



Historical Society of the Northern Territory

Patron: The Hon Austin Asche AC

NEWSLETTER August 2010

NO: 40

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From the President

Matthew Stephen, our President is overseas and will report in September's newsletter

Field Trip to Newcastle Waters Station, Longreach Waterhole and Powell Creek Overland Telegraph Station 22-25 July 2010

By Bev Phelts

Our down- the- track -trip was quite adventurous considering most of it was on the bitumen. The group met at Warlock Ponds, 437 kms south of Darwin and we made our way down the Stuart Highway diverting off the road now and then to look at historical sites.

The first site was the Gorrie Airstrip located 10km from Larrimah. This is one of the Australia's largest dirt airstrips and it supported the largest Army base during World War 11. The Airstrip was named after a flying officer who was killed in action near Menado, Dutch East Indies in 1942. Another stop was to see the monument dedicated to Alexander Forrest who with his party, had set out from WA and explored the area. They were suffering severely from thirst but were saved when they killed a bird and drank its blood. Overland Telegraph workmen found them and brought them to safety.



Michael Smith & Penny Baird
On the Gorrie Airstrip



Judy Boland & Ros Henry
Inside the Daly Waters Pub



The Alexander Forrest
Memorial complete with an
Oppenheimer pole

When we arrived at Daly Waters the place was buzzing with the large number of grey nomads and their campervans.

In 1862, John McDouall Stuart passed through here and named the area Daly Waters in honour of Dominic Daly who was the Governor of SA at the time. The telegraph line followed in 1872 and the pony express operated through Daly Waters. The pony express ran between the north and south ends of the line. Bill and Henrietta Pearce, local tin miners built a store in 1930 to service travelers and later air passengers en route to London. The store acquired an alcohol licence in 1928 and it became a local feeding, drinking and accommodation place for the Army, locals and travelers.

After inspecting Stuart's inscribed "S" on a tree trunk nearby, we decided to go somewhere much quieter for lunch, and set ourselves up inside the Daly Waters Airport Hanger. The complex consists of a hangar which was constructed in 1930, a shell oil store, accommodation, radio and navigational buildings which are heritage listed. The Airport was the first international Airport in Australia prior to World War II. Planes on their way to London would refuel at the site and passengers would be provided with food and overnight accommodation. During the War, it played a significant part in the defence of the Northern coastline. Both American and Australian air forces were based there which included Mitchell Bombers, Kitty Hawks and fighter squadrons.



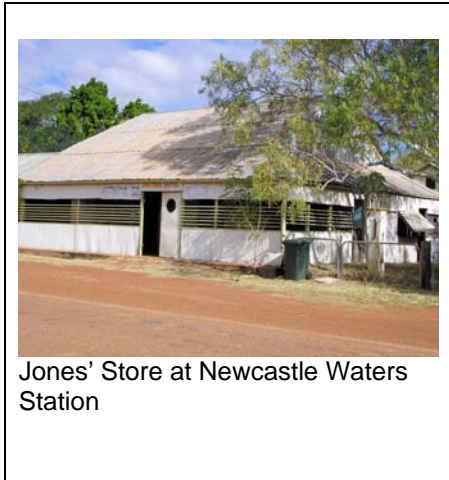
The tree that John McDouall Stuart had inscribed an "S" on



Lunch inside the Daly Waters Hanger

After lunch, we headed directly to Newcastle Waters Station to let the manager know that we had arrived. Newcastle Waters is located about 700kms south of Darwin and was named by Stuart after the Duke of Newcastle. An Overland Telegraph Station was constructed there in 1870 and the first pastoral lease was taken up during the early 1880s.

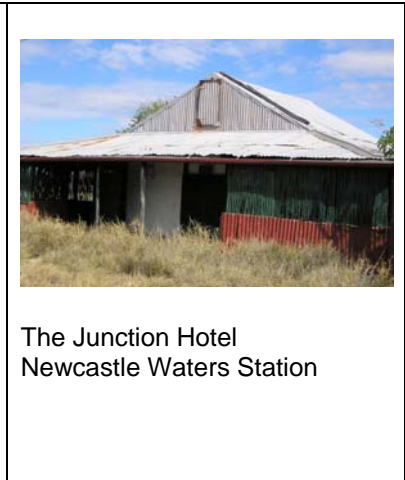
Famous stockmen who were connected with Newcastle Waters Station were D'Arcy Uhr, Nat Buchanan and Pic Willets. Ross and Keith Smith refueled at the Station on their incredible flight from England to Australia in 1919. Later in 1935, the Qantas Empire Air Service was landing at the Station to deliver mail and refuel. In 1930, a small portion of the station was sectioned off to build a township and those buildings are now heritage listed. The stop at the Station gave us the opportunity to look through some of the buildings.



