

SPECIAL EDITION:
20 YEARS OF STEPHEN KNOX'S TREKS
 as seen through the eyes of TSCC members who took part
 Compiled by Jeremy Braithwaite



The front cover of Stephen's Book marking 20 years of his Treks

HOW IT ALL STARTED

Stephen Knox had competed in the 1985 Dick Smith Variety Club Bash and then joined the 1988 and 1989 events as an official.

In 1989 the event went from Bourke to Broome and there were 880 people on it. It was chaos ... people weren't being fed and they all got stuck on the Gibb River Rd for 4 or 5 hours waiting for fuel. They got to Broome and saw cars they hadn't seen before on the 12-day event. It just wasn't working. They'd run out of food not once but twice!

And the same thing had happened in 1988 on the Blatherskite Bash when they were on Newcastle Waters .. one of Packer's many properties and they had no food for the officials.

Anyway, a group of entrants approached Stephen to see if he would be prepared to organise an event.

He'd had a lot of experience organising motoring events ... including the Motor Club shows which TSCC had participated in almost from our inception. And while this was a big step up, Stephen agreed to take it on. The word quickly spread among the entrants, and the Royal Flying Doctor Treks were launched in 1990.

And one of Stephen's priorities was looking after the officials. Those of us from a motorsport background would understand ... no officials ... no event.



*The Event Director carried the event number T1.
The earlier Nissan Patrol was written off by Nick Brittan*



We've mapped the 20 years of Stephen's Treks on Google:

- [1990 – 1996](#)
- [1997 – 2004](#)
- [2005-2009](#)

All the money the NSW entrants raised went to the NSW RFDS ... similarly the Victorian donations went to the Victorian branch of the RFDS ... and so on.

The entrants made their cheques out to the RFDS and so all these donations were tax deductible ... so the Feds also made their contribution too!!

ORGANISING THE TREKS

Stephen:

"I made sure the officials got a bed if there was a bed to be had ... and always a meal and looked after them better than the paying guests.

Because they were coming in at all hours of the night and having to get up in the morning, so they had to be fed.

They would be leaving at 5.00 in the morning to be somewhere down the track to do a control.

So, we never had that problem with our officials.

The Bash also expected the officials to drive home ... to get the vehicles home by themselves. We paid their fuel, and their airfares to make sure that they got home safely and if they needed the car trucked, we put it on one of the trucks and sent them back to Sydney."

The Variety Club had good contacts with the stars and so people like Johnny Farnham, Glenn Wheatley and John Singleton took part. The problem was that they were given priority over all the other entrants ... and it didn't sit well.

The three basic pillars of the Treks were:

- *Have fun*
- *See Australia*
- *Raise money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service*

To quote Stephen:

"Because I reckon if you didn't have fun and you weren't seeing Australia, you wouldn't raise money for the Doctor or not to the same extent. Have fun. See this amazing country and, as a result, raise money and it put a different emphasis on people's attitude to entry fees."

Stephen did a total of 71 recces over the 20 Treks plus one flight into Longreach to double check some mileages.

He and Jill would listen to the locals in the pub of an evening to try to get some local intelligence, and find a better way through the country they were in.

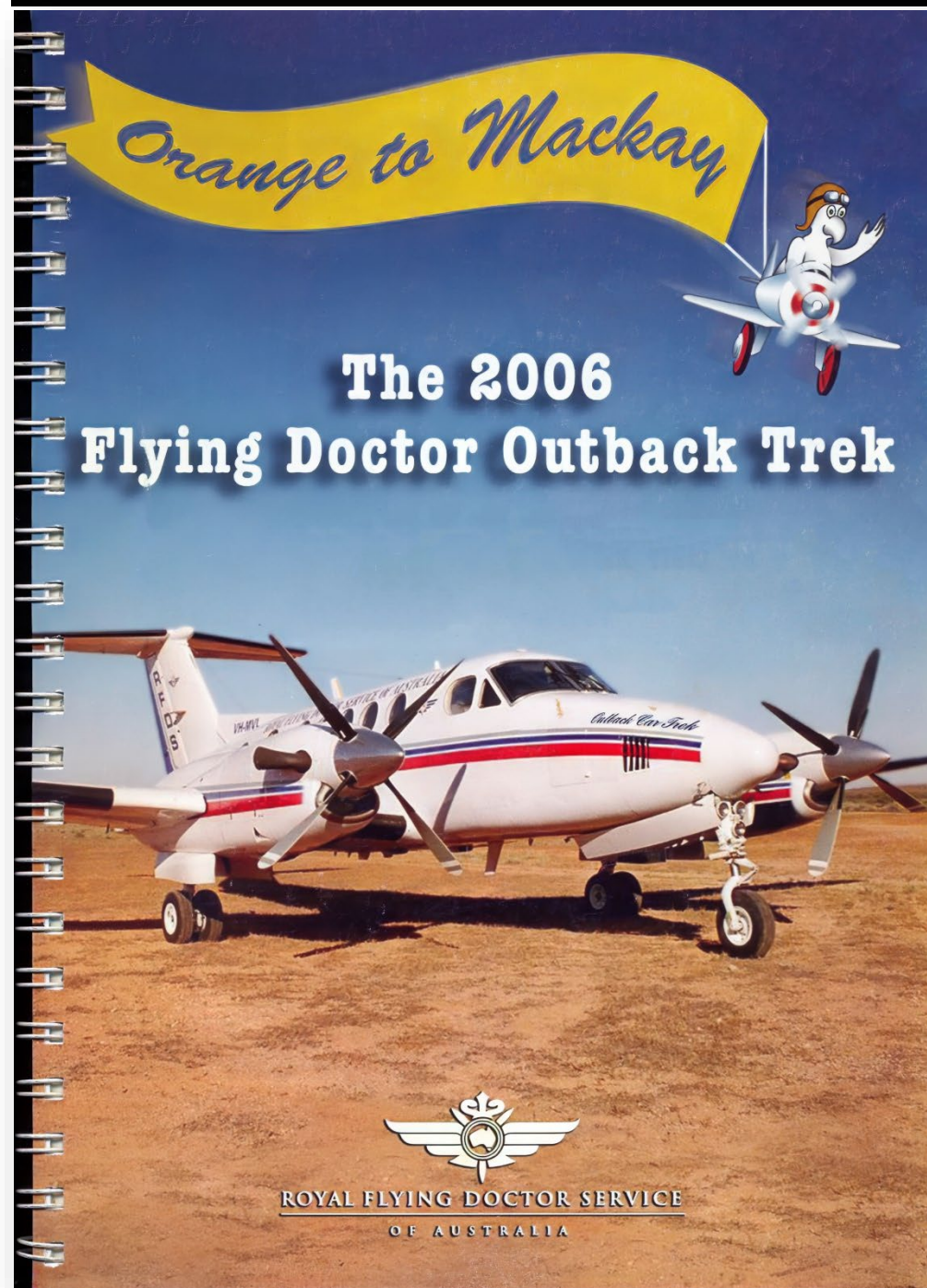
It didn't always go to plan. On one occasion they were told to head down that way and don't worry about the waterhole ... just drive straight through it.

So that's what they did. They drive into this waterhole, and it quickly became apparent that it was much deeper than they expected, and the bottom was grey slimy sludge with no grip at all.

Stephen stripped down to his jocks ... and took the winch cable out to this slender shrub and prayed that it would hold. They were miles from anywhere and there was no help in sight!

The shrub held and they gently coaxed the Nissan Patrol out the other side ... phew!





2006 FLYING DOCTOR OUTBACK TREK

SATELLITE PHONE SERVICE

Thanks to Telstra Country Wide, all of our official vehicles are fitted with satellite telephones (SatPhones). These wonderful devices work everywhere, certainly far beyond the range of other mobile phones. If you need to contact someone while on the Trek, you may use any of these units, but please be brief, as the calls are expensive.

If you need to contact someone in an emergency, try

T1	Event Director	Stephen Knox/Peter Mohr	0145 120897
T2	Control Officials	Graham Bate/Dennis Poole	0147 140012
T3	Control Officials	John Collings/Alan Mugford	0417 140013
T4	Control Officials	John Stoddard/John Fidler	0147 140024
T5	Photographers	Mike and Margaret Faulkner	0147 147823
T6	Control Officials	Peter Lamb/Les Coles	0404 806593
T7	Control Officials	Brian Hall/Kim Bailey	0424 210928
T8	Camera Crew	Wayne Christian/Marty McNichol/ Scott Fisher	0147 155689
T9	Comms/Nurse/PR	Gary Oldman/Charles Underwood/ Colette McGrath	0145 110141
T10	Official/Doctor	Dennis Foster/Dr David Garne	0145 119638
T11	Sweep check	Lindsay Dowie/Paul Gallant	0147 140232
T12	Sweep check	Peter Kennedy/Dick Hollis	0147 140037
T13	Sweep	Neville Simpson/Robert Ceccato	0147 140038
T14	Sweep	Mike O'Sullivan/Ray Lewis	0147 140034
T15	Merchandise	John Newton/Denis Jenkins	0147 140314
T16	Telstra Country Wide	Mark Williamson	0147 154871

Contact numbers for local police stations, hospitals and places where meals or accommodation are being provided can be found at the end of each Day's notes.

MOBILE PHONES

For the vast majority of the Trek the only mobile phones that will work, if any at all, will be CDMA with a smattering of GSM.

Stephen had a photocopier and put it to good use in the production of the road books

White pages were instructions
Blue pages were history and notes on local attractions

Yellow pages separated each of the days

2006 FLYING DOCTOR OUTBACK TREK

DAY 2

MONDAY 5th JUNE – LOUTH to EULO

Total distance 432.9 kms/269.0 mls

How does everyone feel after yesterday's Bundy Stop?

As stated later in the route instructions, the road to Bourke has not been surveyed for the Trek but there should be no complications. The need to go to Bourke is to refuel as there is no reliable supply elsewhere before tonight at Eulo (and there is only one ULP and one diesel bowser there)

If yesterday was to get us in the Outback mood, today is the real deal. We will be literally 'back o' Bourke' – well, 'top o' Bourke' for the pedants – but the Outback flavour intensifies with every kilometre.

Trekkers from 2004 will remember Fords Bridge with affection, not withstanding the rain. It followed the Trek formula that is being developed even further this year, ie tiny towns and great pubs. Remember the camp fires, Jim Catts paying the driver \$100 to let him drive his road train 100 metres, *Andrew Hull, the bush poet, the Telstra bus bogged the next day.....lots of fun.

Hungerford is a fascinating little town on the border between NSW and Queensland. The two states are separated by a gate in the dingo fence and the town is dominated by the wonderful old Royal Mail Hotel. Hungerford is also the most north-easterly port-of-call for the Broken Hill base of the RFDS. Have a look at the Day 2 History Book for more information.

After lunch at the pub, the road to Eulo is basically more of the same. The day is not a long one and there will be plenty of time to 'do' Eulo, buy some of the famous local date wine (!) and line up for fuel. For this exercise, please follow the instructions of the general store owner who has done all this before and the refuelling should be fairly painless.

The Eulo Queen Hotel which will be the focus of the visit is run by Ken and Marlene Manktelow. They run a great pub and we have crossed their paths before. The first time was in 1991 when they were running the Royal Mail at Hungerford and then more recently when Ken was the tourism man at Thargomindah. Nice people and great supporters of what we are doing.

*Incidentally, if you think the trip to Hungerford is a bit rough, imagine walking it. Henry Lawson did and more recently, so did Andrew Hull and a couple of mates from Bourke. Andrew was the bush poet who entertained us at Fords Bridge in 2003 and he wrote about the walk in the Sydney Morning Herald in January this year. You will find the article copied in History Book for Day 2. It's a good read.

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE BY CHRIS BROWNE



CONTROL TIMES

CONTROL NUMBER AND POSITION	OPENS	1st CAR	LAST CAR	CLOSES
1. Louth START	7.00	8.00	9.30	10.30
2. Bourke ARRIVE	8.10	9.10	10.40	11.40
3. Bourke DEPART	8.25	9.25	11.45	12.45
4. Hungerford (lunch) ARRIVE	10.55	11.55	2.15	3.00
5. Hungerford (lunch) DEPART	11.40	12.40	3.00	4.00
6. Eulo FINISH	1.10	2.10	4.30	5.00

THE LAST SWEEP WILL LEAVE LOUTH NO LATER THAN 10.30 AM.

If you arrive at the final control after it has closed, find an official and let him know you have arrived safely.

GRIDS AND CAUTIONS

During the course of the Trek you will cross dozens of cattle grids. Not all are shown in the route instructions simply because there are so many. Those that are shown are there because they are on a curve or for some other reason require your special attention, or they are points of recognition after changes of direction to help you be sure you are on the right track. All grids must be treated with caution and as many have rough approaches and/or sharp drops on the other side. Also, like all parts of roads in the bush, conditions can change rapidly, certainly between the last survey and the Trek itself, so take care.

One of the pleasures of driving through properties is chance to stop, get out and open a gate, close it and be on your way again. Again and again and again! Fortunately, gates are being replaced by grids and they are almost an endangered species.

The simple rule is to leave gates as you find them, usually closed but not always. If the first official on the road finds an open gate, he will identify it with a piece of yellow tape in the centre of the top bar. The sweep will remove the tape at the end of the day. EVERY OTHER GATE MUST BE CLOSED, EVEN IF IT IS OPEN WHEN YOU REACH IT.

Caution advices are shown where there was a potential danger apparent on the most recent survey. However conditions change, roads are graded or weather alters the conditions. Do not assume that if there is no warning there is no danger.

Always drive in accordance with the road conditions and if in doubt, slow down!

The Road Book was spiral bound, and every possible instruction was included:

"Where's dinner?"

