proud to officially manage the site on behalf of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland. Located on the Northern bank of Coopers Creek the 'Dig Tree' is a Coolibah (*Eucalyptus microtha*). It is believed that the tree is 200-250 years old.

Before the base camp party deserted the depot (stockade Depot Camp 65), only hours before Burke and Wills did return from the Gulf, they had buried some provisions in the remote chance of Burke and Wills return and instructions to dig were carved into the trunk of the tree. The three blazes on the dig tree were:

B LXV	Trunk, creek side
Dig 3FT NW	Trunk, land side
Dec 6 60 April 21 61	Limb upstream

These Blazes have now been covered to help preserve the tree. Burke's face was carved into another tree (the 'Face Tree') about 30m downstream of the 'Dig Tree' by John Dick in 1898 and is still clearly visible. Apart from the boardwalk structure built around the tree to help protect it, the site as you view it now is as Burke and Wills and companions would have viewed it nearly 150 years ago.

MANAGEMENT FEE

A 'Dig Tree' Advisory Board has been established comprising the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environment, Bulloo Shire Council, Santos and the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, whose role is to oversee the management of the Tree and its surrounds.

To assist maintain and improve facilities, develop and protect the site for the enjoyment of present and future generations a small management fee will apply to visitors wishing to access the 'Dig Tree' site. An entry fee of \$11 per vehicle, or \$33 per bus will be collected. Please note that the SA Desert Parks Pass does not cover the 'Dig Tree' Site Management Fee. Camping is permitted at the site anywhere within the fenced area around the 'Dig Tree'. Basic bush camping facilities are provided including firewood.

Fishing is permitted at the site with a good supply of Yellowbelly in Cooper Creek (limits apply). Native flora and fauna is abundant and there are opportunities for bird watching along the creek.

Shooting is strictly prohibited. Please feel free to contact the Ranger on 07 4655 4323 or UHF1 (One) for more information or assistance.