Jones' Store at Newcastle Waters Station



The memorial dedicated to stockman, Pic Willets and other stockmen.



The Junction Hotel Newcastle Waters Station

After a brief stop at Elliot Store to top up with fuel and ice we made our way to Longreach Waterhole. The Waterhole was almost deserted by humans and we found a fabulous large area to camp on the waters edge. The Waterhole was brimming with water and on dusk, scores of brologas, pelicans, black whistler ducks, egrets, little black cormorants swarmed the wetland. We watched as these birds continually moved up and down the billabong following the schools of fish. On land, the bush was filled with cheeky finches and a variety of other birds. Sunset saw a beautiful orange haze shimmer across the billabong and later that evening, the full moon's reflection on the water reminded us of Broome's "stairway to heaven".

Around the campfire Barry Leithhead and Robyn McIntyre talked about the research they have been undertaking on Robyn's father, Dr Cecil Cook. The group was interested to hear about a little unknown side of Cook's life - his training in England, his work on tropical diseases and his achievements in the Northern Territory.

On Saturday, we headed south of Elliot to the Powell Creek Overland Telegraph Station which is listed on the Register of the National Estate. The site has been used off and on since 1872 until 1960 so there are several archeology overlays representing different periods of occupation. The Powell Creek Station was one of 11 repeater stations that were built along the Overland Telegraph Line to service faults and to relay morse code signals. Regrettably, the Station is only one of four stations remaining in the Northern Territory. There was quiet a lot to investigate at this site and we lunched and stayed here until the early afternoon. The site contained the Station, stone and tin accommodation for stockmen/staff, 3 water squatter tanks, an old stone well and the remains of a mechanical workshop and outstation. There were numerous crockery, glass, stone and tool remnants. What was surprising was the high number of Oppenheimer poles still standing. Oppenheimer poles are metal poles which were use to replace the wooden poles. The Oppenheimer poles must have been so numerous that they had been cut into short lengths and used for fencing. Our intrepid archeologist, Julie Mastin and keen "assistant", Penny Baird decided to spend the morning following the original in situ Oppenheimer poles. They were pleased to count approximately 20 at roughly 40 metres apart. This is the only site believed to hold such a large number in situ.



Powell Creek Overland Telegraph Station



Left: Ros Henry, Judy Boland, Wendy James, Lyn Reid & Michael Smith at the Powell Creek Overland Telegraph Station



Powell Creek Overland Telegraph Station & an Oppenheimer pole

Over dinner that night we were pleased to be treated again to another amazing spectacle of bird life without a crocodile in sight! Around the campfire, topics of conversation ranged from ghost stories and min min lights to getting lost in the bush. We were also in agreement in writing to the National Trust regarding our observations and lending our support to the protection and preservation of the Powell Creek OLT site. The evening ended with another brilliant moon light display.

Sunday morning was time to leave with some of us going directly back to Darwin and others much more slowly. Our journey home took in Charles Todd's Memorial. Todd was the SA Post Office General and the man responsible for the construction of the Adelaide to Darwin Overland Telegraph Line. The *We of the Never Never* graves at Eley Station and the original homesite of Jeannie and Agneas Gunn. The Mataranka thermal springs and the site of the making of the movie and replica homestead, *We of the Never Never*.