"It's in the book"

You get the idea

DAY 5 - Section B - PORCUPINE GORGE to EINASLEIGH

Distance 275.1 kms/170.9 mls - Transport - Estimated time 3 hrs (plus refuelling)

From The Lynd (today) until Charters Towers (tomorrow) will be 580 kilometres, so everyone will need to refuel at The Lynd which is one kilometre off the road to Einasleigh, our destination for tonight.

Kilometres			Instruction	Miles	
Total	Part	Direct		Total	Part
0.0	0.0	TJTR	CONTROL 3 FS The Lynd 199	0.0	0.0
3.5	3.5	RJSO	FS The Lynd 196	2.2	2.2
39.0	35.5	RJKR	(Mt Sturgeon)	24.2	22.1
106.5	67.5		S 19° 34' 10" E 144° 14' 00.2"	66.2	41.9
152.3	45.8	RJSO	FS The Lynd 48 S 19° 12' 32" E 144° 21' 38"	94.6	28.5
198.9	46.6		SLOW DOWN FOR OFFICIALS	123.6	29.0
		RJTL	FS Einasleigh 73 (fuel at The Lynd) S 18° 52' 59" E 144° 32' 06"		
FUEL AVAILABLE AT THE LYND. NEXT FUEL 580 KMS FURTHER ON AT CHARTERS TOWERS					
231.7	32.8	RJSO	DNFS Carpentaria Downs Station S 18° 43' 33" E 144° 19' 05"	144.0	20.4
253.2	21.5	RJSO	FS Einasleigh 21	157.3	13.4
275.0	21.8	RJTR	FS Copperfield Gorge (Daintree Street)	170.9	13.5
275.1	0.1		CONTROL 4 at "Nice Ice" sign S 18° 30' 47" E 144° 05' 42"	170.9	0.1


Proceed to the racecourse for camping and meals and a bar.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Hughenden police
Oasis Roadhouse, The Lynd
Einasleigh Hotel

07 4741 1411
07 4062 5291
07 4062 5222

HISTORY BOOK

A brief history about the places in the route instructions marked with a  appears below. The information comes from www.walkabout.com.au

DAY 7

COLLINSVILLE

Located 270 km north-west of Mackay, 87 km south-west of Bowen, 1245 km north of Brisbane and 187 m above sea-level, Collinsville is basically a mining town. Indeed, a memorial statue at the entrance to the United Mineworkers Club in Railway Road bears testimony to the miners that have been killed in the district over the years and eight murals around town represent aspects of regional coalmining.

The first European in the area was Ludwig Leichhardt who reached the Suttor and Burdekin Rivers (well to the west of the present town site) in April 1845. Leichhardt was followed by a number of explorers of whom the most important was George Elphinstone Dalrymple, who explored the area in 1859-1860. His forays happened to coincide with the establishment of the separate colony of Queensland (December 1859) which led to the official opening up of the district in early 1861. Between 1861 and 1863 the entire area was taken up by pastoralists.

The European settlement of the area led to the discovery of significant deposits of gold, silver, lead, bismuth, gemstones and, in 1866, coal. The discovery of the latter generated interest but it wasn't until 1912 that any serious attempt to mine coal was undertaken. In 1917 construction of a railway from the coast to the coalfields started and by 1919 coal was being extracted from an area which, at the time, was known as 'Moongunya' - thought to be the local Aboriginal word for coal.

By 1921 a town was starting to develop around the coalmine. The area was renamed Collinsville after the local MLA Charles Collins who represented the Bowen electorate from 1915-1936. The railway finally reached the town in 1922. At this time over 200 men were employed in the local coalmines and the town's population had reached nearly 700.

Being a mining town Collinsville inevitably had strong and powerful trade unions. In 1960 the Queensland government closed down the State-run mine in the area, claiming that it had experienced 'a long period of friction with militant trade unions'. The mine was subsequently sold to private enterprise who managed to win a large contract with Japan, thus keeping the town economically viable.

Today the area around Collinsville (including Scottville and Newlands) produces over one million tonnes of coal per annum which is shipped to the new deepwater coal-loading facilities at Abbot Point near Bowen. The railway was modernised in 1985.

MACKAY

Located 975 km north of Brisbane, Mackay is one of Queensland's major coastal cities. A large and prosperous centre it has everything from a large, modern and sophisticated central business district to good beaches, major port facilities, a huge range of motels and hotels, good restaurants, excellent boating facilities and plenty of interesting trips into the historical hinterland.

Stephen and Jill used a Halda Speed Pilot to make sure the distances were accurate

THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

The Royal Flying Doctor Service had been proposed as early as 1917 but it was not until 1928 that Reverend John Flynn opened the Australian Inland Mission Aerial Medical Service (later to be the RFDS). At this time, Flynn also met Hudson Fysh, a founder of QANTAS. In 1927, QANTAS and the Aerial Medical Service signed an agreement to operate an aerial ambulance from Cloncurry, Queensland.

The history was captured on the \$20 bill and John Flynn's picture is still on it today!

The fabric bi-plane 'Victory' which flew the first Flying Doctor mission from Cloncurry, QLD on 17 May 1928.



The Australian \$20 note features the Rev John Flynn (1880-1951), founder of the Aerial Medical Service in 1942 and the Royal Flying Doctor Service in 1955.

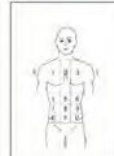


A camel signifying the five camels Flynn purchased in 1913 so that his Patrol Padres could complete their mission work throughout central Australia.

Beneath 'Victory' is the pedal radio invented by Alfred Traeger in 1929 enabling the people of the outback to call on the Flying Doctor for assistance.



The Body Chart was created by Sister Lucy Garlick in 1951 and is still used today. It enables patients to describe the region and intensity of their pain or injury during a remote telehealth consultation.



John Flynn



Alf Traeger invented the pedal radio and by 1929 people living in remote places could communicate with the Flying Doctor and receive urgent medical assistance

FRED McKay



VH-MSZ hit a kangaroo at Tibooburra in 1987 but was returned to service. It has since been retired and remains at Broken Hill

VH-MVL had a 'collision with terrain' at Moomba in 2016 and was written off

Fred McKay was John Flynn's successor at the RFDS and Stephen and Jill had a lot to do with him over the years. They were at Bankstown with Fred for the naming ceremony of the RFDS Beechcraft VH-MVL 'Outback Car Treks'. Here it is in the hangar at [Broken Hill](#) in front of the 'Fred McKay'.

Stephen was telling Fred about getting a bed in the hospital at Moomba as it was the only one available and at the time he had quoted Mel Brooks "Its good to be King" ... only in telling it to Fred he said: "Its good to be God".

Hmmm ... Fred replied to Stephen's written apology and said that people told him that his CMG stood for Call Me God!

Fred retired to the Hawkesbury and was known to many club members. He was the minister at the funerals of both of Julie's parents and was brilliant in the pulpit.

Fred and Meg are buried in the grounds of the school they started in Alice Springs. There's a museum and a memorial to him. All my pictures are [here](#) and the gallery includes the video that plays in the museum.

The [John Flynn Place Museum](#) in Cloncurry also honours both Flynn and McKay.



CATERING ON THE TREKS

Much of the catering was done by the Isolated Children's Parents Association (ICPA), a powerful lobby group.

Another regular caterer was 'Dogga' Dare, named after his time on the Dog Fence.

He had a brother who was a pilot – he was called 'Bomber' Dare and his other brother was a refrigerator mechanic, known as 'Fridgid' Dare.

And Country Women's Associations and the Race Club, including some very obscure ones.

But these people would often drive 200 to 300 hundred kilometres to feed us.

Quite amazing.

Stephen remembers:

SALMONELLA CATERING

We could almost always find a group of country women to provide meals, but on one occasion we drew a blank for a lunch. To solve the problem, we invented our own catering 'company' and called it Salmonella Catering, staffed by a few of our officials.

We had T-shirts made and arranged for many kilos of snags to be collected on the way through one of the towns, along with bread and butter and a box of lettuce. A property allowed us the use of a barbeque and the sausage sandwiches were very popular with the entrants.



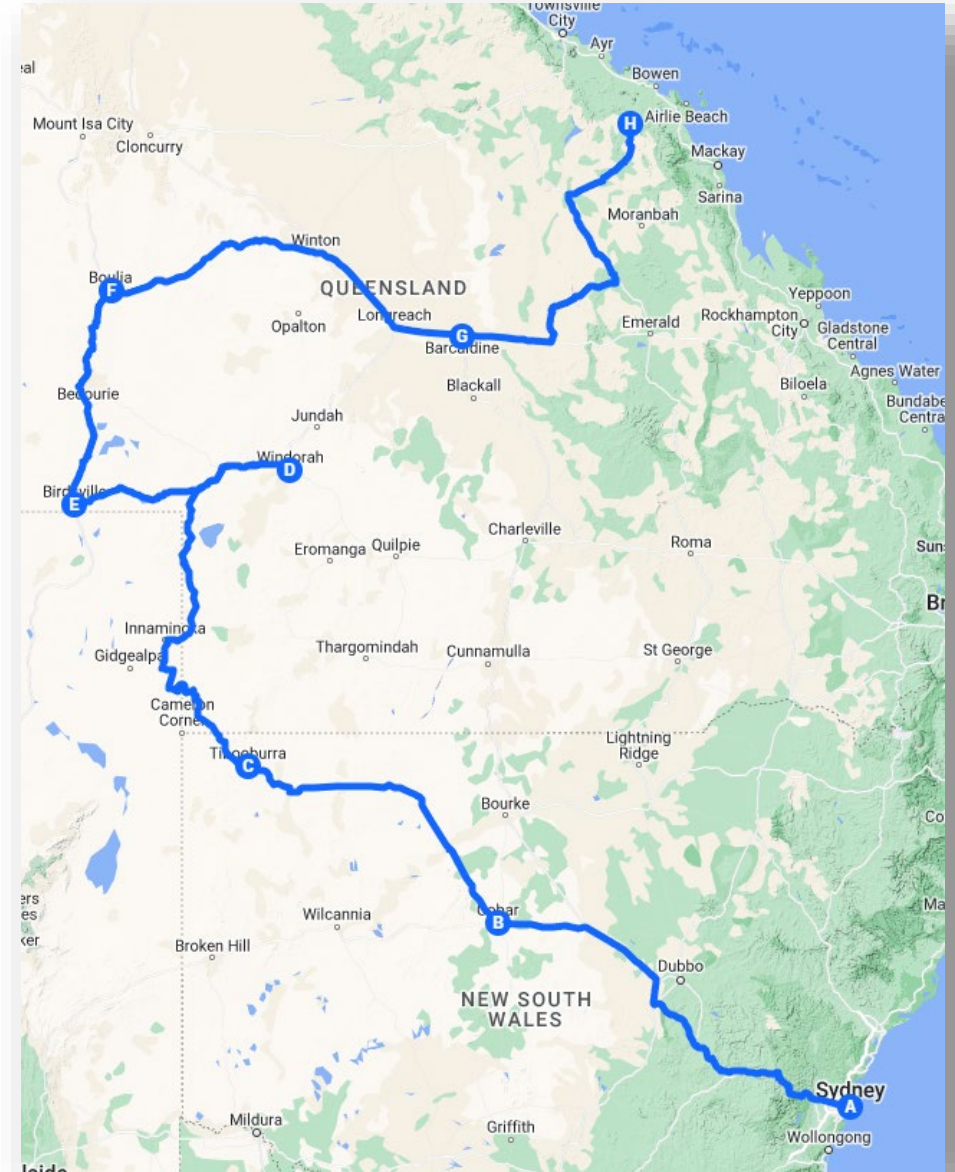
1990 SYDNEY TO HAMILTON ISLAND



Keith Williams – Hamilton Island – lent the Trek his chopper



Ian Chappell burns his jock strap – Trek Ashes are created



The Trek started in Sydney and the route then went to Cobar, Tibooburra, Windorah, Birdsville, Boulia, Barcaldine, and Collinsville before finishing at Hamilton Island

1990 SYDNEY TO HAMILTON ISLAND



Les and Norm Johnson

They fitted an aircraft to the car, and they could stand up through the sunshine roof and 'pilot' the plane. Roselee and Pam accompanied the brothers ... see p14



Nick Brittan flags them away

"When I look back at the Treks that Pam and I went on with Rose and Les, well what wonderful times!

We were in a compact Fairlane with my brother Les having the idea of an aeroplane mounted on top of the roof and even with the name of the first pilot of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Arthur Affleck, on the side.

The whole Trek was fantastic going through private properties to the amazing display of stars in the sky every night. One of the highlights was when we went to Collinsville a small mining town in Queensland and Stephen announced that our cars would be on display at the oval.

Well, you should have seen the kids they came from miles around to come to the oval to have a look. Our car was very popular as you can imagine with the aeroplane on top of the roof and the kids with a smile from ear to ear.

To be quite honest we did too."

Norm Johnson

NICK BRITTAN

Stephen recounts:

"The first one, Hamilton Island. I remember that because Nick Britton rolled my Nissan Patrol when I was in it. Nick was driving and I was in the passenger seat. We had a racetrack on Hamilton Island which used the runway and we had to be off by 3:30 because that's when the Ansett plane was due.

Nick was driving fast down the fence line, and I thought he's going a bit quickly, but then I'm not the European Formula 3 champion ... and he has also been a touring car champion ... so I won't say anything. He turned into the corner and the car rolled over."

Keith Williams had lent us his helicopter for the Trek, and I was taken to Bowen Hospital .. I came back in a neck brace.

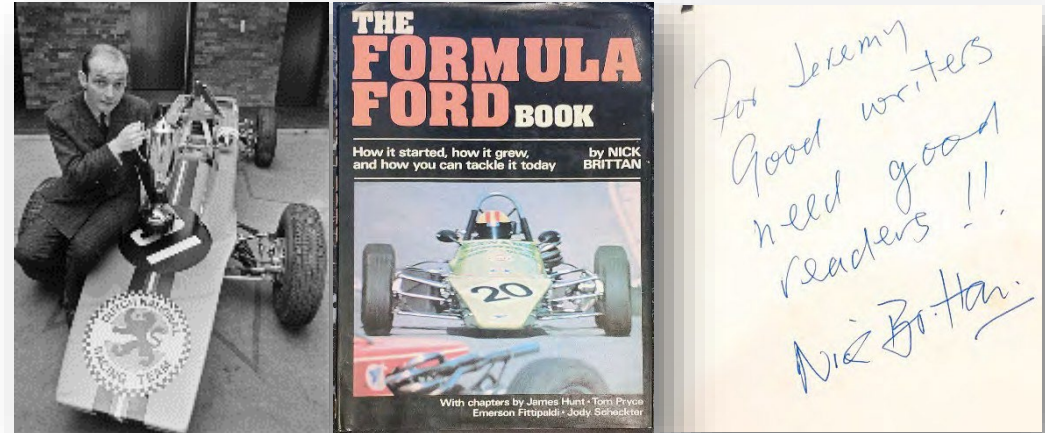
Later I was in the car with Keith Williams, and we hit some bumps and he said: "Oh, sorry!"

He had his offside with him in the car and he said: "That's amazing! I've never, never, ever heard Keith say sorry to anyone."



Nick Brittan gained some notoriety for flying his Formula Vee at Monaco in 1967

A little bit of left rudder and ease back on the stick ??



Nick Brittan was an amazing character. He was instrumental in getting Formula Ford AND Formula Vee off the ground. In the pic below he used to run a road registered Lotus 51 FF around Hyde Park



He had been a competitor in the 1968 London Sydney Marathon and went on to organise the 1993, 2000 and 2004 LSM events. He also organised the London Mexico, the Panama Alaska* the Shield of Africa and the Midnight Sun to Red Sea*

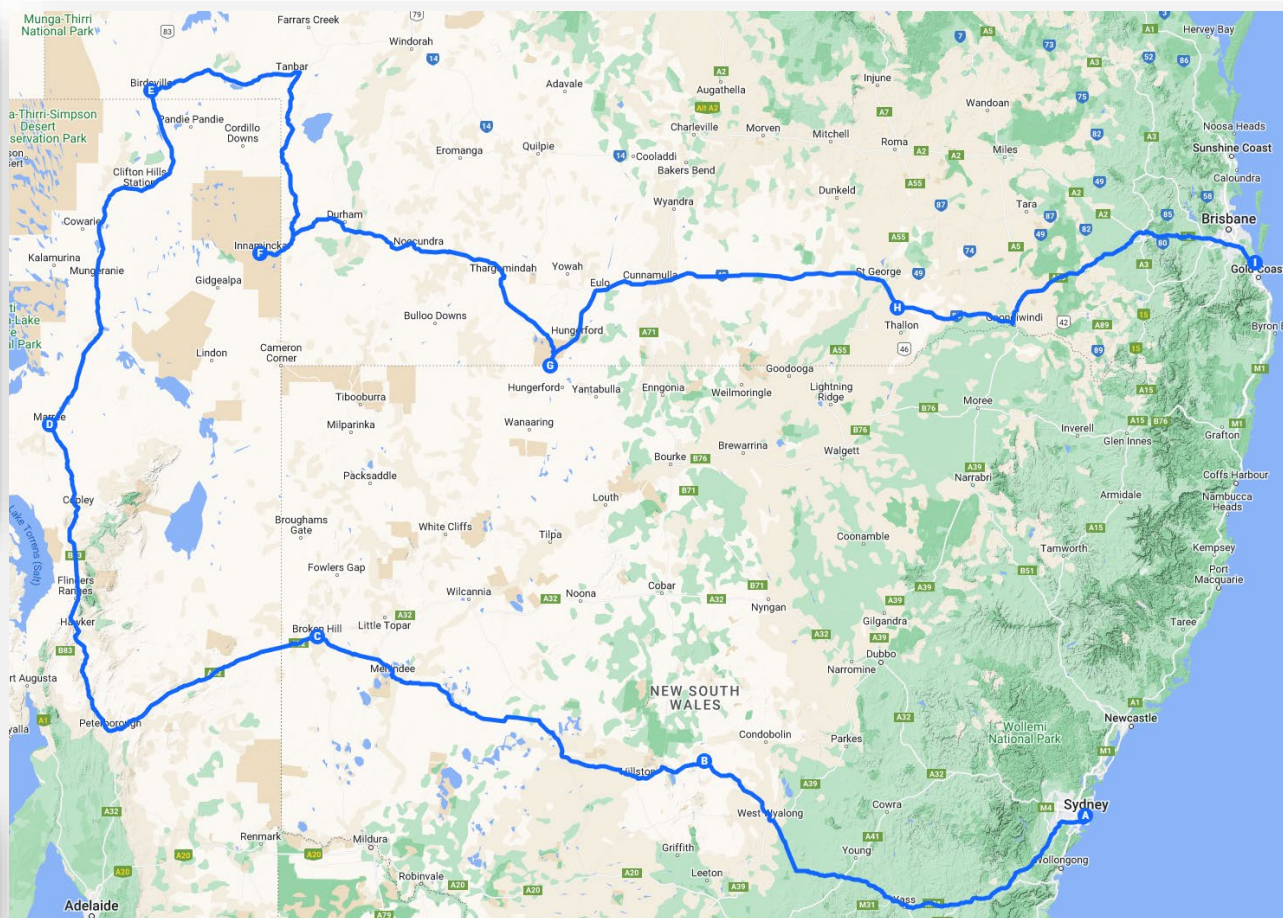
** Terry Daly/Robert Brill and Les Johnson/Jim Peters did both these events*

1991 SYDNEY TO SANCTUARY COVE



Stephen Knox and Pro Hart

The RFDS was so thrilled with Stephen's efforts on the Treks they commissioned a Pro Hart painting for him. It now hangs in the house:



The Trek started in Sydney and the route then went to Lake Cargellico, Broken Hill, Marree, Birdsville, Innaminka, Hungerford, Nindigully and finished in Sanctuary Cove

1991 SYDNEY TO SANCTUARY COVE



1991 marked the first of Alan Jones 17 Treks, 7 of which he did with Liz. Team AFRICA stands for Another Fffing Rally I Can't Afford



Yellow Submarine



Pam Johnson, Roselee Johnson and Kim Ketelbey



The Johnsons

FUNDRAISING

Stephen recalls:

EVERY DONATION COUNTS

“The Variety Club placed all its attention on the people who raised these vast amounts of money, and there is always someone who can write a cheque for 20 grand.

I impressed upon people that they must never consider their donation to be insignificant because they have raised more money in one year than most people donate in their lifetime.

I think that message got through.”

ACCESS TO PROPERTIES

“And we used to get access through a lot of properties. Thousands of kilometres on station roads. And we wouldn't have got that if it hadn't been for the Doctor.

We would rough up their tracks and they had a lot of work for the grader after the Trek have been through.

Probably one of the best examples of that was we had two support official vehicles provided by Santos at the gas fields.

One time we went up the Strzelecki Track and I had a morning meeting with the officials who were from Santos because they knew the road. They went away and rang their base and came back and said you've got approval to go through. And this was in spite of the fact that it was going to cost \$100,000 to repair the roads after we'd been through.”



The first \$475,000

“Santos had such a wonderful relationship with the Flying Doctor because of all their workers. There would have been no other way that they could provide medical facilities.

We used to have a terrific time. We used to do the surveys and we'd stay in the Santos bases. And you go in for dinner in the mess hall with all the workers, and Jill would be the only woman there most of the time.

We'd be having our dinner in this huge mess hall and then the fellow next to you would be having his breakfast, because he was on shift work.”

More recollections from Stephen:

ROB BLAIN

"He had the best business card I've ever seen. He was president and CEO for the South Pacific for CB Richard Ellis, the real estate company.

So, he's the president and CEO for the South Pacific. His territory included India, China, Japan, Indonesia, Australia. He was he was based in Hong Kong. We had the most fantastic night with him and with our daughter in Hong Kong.

He was also an auctioneer. It happened twice to my knowledge, once at Julia Creek and once at Tibooburra.

The school was trying to raise money to get their young kids to the coast for a holiday.

He jumped up on the bar on both occasions, he said. Right, these kids want at least \$5,000 dollars, and he'd go round the room "\$500 OK for you? Fine" ... "A thousand here" ... "\$750 there" ... and so on.

And he knew the people he was pointing to, and they could afford it. So, it wasn't embarrassing people.

The poor teacher who was running it was in tears!"

HOWARD DREDGE

"Howard Dredge from Phillips Foote was very generous. We had a set of Bradman albums, and we were at Moomba. We flew the auctioneer up from Adelaide and he was up on the trailer which was our stage.

And Howard had got up to five hundred dollars

The auctioneer said: "Who's in for \$600?" Howard: "Yeah" "\$700" "Yeah" .. "\$1200? "Yeah!"

The auctioneer said: "Where do you get a place like this?"

THE BOULIA AUCTION

We were in Boulia in 1998 and we had Scott Cam with us ... from the Block TV Series.

We're having an auction, and someone had a pencil drawing of a horse. It wasn't very good, but it was in a frame.

Howard and Phillip somebody from Melbourne were chasing each other around the room. Every time they passed the auctioneer, they put a bid on300400.

All in the spirit of the event!"

1992 SYDNEY TO KALGOORLIE AND BACK ON THE INDIAN PACIFIC

In 1992 we started in Sydney, and we finished in Kalgoorlie and then we chartered the Indian Pacific.

They built the train for us, which was over a kilometre long.

We loaded the cars, we had to have low loaders because the 4WDs had aerials and lights and things on top. They wouldn't go under the bridges.

We loaded the cars at Kalgoorlie, but then we couldn't leave the station because the train had run out of Bundy.

Another case of Bundaberg rum solved the problem and we headed off.

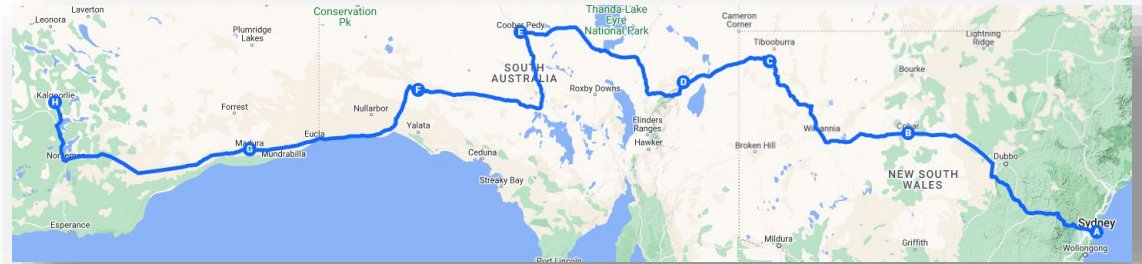
We split the train in Parkes and the cars went into Central, and the passengers section pulled into a siding in Katoomba, and everyone got off the train, and went to the Fairmont Resort for lunch.

A lot of people came up from the city to meet their friends and relations and then the coach just took us back to the train. We all went into Central, got into our cars and drove home.

It had cost \$92,000 to hire the train!

You can't do it anymore. In those days the rolling stock was owned by Country Link and National Rail and someone else and you could hire it from them.

Now they don't have the rolling stock to build trains to meet customer specifications. So, we've done a lot of things that you can't do anymore, like driving through some of the properties where they're all sealed roads now.



The Trek started in Sydney and the route then went to Cobar, Milparinka, Arkaroola, Coober Pedy, Ooldea Soak, Madura and Kalgoorlie



The Governor at Eastern Creek

1992 SYDNEY TO KALGORRLIE AND BACK ON THE INDIAN PACIFIC



Alan Jones and Neil Laurie



The Trek Indian Pacific was a kilometer long and cost \$92,000



*Alan Jones
The bread is to soak up
the Jim Beam*



The Trek couldn't use the standard double deckers and had to specify low loaders to accommodate the aerials and other paraphernalia on the roof of the cars