For a full version of our trip, see our website

Coming Events

- 28 June - 3 September Exhibition - '*Spirit of Arnhem Land*' - Exhibition by Penny Tweedie
Northern Territory Library - Parliament House. Penny's books, 'This is My Country - A View of Arnhem Land', '*Spirit of Arnhem Land*' and 'Standing Strong' provide dynamic documentation in photographs. She has worked in 70 countries for international magazines and charities and her work has been exhibited worldwide. Free exhibition, open to the public.
- 6-8 August 2010 – SA State History Conference “Cross-Currents: History, People and the Environment” in Murray Bridge, SA. The conference will focus on the relationship between history and other research fields. Email: jmackenzie@history.sa.gov.au
- 20-22 August – Camping trip to Bradshaw Defence Force Base (near Timber Creek)
- 27 & 28 August – Open days at Government House - 3-7pm both days.
- 3-4 September – Green Building and Design Conference – Greening the Existing Building Stock in 2010, State Library of Victoria. Topics cover renovating for a different future, City of Melbourne's 1200 buildings program, material recycling, building transformation, wind energy non technical aspects of energy efficiency in office building. For information phone: 039925 8111 or www.rmit.edu.au
- 6 November - ANU/CDU History Colloquium, Saturday 6 November at the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT Theatre. Organised by the Professional Historian Association and History Council of the NT. The Colloquium will be an all day event and everyone is welcome to attend.
- 28 Sept-2 October 2010 – Museums Australia National Conference “Interesting Times: New Roles for Collections” in Melbourne, Early bird registration closes 15 July. Contact www.ma2010.com.au
- If you are visiting interstate there are upcoming Australian Garden History Society events in NSW & Perth - The Northern NSW Branch is re-staging it's New England garden history photographic exhibition at the Glen Innes Gallery from 21 August-18 September 2010 & The WA Branch is holding a photographic exhibition, *Early Perth Gardens*, at the Perth Town Hall from 11–25 May 2011.

Whats on at the Northern Territory Library, Parliament House

Free event, open to the public. Bookings preferred 1800 019 155 or Email:libraryevents@nt.gov.au

- Monday 16 August 12:00pm Looking Back, Racing Forward
Three of the Top End's creative legends: Ali Mills, Bong Ramilo and Gary Lee join up for a chat with Darwin Festival Artistic Director Jo Duffy as they attempt to decipher urban myth from historical fact.
- Tuesday 17 August 12:00pm - Ngarukuruwala: We Sing Songs
Last year, the Strong Women's Group from Nguui made a monumental journey to the National Archive Institutions in Canberra to repatriate treasured sounds and images to their rightful home on the Tiwi Islands. Teresita Puruntatameri and co-collaborator Genevieve Campbell recount their tales of journeys shared and their pride in a project that has opened minds, doors and hearts.
- Thursday 19 August 12:00pm - Head Full of Love
One of Australia's most respected theatre directors Wesley Enoch talks with the charismatic cast of Head Full of Love, a world premiere play based on Central Australia's famed Beanie Festival and the humble people and artworks that abound at this curious event. The play opens at Brown's Mart Theatre on Tuesday 24 August.
- Wednesday 25 August 12:00pm - Trans Cultural Jazz
At the cross-road between traditional and contemporary jazz, sits an extraordinary group of musicians who will gather in Darwin for the 2010 Festival. Australian jazz aficionado Sandy Evans; new music producer, Tos Mahoney; bassist, Michael Galeazzi; Guru Kaaraikkudi Mani and Adrian Sherriff represent the international artists who are challenging the old with the new.

- Saturday 28 August 12:00pm - Rhoda Roberts

Bundjalung woman, founder of the Dreaming Festival and current Artistic Director of the Garma Festival, Rhoda Roberts talks about her experiences, hopes and dreams for Indigenous Australian artists. Rhoda is an artist in her own right and Darwin Festival are immensely proud to be working with her on her new creation Bodymarks for Wanga Mirak, the 2010 Darwin Festival closing event.

- Wednesday 18 August 12:10pm - 'Dark Life: How Life Underground Can Point to Life in the Stars' by Dr Hazel Barton

As part of 2010 Science Week, Dr Barton will explain her understanding of microbial interactions and processes in underground caves. She has been collaborating with NASA on planetary protection, and examining the similarities between cave conditions and the subsurfaces on Mars. Dr. Barton will also talk about cave micro-organisms and astrobiology.

- 27 September Monday 12:10pm. - Professor Steve Larkin - new Pro Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership at CDU. Professor Larkin is the highest ranking Indigenous person in an Australian university, and has extensive leadership experience in Indigenous organisations including the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, the Aboriginal Health Strategy Unit in the NT Health Services and the Community Development and Social Health Branch of the Federal Department of Health and Aged Care. He holds a Bachelor of Social Work, a Master of Social Science (Welfare and Social Policy) and is completing his PhD on the topic "*Race matters? Indigenous employment in the Australian Public Service*". Free event, open to the public.

Report from the Federated Australian Historical Societies (FAHS)

1. Work has started on the triennial operational plan 2011/2013 - Helen Henderson (WA Historical Society) is getting this together.
2. A review of the FAHS is planned - discussion on this will take place at the annual general meeting in September.
3. *Heritage Identification and Protection* is available on the FAHS website - www.history.org.au - also links to various other historical sites.
4. FAHS are reviewing the National History Curriculum.
5. FAHS has become a member of Blue Shield Australia - more information can be found at their website www.blueshieldaustralia.org.au. Blue Shield concentrate on disaster planning and management and are a world wide organization.
6. A letter has been send to the Federal Minister concerning the Burra Mine in SA where a mining company wishes to do exploratory work. Although it is a historic site, previous work has been carried and the area is not pristine.