Jack Jones



1992 SYDNEY TO KALGORRIE AND BACK ON THE INDIAN PACIFIC

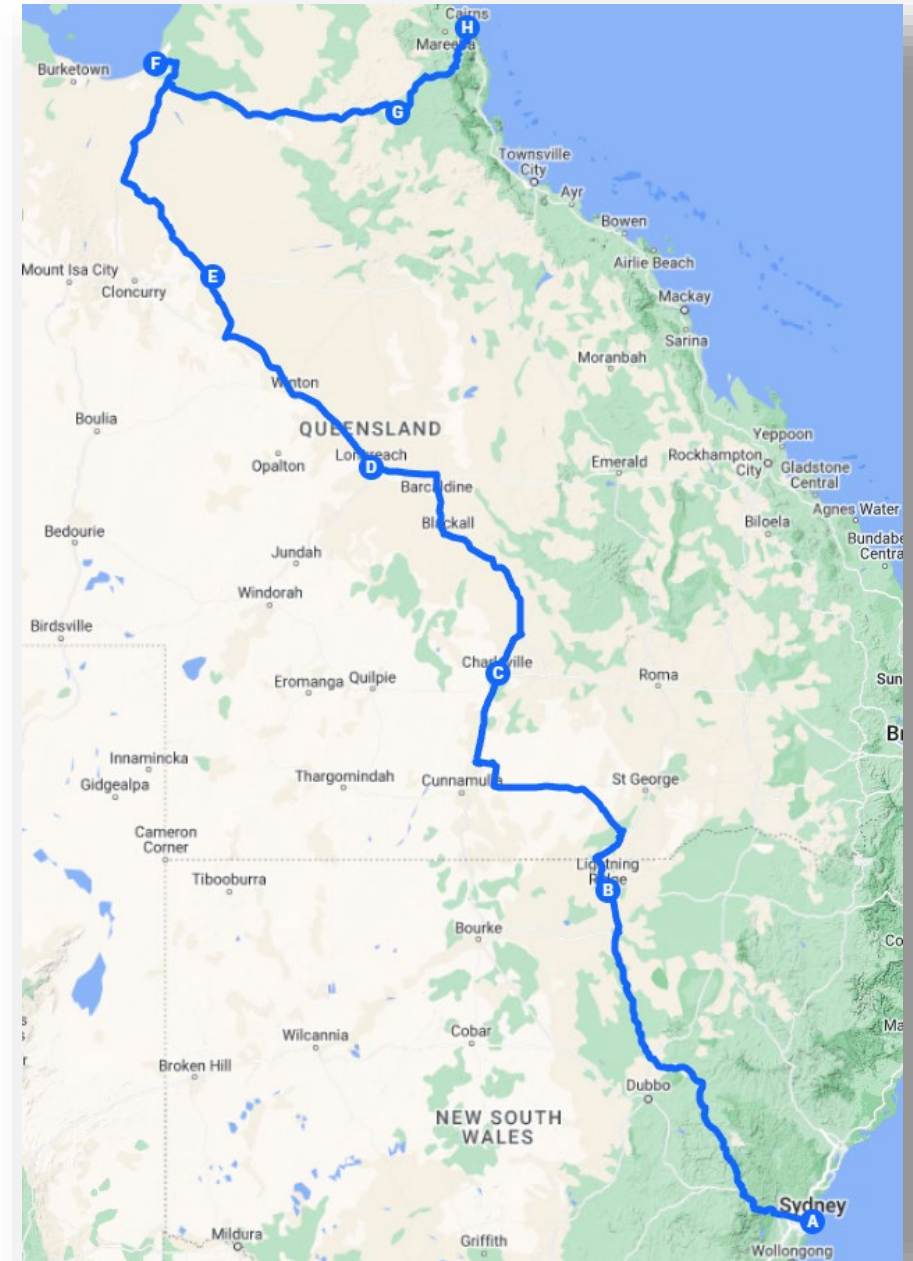


More cars on the Indian Pacific

1993 SYDNEY TO CAIRNS



Alan Jones holding up the Gulflander (above) and stirring the dust (below)



The Trek started in Sydney and the route then went to Lightning Ridge, Tyrone Station, Longreach, Julia Creek, Karumba, Undara Volcanic NP and finished in Cairns

1993 SYDNEY TO CAIRNS - UNDARA LAVA TUBES – MT SURPRISE



The Trek visited some amazing places ... these are the Undara Lava Tubes created by the flow of lava from a now extinct volcano. Stephen and Jill stayed the night in a railway carriage

1994 DUBBO TO DARWIN

Syd Howard used to light a skyrocket every morning at 6.00 to wake everyone up.

You'd wait for the thump before the bang. Yeah. Yeah. Wait for it ... wait for It ... wait for It ... BIG BANG.

They were real fireworks like you used to see on the Harbour Bridge.

A little kid was watching in some outback town, and I said:

"I bet you've never seen fireworks like that before, mate."

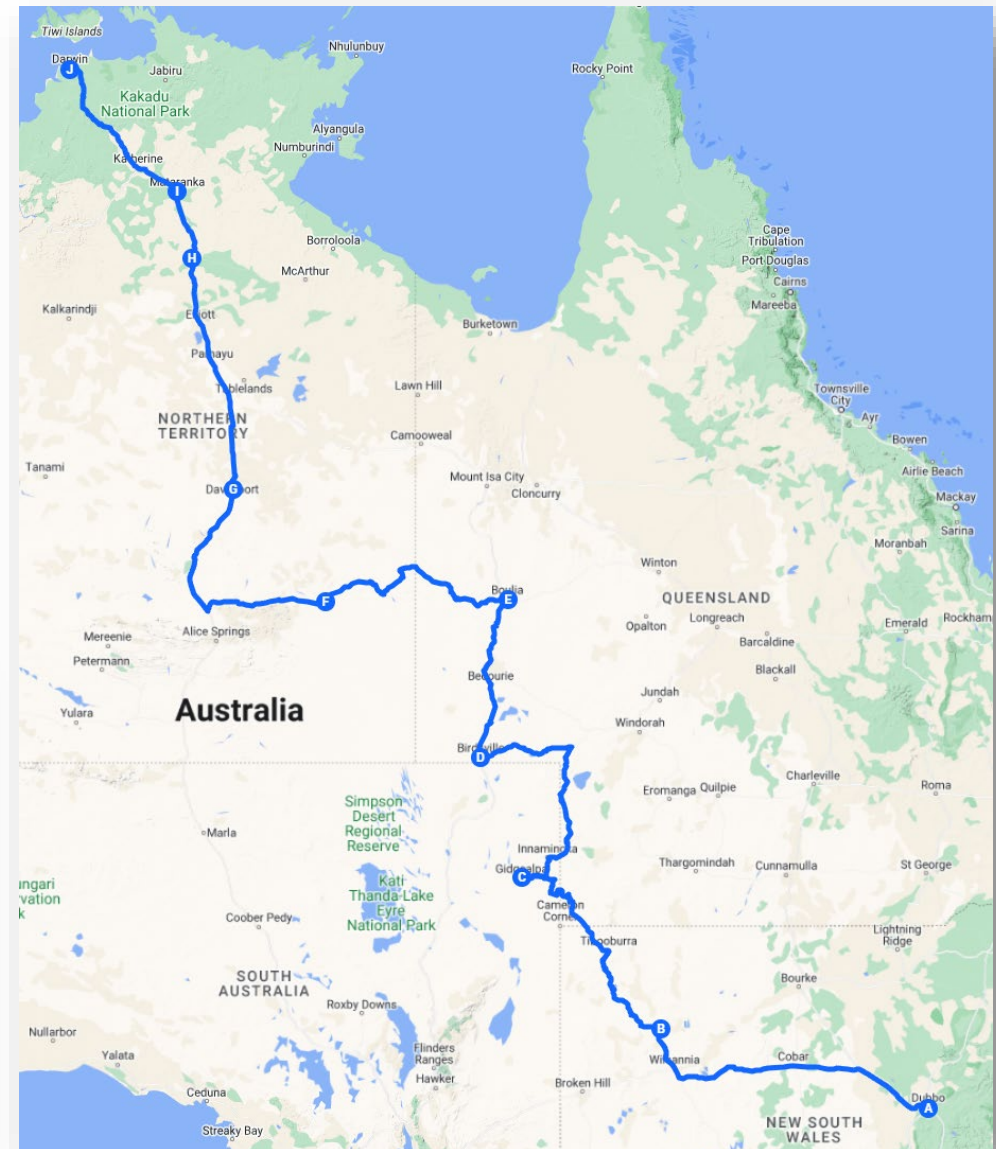
"I've never seen fireworks" was the answer.

Syd Howard did 19 Treks with Stephen and Jill. In 1997 he brought Kevin Bartlett along as co-driver.

KB also did the 2002 Trek with Reg Darwell.



Syd Howard did 19 of Stephen and Jill's Treks



The Trek started in Sydney and the route then went to Dubbo, White Cliffs, Moomba, Birdsville, Boulia, Jervis Station Roadhouse, Wycliffe Well, Daly Waters, Mataranka and finished in Darwin

1994 DUBBO TO DARWIN – JOHN and MARGARET MOODY

John and Margaret Moody only did one Trek with the Royal Flying Doctor – the 1994 Dubbo to Darwin.

They built the car up with a new (from the wreckers!) motor and gearbox and a triple core radiator which caused the only problem they experienced – overheating. This was perhaps caused by some sediment in the old V8 block.

They used to drain the radiator every night and on one occasion were advised to use Coca Cola to help clear the radiator. It may well have helped!

After the Trek finished, they spent a week in Derby sightseeing including the RFDS base, and then motored up the road to Halls Creek and Broome. From there it was back down the Tanami Desert to Ayers Rock ... 1,400 km in one day sitting at a steady 110kph in the old Ford.

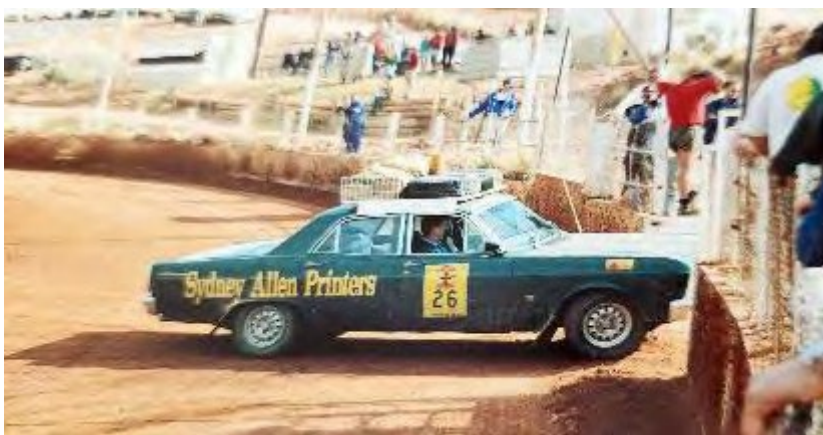
They had planned to pick up fuel at Rabbit Flat, but the servo had recently been purchased by the local aboriginals and they luckily met another traveller after just 200km into the Tanami who warned them they had all gone walkabout.

From Ayers Rock it was down the road to Port Augusta, and back through Broken Hill to home.



The noise from all those stones was incredible

1994 DUBBO TO DARWIN – JOHN and MARGARET MOODY



John does a bit of Speedway ... that right front wheel is definitely waving at the crowd



At Big Red ... and getting some Coke in her

1994 DUBBO TO DARWIN – JOHN and MARGARET MOODY



*Top: A bit of outback humour
Bottom: Everyone listened when Stephen speaks*



Daly Waters ... fill her up with VB

1994 DUBBO TO DARWIN – JOHN and MARGARET MOODY PHOTOS



Camping out ...



Some dickhead ...

1995 WINTON TO TOWNSVILLE



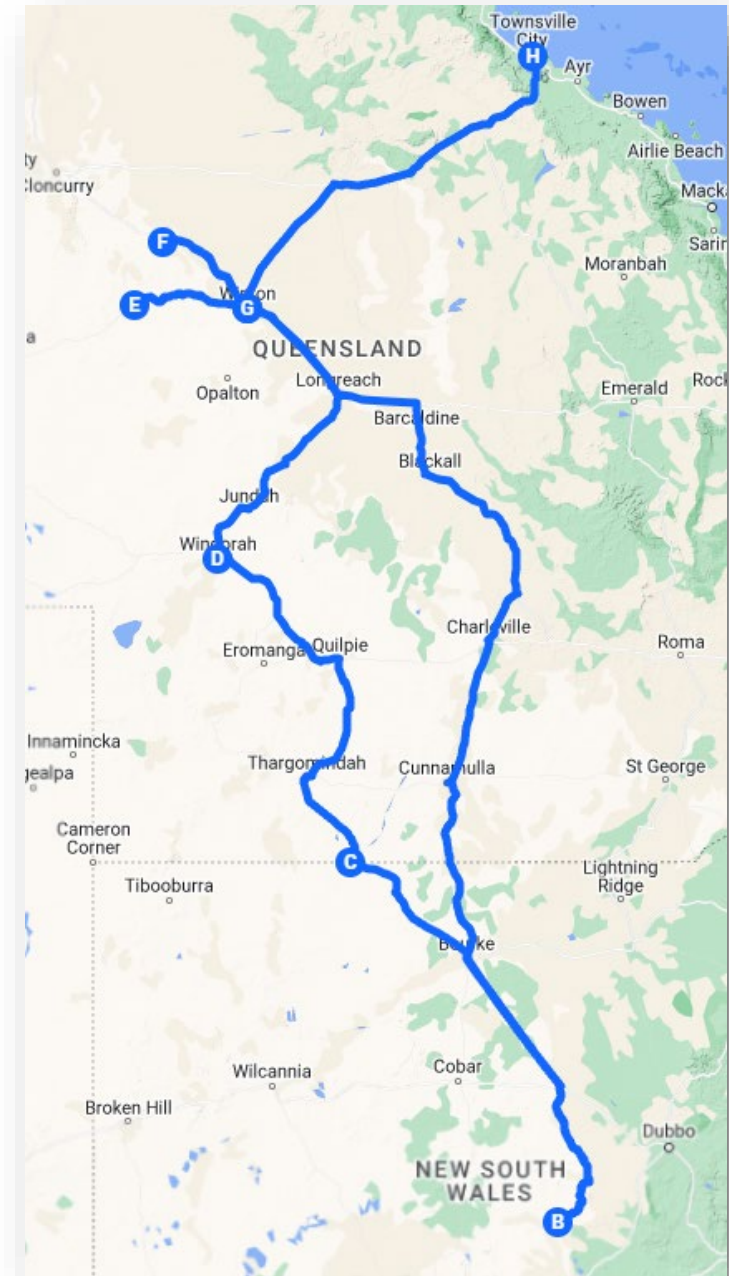
*Daryl and
Gareth
Pike*



*Dick Smith announces the winner of
the Ferrari*



*Alan Jones has a party on the tank
Look at all the empties!*



*The Trek started in Winton, Qld and the route then went to
Condobolin, Hungerford, Windorah, Middleton, Kynuna, Winton
and finished in Townsville*

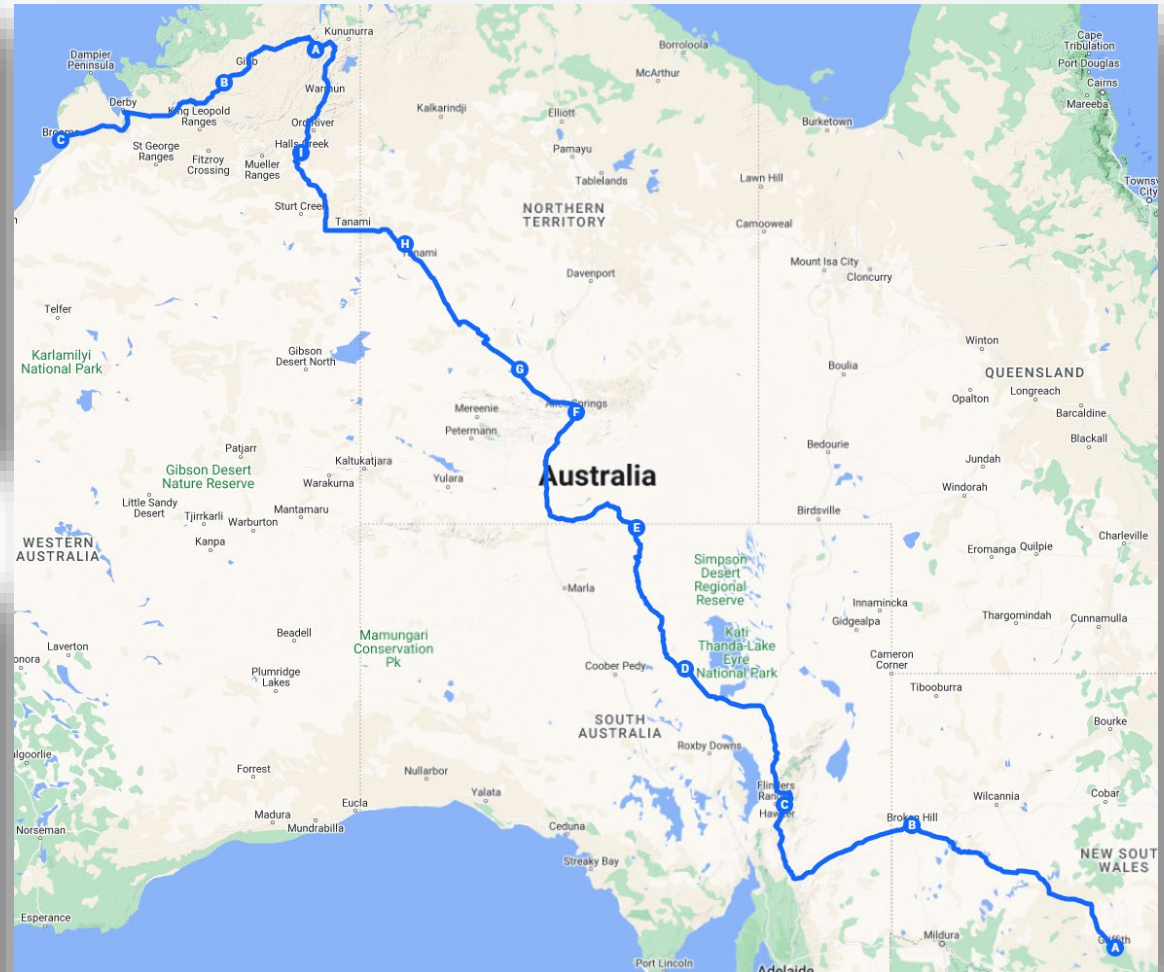
1996 GRIFFITH TO BROOME



Alan Jones and John Adam



Syd Howard fireworks



The Trek started in Griffith and went to Broken Hill, Wilpena Pound, William Creek, Mt Dare, Alice Springs, Tilmouth Well, Rabbit Flat, Halls Creek, El Questro Station, Mount Barnett and finished in Broome

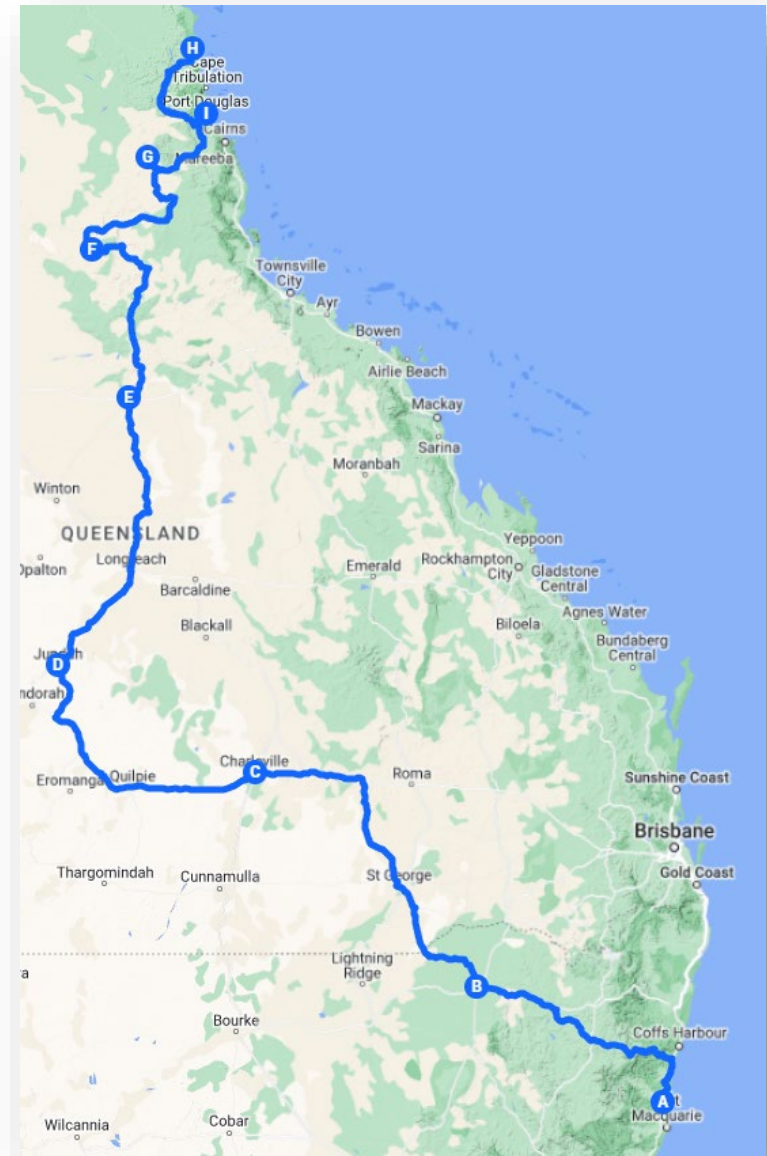
1997 KEMPSEY TO PORT DOUGLAS



Syd Howard and Kevin Bartlett



TOP GEAR SPECIAL EDITION: 20 YEARS OF STEPHEN KNOX'S TREKS



The Trek started in Kempsey and went to Moree, Charleville, Jundah, Hughenden, Forsayth, Chillagoe, Cooktown and finished in Port Douglas

Jim Catts and Phil Wickham

1997 KEMPSEY TO PORT DOUGLAS – DOMINIC TRUELOVE



Dominic Truelove entered three Treks ... in 1997, 1999 and 2001 ... all in VW ... and all with Jon Cran as entrant

The second VW #68 belonged to John Milne ... a good friend of Stephen and Jill

The Savannahlander (right top) runs from Cairns to Einasleigh and has an aluminium body

1998 COONABARABRAN TO YULARA



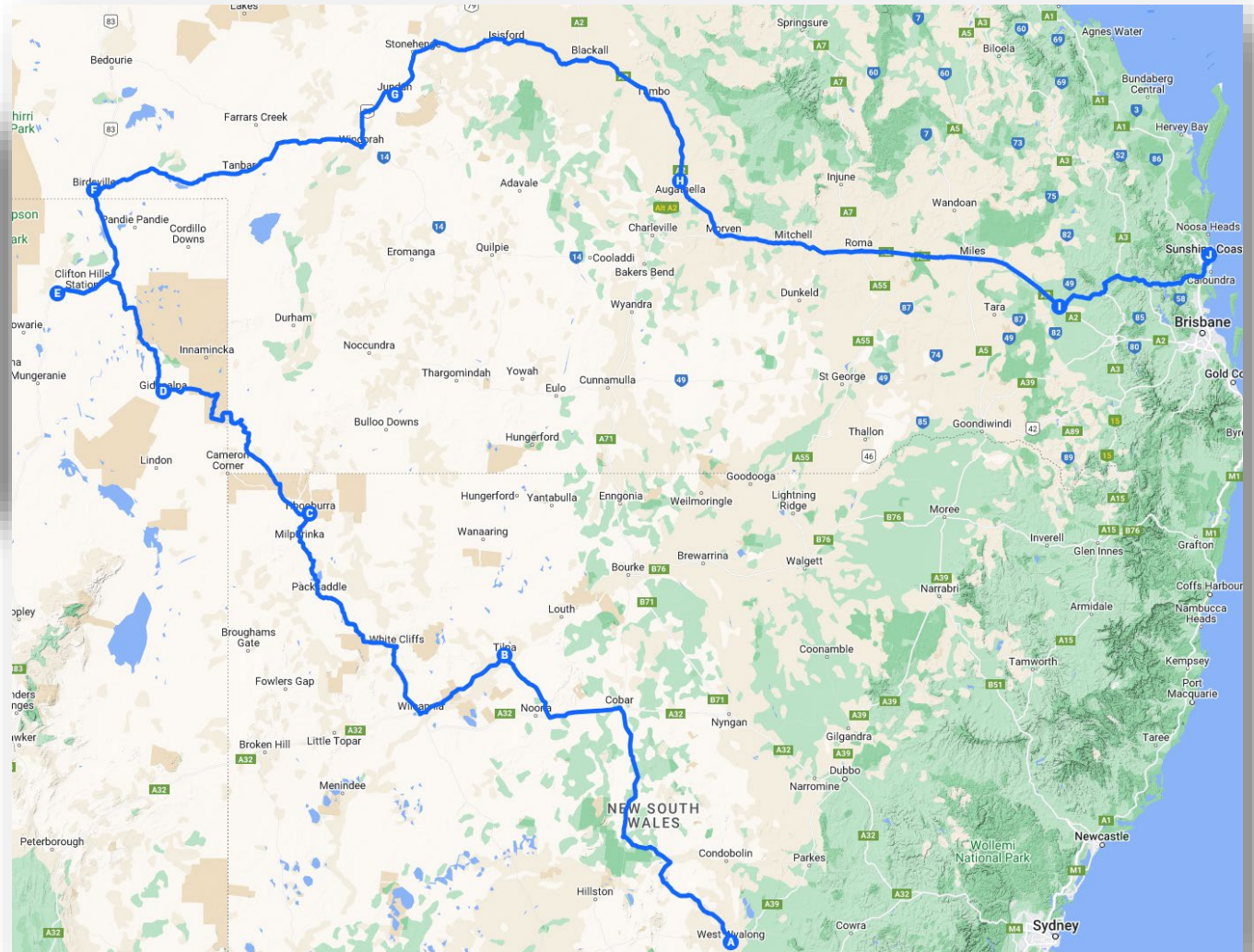
The Trek started in Coonabarabran and went to Lightning Ridge, Thargomindah, Innamincka, Betoota, Boulia, Ross River Resort and finished in Yulara

Flight nurse Jane O'Connor participated in 1998 and joined the medical team in 1999

1999 WEST WYALONG TO MADJIMBA BEACH ON THE SUNSHINE COAST



Jim Catts, Alan Perman and Phil Wickham



The Trek started in West Wyalong and went to Tilpa, Tibooburra, Moomba, Clifton Hills Station, Birdsville, Jundah, Augathella, Dalby and finished in Madjimba Beach

THE SECOND TEN YEARS



2000 GUNNEDAH TO DARWIN



They called him 'Pontius Pilot' and he was the chemist from Winton. He flew Stephen over Ayers Rock and the Olgas ... so relaxed and wonderfully smooth



Daryl and Gareth Pike

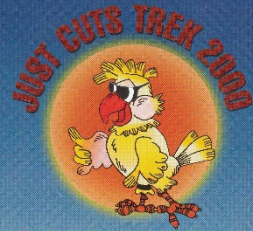


Jim Catts ... still on the spoons



The Trek started in Gunnedah and went to Mitchell, Ilfracombe, Kynuna, Kajabbi, Cammoweal, Cape Crawford, Birdum, Tanami, Top Springs, and finished in Darwin

2000 GUNNEDAH TO DARWIN – TREK BROCHURE



HOW TO ENTER THE 2000 JUST CUTS TREK

This year 2000 is a very important one for Australia and for the Just Cuts Trek. In the year that our country stages the first Olympic Games held on this continent since 1956, the Trek starts its second decade. The 10th Anniversary event was a great success, attracting participants from the USA, the UK, New Zealand, Hong Kong and from around Australia. A record amount of money was raised and we visited some of the great places in the Outback. But not all of them - not by a long shot!

The cost to enter the Trek has been kept at \$5,000 since 1996, and the mild increase to \$5,500 reflects the passage of time and the fact that this is a bigger event than most previous ones. A limited number of support 4WDs will be accepted and the entry fee for those will be 50% of the usual entry fee, or \$2,750. Everyone will pay 'meal money' of \$500 - the same as for 1999. In spite of this being a longer event, that will include a varied range of excellent fare, plus some insurance, a video of the event and a few incidental costs such as all camping fees along the way and a very special Final Dinner. More details can be found in the Supplementary Regulations which will be sent to all who enter.