Wendy Carter

Wendy, past President and committee member of the Kununurra Historical Society overnighed in Darwin recently on her way to a mining conference in New Zealand and then on to England. Wendy is an extraordinary active volunteer of the KHS and regular joins HSNT's field trips. Some years back, Wendy led one of HSNT's most memorable expeditions down the Gibb River Road. Wendy will remain in Devon indefinitely to care for her elderly parents and promises to return to Kununurra.

HSNT members, Yvonne Forrest & Bev Pheltes caught up with Wendy (right) over dinner at Happy Gardens Restaurant .



New Publications

How Did They Get Here? Arrivals after 1924 by Cora Num

This modern, easy to use book has been designed to help you find arrival records for members of your family who came to Australia after 1924. The book includes lots of Internet sites and other resources to extend your search. There are also 'sticky notes' throughout the book with helpful hints and suggestions. Topics include: Using the National Archives of Australia resources, passenger records, naturalisation records, alien and internee records, Hamburg passenger lists, FamilySearch, child and youth migration schemes, online newspapers, Google books, Trove, finding ships' pictures, pictorial databases, Immigration Photographic Archive and Welcome Walls. A5, 32 pages. \$10.00 plus postage. Cora offers a 25% discount on 5 or more books. Details at [Web Sites for Genealogists](#) www.coraweb.com.au

An Everyday Transience: The Urban Imaginary of Goldfields Photographer John Joseph Dwyer, edited by Philip Goldswain and William Taylor

The work of 19th century photographer John Joseph Dwyer reveals the evolution of Australia's Goldfields – its wealth, rapid growth and the subtle changes these invoked – in this beautifully produced book.

Pictures of Time Beneath: Science, Heritage and the Uses of the Deep Past, by Kirsty Douglas

Pictures of Time Beneath examines three celebrated heritage landscapes: Adelaide's Hallett Cove, Lake Callabonna in the far north of South Australia, and the World Heritage listed Willandra Lakes Region of New South Wales.

News from David Carment

I have just returned from the Australian Historical Association (AHA) conference in Perth. There were many excellent papers. If you were not there, the full program is at www.theaha.org.au.

Papers with some Northern Territory content included:

1. Geoffrey Bolton, Murdoch University, "'Throwing Stones at People in Grass Castles?" Addressing the Rise and Criticisms of the Overlander Legend, with Special Reference to Mary Durack'
2. Claire Brennan, James Cook University, 'Hunting Australian Big Game: Commerce, Romance and Tropical Connections'
3. Rosemary Kerr, University of Sydney, 'Through the Rear View Mirror: Reviewing National Legends on the Road'
4. Claire Lowrie, University of Newcastle, "'Our Mongolian Colonists": The Transcolonial Politics of Chinese Domestic Mastery in Darwin and Singapore 1910s-1930s'
5. Russell McGregor, James Cook University, 'Drawing the Local Colour Line: White Australia and the Tropical North 1901-1939'.

Interesting Internet Sites

The Australian Mining History Association promotes and publishes research on Australian mining histories. The Association holds its annual conference in various places and states. This year's conference was held in Greymouth, New Zealand. Next year in September, the conference will be held in the Lofty Ranges, Adelaide. www.mininghistory.asn.au

National Australian Archives hold digitised *Northern Territory Times and Gazette* since it first commenced in the 1880s. Other digitised old newspapers are *The Argus*, *Sydney Herald*, *The Brisbane Courier*, *The Adelaide Advertiser*. The site is easy for searching and printing off articles. If you are researching a particular topic or person, this site is brilliant. www.nla.gov.au/nla.news-article

News from Kununurra Historical Society (KHS)

from Andrew Barker, President

Recent archival research of the Kununurra Historical Society's own history, finds that a milestone has recently passed, which was the inauguration of the Kununurra Historical Society (KHS), at a meeting on June 5th 1986 and subsequently the first AGM of the society, that was set down for November 1986. So as we enter our 25th year, which can continue for us right through to November 2011 we are working on a timeline of KHS's own history. The Archive and Museum of the KHS have come a long way in 25 years and the archive constantly grows, becoming

ever more useful as a rich research resource. As well as KHS's main areas of interest, that are mentioned below in some detail, other general areas of interest include Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing, as they have no local history group. KHS has some collections relevant to those places, as well as the Kimberley in general and we have a good rapport with the Wyndham Historical Society.

With Kununurra's proximity to the WA/NT border (27km) our history has become entwined and now reflects the close ties of the East Kimberley to the Northern Territory of South Australia and today's NT. Current displays like the Wirraway "Challenge" (Challenge is the meaning of the word Wirraway), about Batchelor based, 12 Squadron, Wirraway, A20-62, which force landed when flying between Batchelor and Wyndham, on March 20th 1942. The forced landing was just a few kilometres inside Western Australia, on the coastal salt marsh by "Wirraway Island" and about 20km NNW of the fenceline and marker which terminates the (northern limit), of the WA/NT border. This is a story of survival and rescue in wartime East Kimberley. Some displays current, including Reg Durack's Veterinary Kit and others are being planned about the "Kildurk Duracks" and their links to Kununurra. As well we have, "Kinivan's Yards - No Reg '62" art work by Elizabeth Durack, dated 1962 - Kinivan's Yards are on Rosewood Station near Kildurk Creek and within metres of the Kildurk (now Amanbidji) boundary. The NT/WA Border Markers History, about the Austral Pillar(s) (1921) and the Kimberley Obelisk (1927) as well as objects on loan, originally from Tom & Jack Kilfoyle's Rosewood Station, which straddles the WA/NT border. Lake Argyle at peak level, also straddles the border close to Rosewood's northern NT boundary, having done so since the spillway cut dam was created. That dam added about 6 metres to the waters of Lake Argyle peak flood level, to give better head pressure for the 1996 hydro-electricity addition. At peak level the waters of the Lake have left evidence that the Kimberley Obelisk border marker has had half a metre of water around it near the confluence of Hicks and Bobtail Creeks, on the NT part of Rosewood. Finally the ORIA itself which has always been planned to expand into the NT.

These current and planned displays and facts, reflect the ties of the East Kimberley to the NT, and to better reflect KHS aims and areas of interest, a plan is in progress for a change and general update of our constitution, to include the NT as part of our main area of interest, alongside the ORIA, as the two key areas for the growing collections of the KHS - Kununurra Archives & Museum.

Looking back 50 years ago, to June 1960, which was a year when the town of Kununurra was in an embryonic state, as contracts were being finalised. Bandicoot Bar, was just that, still the rocky bar, that held back the splendid miles of water, that was Carlton Reach. By May work had started on building the first house in the bushland of Kununurra, below Kelly's Knob. Land in the Ord valley was being surveyed, as was the Bandicoot Bar, in preparation to anchor down the Ord River Diversion Dam. By June work was progressing on the first two houses in Cajuput Street, and the first few of 12 "elevated" houses were being started, to house the staff of CNC, the between present day school site and White Gum Park.

Below from: *50 Years of Ord Irrigation - Review and Future Perspectives*, one of twelve papers presented at the Seminar in Kununurra during November 1991.

In the first half of 1960 a number of contracts were let. (The values have been converted to Dollars).

The Diversion Dam	Christiani & Nielsen	\$ 5,152,000.
Radial Steel Gates	Vickers Hoskins	\$ 1,526,000.
Office Housing etc	Geraldton Building Co	\$ 514,000.
Crane & Stoplogs	J&E Ledger	\$ 288,000.
Power Station Equip	Hawker Siddeley	\$ 234,000.
Pumping Equipment	Harland Engineering	\$ 202,000.
Radial Gate Elect	F.R Mayfield	\$ 124,000.

By September 1960 work would get started on the construction of a power station at the Diversion dam site, with power lines running back to power the fledgling town, as well as work on the Kununurra Airport. On October 20th 1960 the first earth works for the Ord River Diversion Dam would also get under way with drilling and blasting for the dam foundations.

Here and now, as we begin this period of many 50th Anniversaries approaching, the KHS plans to be ready, with a timeline to know in advance as these dates get close. We will be producing new displays accessible to the public, to show the significance of these events, in interpreting the interesting, incremental development history of the commercial Ord River Irrigation Area (ORIA).

Another milestone for the Ord will occur in 2011, being 70 years since Kimberley Durack set up "Kim's Place" during 1941, on the banks of Carlton Reach, which paved the way for the Ord River Scheme, being the first serious attempt at tropical agriculture experimentation in the Ord River area.