After ten years, the Trek continues to grow in popularity - 1999 was the biggest ever. It was also the biggest there will ever be, because the Trek has a policy of staying relatively small. Only 70 entries will be accepted and about 20 supports. So send in your entry form quickly with a non-refundable deposit of \$500. (If you nominate a support on your entry form, a special application will be sent to you to be returned with \$250 deposit, also non-refundable.)

COVER NOTE

Car 07 has done the Treks in 1997, '98 and '99 with two different crews. In that time they have donated nearly \$140,000 to the RFDS.

DAY 9 - MONDAY 12 JUNE IN DARWIN
A day to relax and have a look around this wonderful city that is our northernmost capital, Australia's gateway to Asia. Tonight will be the occasion of the Grand Final Dinner which will be held in the Darwin Aeronautical Museum, under the wing of a B-2.

DAY 8 - SUNDAY 11 JUNE TOP SPRINGS TO DARWIN - 606 KMS
Most of today's drive is on beautifully smooth bitumen roads, but there will be a last stretch between Top Springs and the Yarrunga Highway.

DAY 7 - SATURDAY 10 JUNE CAPE CRAWFORD TO TOP SPRINGS - 513 KMS
In 1991, the Trek went to Darwin, to a memorable night at the Daly Waters Hotel. This year it will be a lunch stop before we head off along paddock tracks, crossing the Buchanan (no-cold!) Highway. The Wanda Inn is located at the crossroads. There's nothing else!

DAY 6 - FRIDAY 9 JUNE BURKETOWN TO CAPE CRAWFORD - 509 KMS
Traveling in the Gulf Country usually involves long distances and today is a good example. From Burketown, the road runs parallel to the southern shore of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Through the ornately named Jell's Gate, Wollongong and Boorabool to Cape Bedford where the pub, called "Miserable Old", what more can you say?

DAY 5 - THURSDAY 8 JUNE KAJABBI TO BURKETOWN - 348 KMS
This is a short day with an opportunity to enjoy a great road through the increasingly vast Gulf strations of Gleason, Kamilaroi and Larnie before lunch at the Gregory Downs Hotel. From there it's a short drive to Burketown and our destination for the night. Forest Barmahack Lodge, a few kilometers to the west.

DAY 4 - WEDNESDAY 7 JUNE KYNUNA TO KAJABBI - 528 KMS
One of the many great tracks the Trek has taken over the years is the one between Kynuna and Middleton and in 2000 we will do it again. So we will be heading north west from there, through the beautiful Finucane Range and along some very remote tracks through properties to emerge south of Cloncurry at the Selwyn Mine. The road north of "The Camp" leads to the Gulf, but we will stay over at the Kalkadene Hotel in the tiny town of Kajibbi.

DAY 3 - TUESDAY 6 JUNE ILFRACOMBE TO KYNUNA - 452 KMS
The short run to Longreach on the bitumen flattens to desert. Not long after passing the original Outback hanger, we head off into the scrub and head a challenging way along station roads with names like "Back Creek Road" and through properties. After a brief flirtation with bitumen in the middle of the day, it's off along "Dicks Creek Road" to finish at another famous pub, the Blue Hecker at Kynuna.

DAY 2 - MONDAY 5 JUNE MITCHELL TO ILFRACOMBE - 613 KMS
Another longish day, but over some great tracks between Mitchell and Ilfracombe and in the afternoon through the country around Ilfracombe. There is a top class sealed road all the way from start to finish today, but we have succeeded in avoiding almost all of it. Tonight at the Wolluna Hotel will be very special. Owner Damien Cuts will put on his famous "Back to the Bush" show and a finer horseman than Damien would be very hard to find.

DAY 1 - SUNDAY 4 JUNE GUNNEDAH TO MITCHELL - 782 KMS
Gunnedah is another of these great country towns, like West Wyalong last year and Coonabarabran the year before; that will give the Just Cuts Trek a wonderful farewell on what will be one of the best trips in the event's eleven year history. It starts with a beautiful drive through Berridge, still in the New England area, before heading north to the Queensland border. Day 1 will be fairly long to get us close to the Gulf and beyond while the going is easy. Dinner tonight will be at an unusual venue - the old Jennings Shire Hall at Mitchell, right next door to the hot spa pool. Immersion is optional, but recommended.

THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE
Life at the end of the 20th Century is very difficult to the late 1920s when the Reverend John Flynn saw his dream of a universal health service take to the air. The "Mantle of Safety" that he worked so hard to achieve now covers 90% of this vast land, an area greater than that of Western Europe.

To survive in this era of economic rationalism and not allow its provision of health care to be compromised, the Service has to stay at the forefront of its technology and management practices. This has led the NSW Section to establish a new base at Dunkin and to take over the aircraft of the Victorian Air Ambulance Service. It has already established a base in Launceston (Tasmania) and Harkness (Sydney NSW) and, of course, retains its Broken Hill operation.

Other States and Territories in Australia are covered by the RFD's Central Section which after South Australia and the Northern Territory and those are based in Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria. Although the emphasis has shifted, one thing that has not changed in those 72 years is the need for effective medical services for the people in remote areas. The RFDs, which operates the largest, most experienced and most comprehensive aeromedical service in the world, now treats more travellers than ever before, as the Outback becomes more accessible to city dwellers in 4WDs. Clinics are more frequent and offer a far greater range. A service that John Flynn could have imagined and, as a result, is more reliable and effective than ever before.

The other thing that remains unchanged is the Service's need for financial support and, with nearly \$3.75 million donated in its first ten years, the Just Cuts Trek is its leading contributor.

This is the brochure for the 2000 Gunnedah to Darwin Trek sponsored by Just Cuts

Just Cuts founder and owner Dennis McFadden came on every Trek from 1999 and would bring a team of hair stylists to some of the locations and the money charged for a cut went to the Doctor.

You had to be a bit brave though ... see over

JUST CUTS – A CLOSE SHAVE FOR STEPHEN!



THE CATTS FAMILY STORY

To participate in the RFDS Trek one needed a vehicle 30 years old or older and make a donation to the RFDS of \$5000 per car. Meals and other expenses were additional.

I did 11 events in three different cars:

1. Ford Mustang
2. Peugeot 404 Ute converted to van which I bought from Alan Jones for a particular reason
3. Peugeot 504 sedan

Over the years I had four different co-drivers. My son James helped me prepare the cars for each event and after 2 Bourke to Burketown and two RFDS events with the Mustang he asked me if he could come on the event.

He was 15. Alan Jones has his Peugeot 404 van for sale. It would be an ideal vehicle if James was allowed to come as he would be safe sleeping in it while the boss was sipping Aroona Mineral Water by the campfire.

It was then a question of getting Mr Knox's blessing. Stephen replied:

"everyone is welcome on this event. The rules are the same for all and I will ask that:

1. He doesn't drive unless on private property of which there is plenty ... 100s of miles in fact
2. He makes his share of the entrance donation to RFDS
3. Obtains the written permission from his school headmaster.

The headmaster gave his blessing as long as James wrote a detailed story of his experience to be published in the school magazine. Next, he had to find sponsors to cover his donation. It was very difficult for him to obtain cash sponsorship and he was keen to get Bundaberg Rum on his side as he was a keen rugby player and Bundy and the Bundy bear sponsored rugby and indeed paid his expenses to play in Fiji in an under 15 team.

Bundaberg Rum responded to his written request for sponsorship and invited him to a meeting to present his case. After a week or so they came back with an offer. No cash but plenty of promotional product: Bundy Bar Mirrors, watches, clocks, hats, shot glasses, bags, Dark and Stormy and Bundy and Coke cans. Pallets of each. Thousands of \$\$ worth of stuff!



Every car naa to buy a carton of water before the start. No water ... no start



Jim organised the shop



Raffle at least 5 draws ... maybe 10 ... per night. One of the princesses draws



James and Stephen



James and Stephen



R: Perfect night's sleep in the Peugeot bought from Alan Jones

THE CATTS FAMILY STORY

James went to Stephen Knox in an attempt to find a way to convert all this stuff into cash for the Doctor. Jill Knox would set up a shop at scrutineering at the start. James sold raffle tickets every night. Stephen announced no raffle ticket, no dinner voucher, and also supervised the drawing and presentation of prizes. Nearly every entry won a prize.

James designed and found a tank manufacturer to make a "One Gallon of Bundy" tank. Limited editions numbered 1 of 3 to 3 of 3. On two successive years they were sold at the annual RFDS event auction night. They sold for well over \$1000 each. 1 of 3 came back at a next event auction and sold again for similar money.

Stephen and Jill ran this amazing event for over 20 years.

They would drive the entire route through dust and flooding rivers.

Jill wrote route notes with absolutely pinpoint accuracy of distance and detail.

They organised three meals per day for about 300 people using Women's Associations, Rotary, Schools Parents Associations, etc. They also organised amazing local and international entertainers to perform in the Outback on the back of a semi-trailer at 8:00 at night.

Jill would check on James and other special people every day.

Stephen had total control of 300 of the countries professional and business big heads. I only witnessed him lose his temper once. The naughty boy owned one of Australia's wealthiest private businesses which had just become a public company. One could hear a pin drop for the rest of the event.

Stephen and Jill are always so calm, smiling and getting on with their business quietly while making a huge impact on many of the people associated with the event, not to mention the contribution to funding of capital expenditure to the Royal Flying Doctor Service who get no funding from Government for capital expenditure and only operational support.

Stephen and Jill are very worthy recipients of their Order of Australia awards.

They, in my case, made a teenage boy into a man in under 12 months. Now at 40 I still hear him say "Knoxy would handle it this way".



There were all sorts of awards for all sorts of things



Frank Kleinig wins a Bundy Watch but not interested in the 1-gallon Barrell



The event had its own aircraft flown by Pontius Pilot



The first night over the Qld Border – the Bundy Stop. A night to forget!



THE CATTS FAMILY STORY



JIM CATTS **THE SPOONS PLAYER**

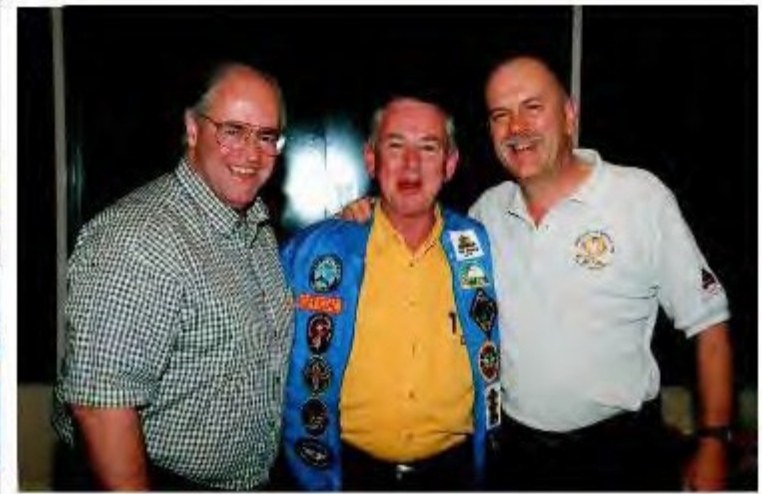
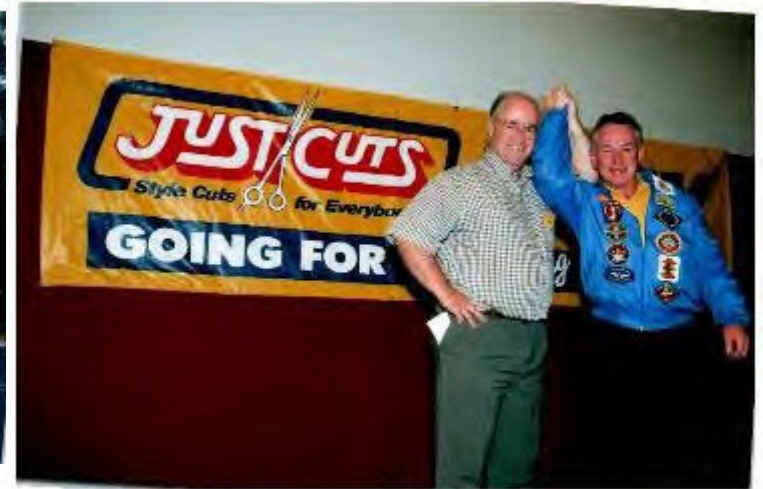
LEFT:
The best and most famous piano
accordionist in the outback entertained
us on several occasions



RIGHT:
Locals of all ages were always welcome



THE CATTS FAMILY STORY



The Peugeot 404 caught fire during preparation one year. The result was good. Harvey Milne ... Mr. Aroona .. would co-drive on the next event

Mr. Aroona, Harvey Milne, would buy Stephen Knox's official jacket of 10 years for a handsome sum and present it to Jim Catts!

Pat – an opal miner from central north Qld, bids well over \$1,000 for the One Gallon Of Bundy Rum Limited Edition. He donated it back the next year and raised nearly \$2,000.