In the coming year KHS would like to call upon everybody, including government departments, businesses, organizations, associations, and individuals to provide us a history of their Kununurra and ORIA associations. Especially we hope to find people out there, who have previously lived here in the East Kimberley to do the same. These would become an interesting snapshot of our history 50 years "down the track", to be preserved in the KHS archives for future generations. We believe these histories could be looked upon with great interest in 2060 and on into the future, as well as during the intervening years.

If you know anyone who has had something to do with the Ord, please get them to email KununurraHistoricalSociety@gmail.com We will email a guidelines form and will be encouraging use of digital formats with images but will accept any format.

I am also looking for a volunteer who could digitally photograph the Rosewood Station books which are held in NT Archives.

Contact us at the Kununurra Archives & Museum, Coolibah Drive, Kununurra - PO Box 77 Kununurra, WA 6743. Phone 08 9169 3331 - Open 10.30am - 2pm (most days up to 4pm) - Mon-Fri - or on request outside these hours. You can contact me after hours on 08 9169 1600 - Andrew Barker - KHS President

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

ICOMOS International Day for Monuments and Sites

ICOMOS recently had the celebrations for ICOMOS' International Day for Monuments and Sites in partnership with the National Trust. We managed an impressive line-up of events related to the theme of 'Heritage of Agriculture'. The theme for International Day of Monuments and Sites for 2011 is 'Water' and there was much discussion on possible 2011 events to address this theme.

Annual Conference

The Broken Hill 'Outback and Beyond' conference was a great success, and we received very good feedback and ideas from registrants. President Susan McIntyre Tamwoy said *'The conference organising committee continued AI's successful record in fantastic conferences that provide the perfect mix of intellectual stimulus and relaxed opportunities to network with colleagues.'* Abstracts of papers are available on the conference website and a selection of keynote and other papers will be published in *Historic Environment* in due course.

Sue Rosen talks to Radio National about her book *Australia's Oldest House*

Sue Rosen has featured on ABC Radio National's 'By Design' program, talking to Alan Saunders about her latest book, *Australia's Oldest House*, published by Halstead Press. Sue's interview can be downloaded at ABC's 'By Design' website. In *Australia's Oldest House*, Sue looks at the 30 year debate over the age of Experiment Farm Cottage at Parramatta. For enquiries, please contact, Dorothy Griffiths, on 0407 107 026.

The Australian Central Credit Union

The Australian Central Credit Union is offering discounts to HSNT members - \$300 cash back on all home loans, 50% off the Personal Loan Establishment Fee, \$50 off all general insurance policies and 0.25% bonus interest on a Dream Saver account. Just mention that you are a HSNT member.

Information on Mitchell Creek from Margaret Clinch

Mitchell Creek, or Mitchell's Creek, as some longer term residents prefer, is named for AJ Mitchell. He was one of the Senior Surveyors, and second in charge to George Woodroffe Goyder, who led the Northern Australia Surveying Expedition to the Port Darwin region in 1869.

Mitchell's Number One Party surveyed the East Arm area, after first establishing a wagon line of road from Port Darwin towards Freds Pass, near the previously known Adelaide River. This was referred to by Goyder as the start of the highway to the Interior'— the genesis of the Stuart Highway. The Northern Territory was then part of South Australia., with Goyder its Surveyor General. Town and rural lots were urgently surveyed to be sold to raise funds for the development of the Territory.

Darwin (originally Palmerston), Southport, Virginia and Freds Pass were quickly surveyed. Land parties were helped by small boats on Darwin Harbour. Mitchell's old surveys include sections North East of Mitchell Creek, well clear of mangroves and harbour edges. Camping out, Mitchell's men felt mosquitoes and midges, especially at night. Working under pressure in the tropical climate, and virgin bush, with grass sometimes twelve feet high, with primitive tools and transport, was sometimes exhausting for Mitchell's Number One Party.

Later back at Port Darwin, Mitchell was prominent in the camp's infant Port Darwin 'Theatre Royal'. One of his senior colleagues Edwin Smith, described him as 'a brilliant man, a clever entertainer, amiable, but was inclined to be erratic.' After the Expedition he went off to America, and was not heard of again. The 'Mitchell' involved in the Overland Telegraph is a different person.

LS Brooking of 'Brooking' Creek', was a Surveyor Cadet, at first shy, but later became a camp theatre performer.

Many Darwin streets are named for men in the Northern Territory Survey Expedition.

More information about the survey expedition is in Margaret Goyder Kerr's book: *The Surveyors: the story of the Founding of Darwin*. Adelaide; Rigby, 1971. Try your library.