2001 DUBBO TO MOSSMAN

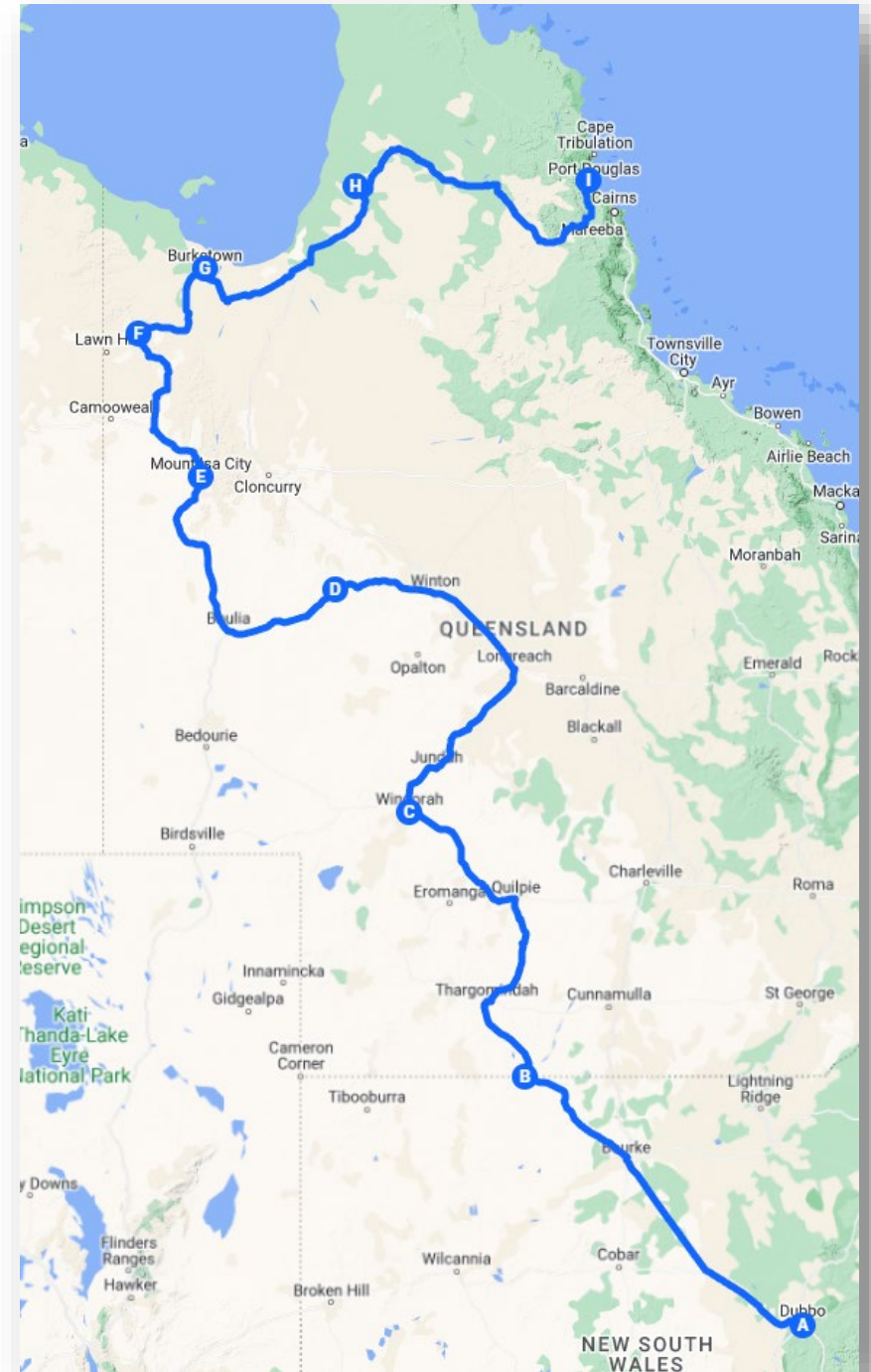


Dominic Truelove and Jon Cran



Jim Catts in Sound of Music garb

The Trek started in Dubbo and went to Hungerford, Windorah, Middleton, Mt Isa, Adels Grove, Burketown, Dorunda Station, and finished in Mossman



2002 COFFS HARBOUR TO PERTH



WA Governor Lt Gen John Sanderson at Laverton



The Trek started in Coffs Harbour and went to Nindigully, Isisford, Winton, Boulia, Ross River Resort, Alice Springs, Ylara, Tjukurla, Laverton, Kalgoorlie, and finished in Perth



Gordon and Kim Ketelbey



Jim Catts and Aroona man Harvey Milne

2002 COFFS HARBOUR TO PERTH – DARRYL and GARETH PIKE

Thank you, Jill and Stephen, for guiding No1 son Gareth, and myself on some incredible trips around Australia.

The most amazing of these was in 2002 from Coffs Harbour to Perth, via Alice Springs and Uluru. A distance, mostly on dirt, of 5,774km.

Our car was a 1970 Porsche 911 which was built for the Paris to Dakar Rally. It didn't compete in that event but did finish in the London Sydney, after which I bought the car from a competitor.

However the most eventful of Stephens Treks for us, was the Gunnedah to Darwin in 2000. It was 4,911km and again mostly on dirt.

We were still in the 911, beautifully prepared, but we finished in Darwin with it looking a very sad mess. We gunned it off the start onto a long strait out of Gunnedah and then, at 120ks per hour, BANG, the bonnet unclipped and buckled up over the windscreen, with the driving lights smashing the roof down onto our heads, and the windscreen smashed. As we blindly came to a stop a galah flew into the open boot ... its in the front ... and we found it dead amongst luggage. It was a mess.

Of course, two hoons driving a Porsche didn't get much sympathy from the passing trekkers in their Holdens, Fords etc. except, "Mate clip your bonnet down next time." Which I had forgotten to do.

We bent the bonnet back as best we could, gaffer taped the windscreen then we had to lay upside down on the seats, and with our feet, popped the roof back.

We were well behind the rest of the trekkers by this time, so we had to push the 911 harder.

It was dusk, a red dusty road with Gareth driving and me with my eyes partially shut. Rounding a blind rough and dusty bend at over 100ks an hour, I noticed a man-sized roo sitting in the middle of the track. STOP, I yelled to Gareth, but with youth on his side he decided to duck it and then it's mate, even bigger, jumped out in front of us. It had nowhere to go, and neither did we.



2002 COFFS HARBOUR TO PERTH – DARRYL and GARETH PIKE

With a dead roo draped across our bonnet, and our lights smashed, we stopped a 100 metres down the track.

We thought we had cleaned everything up, even dragging old man roo off the road while being watched by its partner, but we hadn't.

Pictures will show how the front bumper was buckled in the middle with a square slot where a number plate might go.

Well, behind that slot was an oil cooler, with pipes running from the engine in the rear, through the cooler back under the car on the opposite side to the engine.

That seemed OK until we felt oil dripping onto our shoes. This wasn't what you need at night with 100ks to go.

Long story short we made it to the next stop.

I said that this was the most eventful, well the excitement didn't stop there, but the next event was a funnier one.

Because of the clouds of dust being thrown up by 100 competitors it was best to be at, or close to the front of the group, and this we were as we were approaching Kajabbi, somewhere in the middle of the Northern Territory.

As we got closer to this town with one pub and a few houses, we spotted green grass near the Pub.

After sleeping in swags, on red dust on the nights before, we had to accelerate to claim a green grass sleeping spot, which we did.



2002 COFFS HARBOUR TO PERTH – DARRYL and GARETH PIKE

We pitched camp and sat back watching the rest of the cars arrive while about a dozen of the lucky ones claimed the trophy, long green grass.

We had a great barbecue and a few beers, and being tired we climbed into our swags and went to sleep.

At midnight it started raining, I shook Gareth who was asleep in his swag next to me and yelled “It’s raining let’s put our gear under the car.”

“It can’t be raining look at the sky, stars right to the horizon” he replied.

Then a funny taste in my mouth, pieces of sodden paper landing on us with the rain, and the smell !

We didn’t know that at midnight, the pumps were programmed to start emptying the pub’s septic tanks, which were pumped through the large garden sprays. Well, we scrambled, to the laughter of those sleeping rough in the desert. We had to join them now and find a camp in the worst spots.

Yes, the smell lasted for days

Lesson learned. Green grass in the desert doesn’t just happen!

Thank you, just a few of the many hundreds of stories told on, and about the Trek by all the trekkers.

Darryl and his son Gareth competed in five of Stephen’s Treks

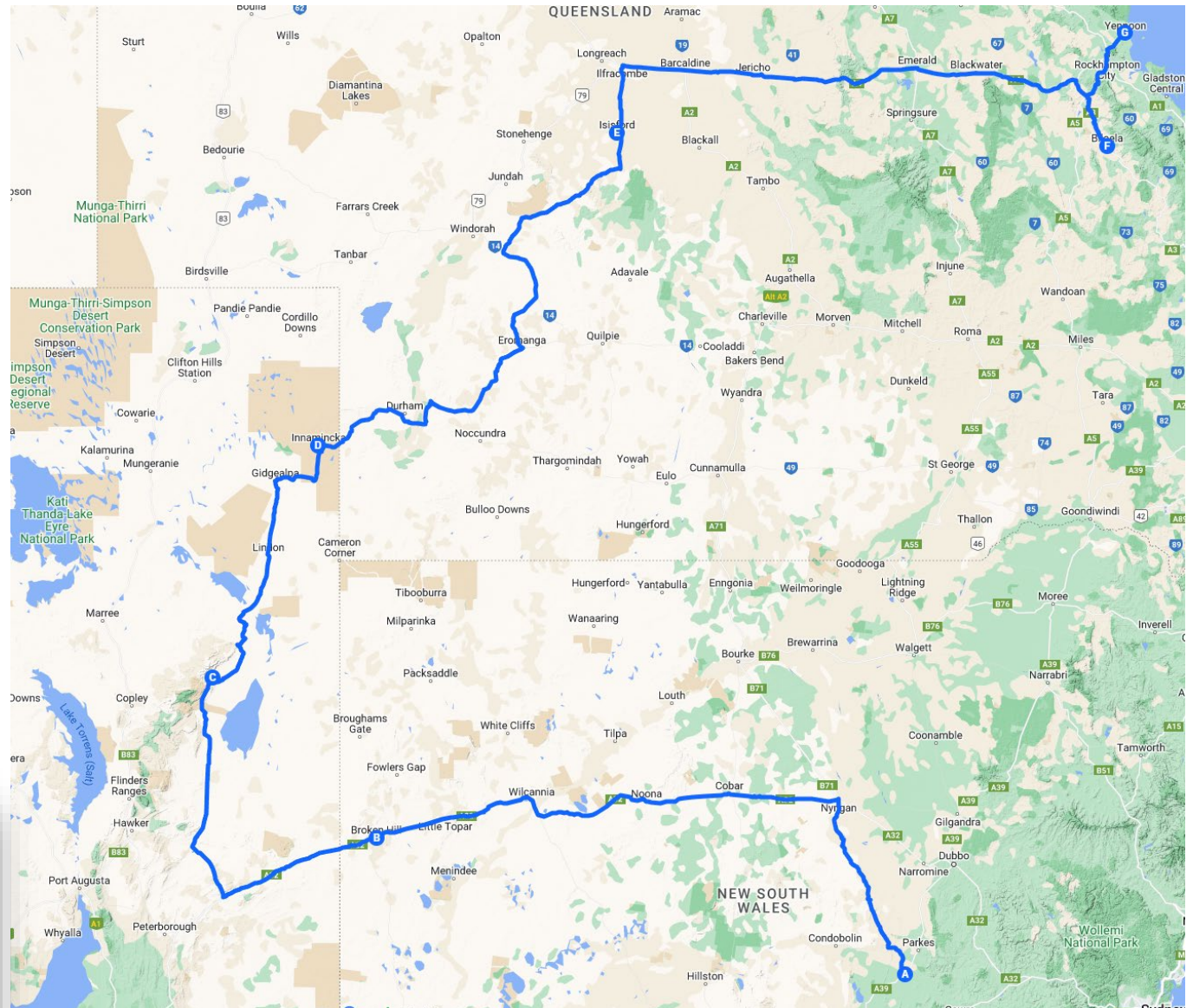


2003 FORBES TO YEPPOON

The Trek started in Forbes and went to Broken Hill, Arkaroola, Innaminka, Isisford, Biloela, and finished in Yeppoon



Glen Spear event photographer brought his own chopper



2003 FORBES TO YEPPON – BUCKLAND TENNIS CLUB

The Buckland Tennis Club is east of Tambo on the road to Rockhampton. It doesn't appear on a Google map.

They've got tennis courts and other sporting facilities, and I remember them cooking the meal in a huge corrugated iron contraption seemed like a raised garden bed and they moved the food around with a paddle while it cooked.

There's this fellow who injured himself. He cut himself badly on his leg and had a flap of skin. This had to be sewn back on and they laid him out on the bar and operated on him with the bartender serving beers over the top.

Anyway, they got him back together and didn't spill a drop!

We also always took one of the Flying Doctor staff with us one of the doctors, and a nurse. The Flying Doctor treated that is a bit of a junket for the doctors.

One of the girls who joined us couldn't quite believe this. She joined us at Coffs Harbour. We went Coffs Harbour to Fremantle ... straight across the middle.

And she said: "I'm going to hate this, these big blokes getting drunk and so..."

But within 24 hours she was sold, and this was the start of a lifelong friendship.



Lachlan Millar MP posted this video of the Doctor landing at Buckland Tennis Club:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=362352597726572>

SAFETY ON THE TREKS

We asked Stephen if there had been any bad accidents.

"I can only think of one ... but there might be two ... where the Flying Doctor was called in, which was sort of embarrassing since we're trying to raise money for them. But we found we tended to have rollovers on the first day with new people, new entrants.

They think that they getting their modified HQ or HK Holden or their Volkswagen or the Chevy Impala or something and drive like 100 miles an hour on dirt and a few of them came to grief."

They were required to have rollover protection and full harness

They would quickly settle down. We didn't have too many. We had one with a car stopped at the gate in dust ... there were huge clouds of dust on those roads. Another car hit it up the back.

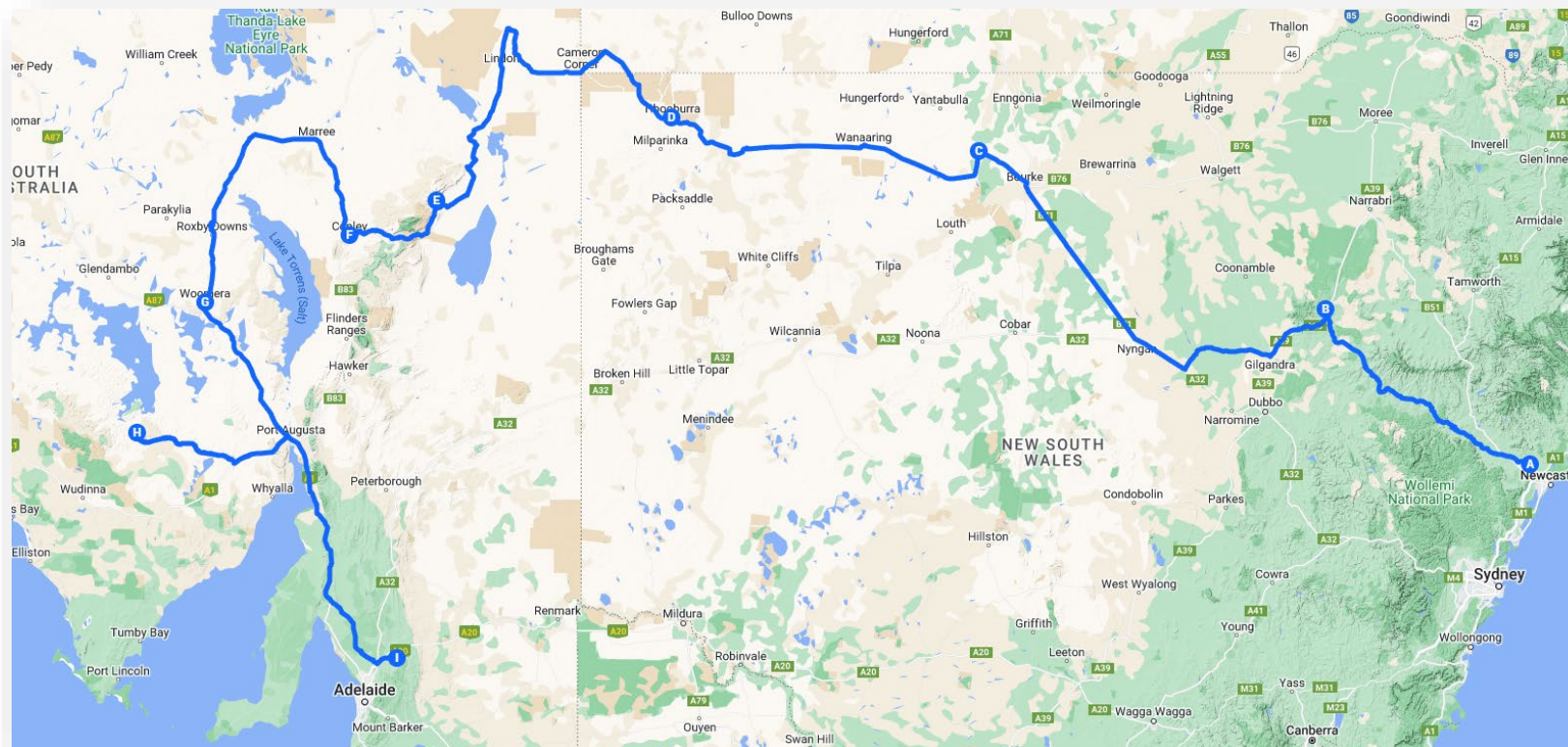
Anyway, we insisted that everyone call on the CB any potholes and danger signs. For example, they would say:

"Car 14 at 33.6 kilometres. Big wash out."

So, you have you have to do that . It was compulsory, and we'd talk to people if they weren't doing that.



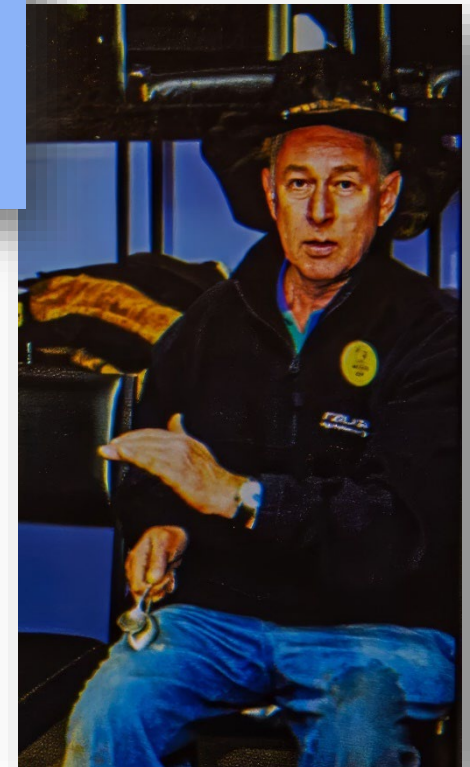
2004 MAITLAND TO TANUNDA IN THE BAROSSA VALLEY



The Trek started in Maitland and went to Coonabarabran, Fords Bridge, Tibooburra, Arkaroola, Copley, Woomera, Mount Ives and finished in Tanunda



Daryl and Gareth Pike



Jim Catts still on the spoons

2005 ESPERANCE TO ALICE SPRINGS



Alan and Chris Jones

Alan Jones was a rascal

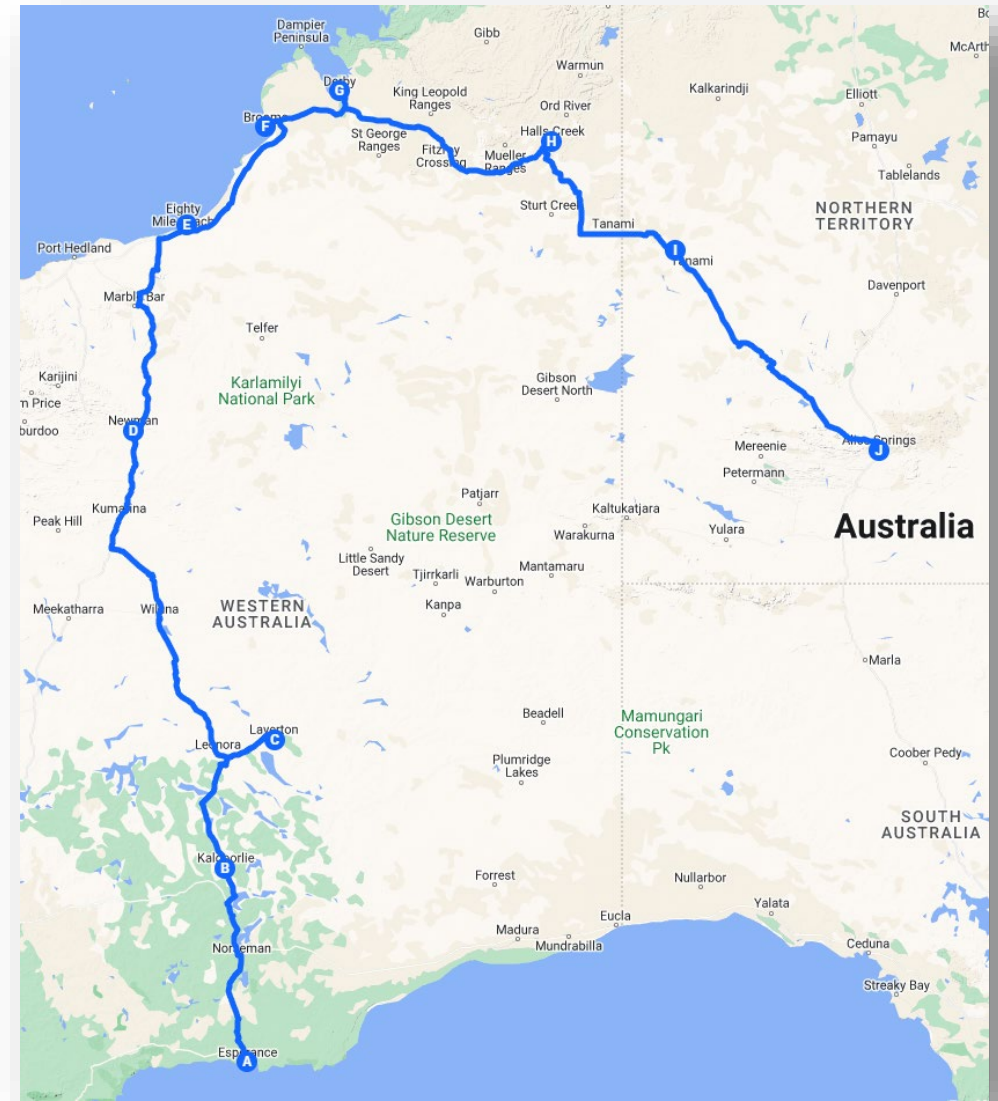
He had air horns fitted from a diesel locomotive ...

We stopped at Yaraka and then at the end of the line there are buffers and a concrete block, and someone pitched their tent on the railway.

Jones got up on the railway line.... put all these lights on ... and blew the diesel horn ... Blah.... Blah....

He also in the middle of the Nullarbor Plain had a cassette that he put in his player in the car and it was full of orgasm sounds.

And in the deadly silence of the Nullarbor "Ahah.... ahaaaah" He played this every night!!!



The Trek started in Esperance and went to Kalgoorlie, Laverton, Newman, 80 Mile Beach, Broome, Derby, Rabbit Flat and finished in Alice Springs

2005 ESPERANCE TO ALICE SPRINGS – BILL CURTIS

Bill Curtis has just joined TSCC, and he took part in a number of Trek's in the early 2000's. All the photos he sent were from the 2005 event so that's why its here in this publication. Bill takes up the story:

The Kids' Panadol Car was a bit unusual in the Trek in that it was solely supported by a corporate sponsor: GSK Consumer.

In the early 2000's GSK Consumer developed a new campaign for the range of Kids' Panadol variants. I was doing some work with GSK at the time, and got the Panadol marketing team thinking about the benefits of sponsoring a car in the Outback Trek.

- Supporting a worthy health care cause: RFDS
- Providing resources for outback schools wherever we went
- Extending the awareness of the Kids' Panadol Echidna from the TV and print campaign
- Meeting GSK Consumer sales reps on the route and helping them in their activities with GPs and Pharmacists
- Showing the car at sales conferences
- Thus, the company was able to underpin its marketing activities with some really useful work in the community

There were a number of people in the Car 26 Team: some from marketing and advertising and three guys who were/still are brilliant mechanics. We had a good look at the Outback Trek before we decided to join. We spoke to some participants, went to the start one year to meet people and get a feeling for what taking part in an Outback Trek was like.

Our team had done several Variety Club Bashes, so we had some experience. We really liked what we saw and heard about with the Trek. Our plan was to involve a major pharma company.....and it would be very bad if the event was unprofessionally run.....or worse.



At the 2005 start at Luna Park



In Western Australia

2005 ESPERANCE TO ALICE SPRINGS – BILL CURTIS

The organisation was always superb: the officials knew what they were doing, we never had days of complete and utter chaos which used to occur all too frequently in the Bashes.

Stephen and Jill were terrific in helping me set up the relationship with GSK Consumer.

Panadol represented a huge percentage of GSK Consumer's sales and profit and was the brand leader in the OTC Analgesics market.....a market that is under constant surveillance in terms of appropriate marketing strategies etc.

The initial presentations had all the right info and data to reassure the senior marketing guys at GSK Consumer.

Our team also put together a Support Vehicle, manned by three of the mechanics in our team. It was a Toyota Land Cruiser with a welder in the back. The guys carried out many extraordinary mechanical rescues in the Treks.....they were voted Top Support Team twice.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is a unique Australian organisation. Over 20 years Stephen and Jill Knox brought the RFDS to life for countless people in the cities, while raising a huge amount of money, and having fun.

It was an honour and a privilege to have been part of it for a few years.



With the award-winning support vehicle



A school we visited in Laverton



Kid's Panadol with all the kids

2005 ESPERANCE TO ALICE SPRINGS – BILL CURTIS

The red dirt gets in everywhere



Two kids they looked after



In the middle of nowhere



Somewhere in the outback



2005 ESPERANCE TO ALICE SPRINGS – JOHN TOURISH

It all started with Variety event in 1988 as a young McDonald's Franchise Operator I was asked to become part of the team to erect a tent McDonald's Restaurant at William Creek (S.A.), to operate for one day, feed the locals and the entrants in the Variety Bash. This followed with the same set up at Walkabout Creek Hotel (Qld), then Louth (NSW) which was substituted for Noona due to some very wet country and floods and finally Daly Water Pub (N.T.). My usual mode was to work on setting up the Macca's, work for the event and then join one of the vehicles for the rest of the event.

This led to me getting together with a few Penrith business mates and we prepared a couple of HR holdens and raised funds for Variety and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves for a few years.

BUT The "word" was out that Stephen Knox ran a great event raising funds for the Royal Flying Doctor, something close to my lifestyle and understanding of the "Doctors" value to the people in the Bush, so felt it was time for a change.

My business partner and long-time friend Leigh Turnbull from Rockhampton got together, and I built up the 1968 Chevy Impala into a 'Trek Car'. David Crust from Longreach contributed greatly to the build and the three of us enjoyed a number of Treks over the years, Leigh and myself raising the funds and David doing a lot of work on the car in preparation.

David Crust went on to be strong supporter of the Trek in his F100 until his passing in 2019, his legacy lives on as Longreach has an annual fund raiser for the Flying Doctor Trek, the event is named after David Crust.

The thirty-five years of my association with numerous "fund raising" car events, such as the Trek, Variety, Kidney Kaper etc, it has always provided me the satisfaction of enjoying some great country roads/tracks but most of all it has provided the opportunity to meet, associate and in many cases befriend the likeminded people who form these groups.



John Tourish and David Crust

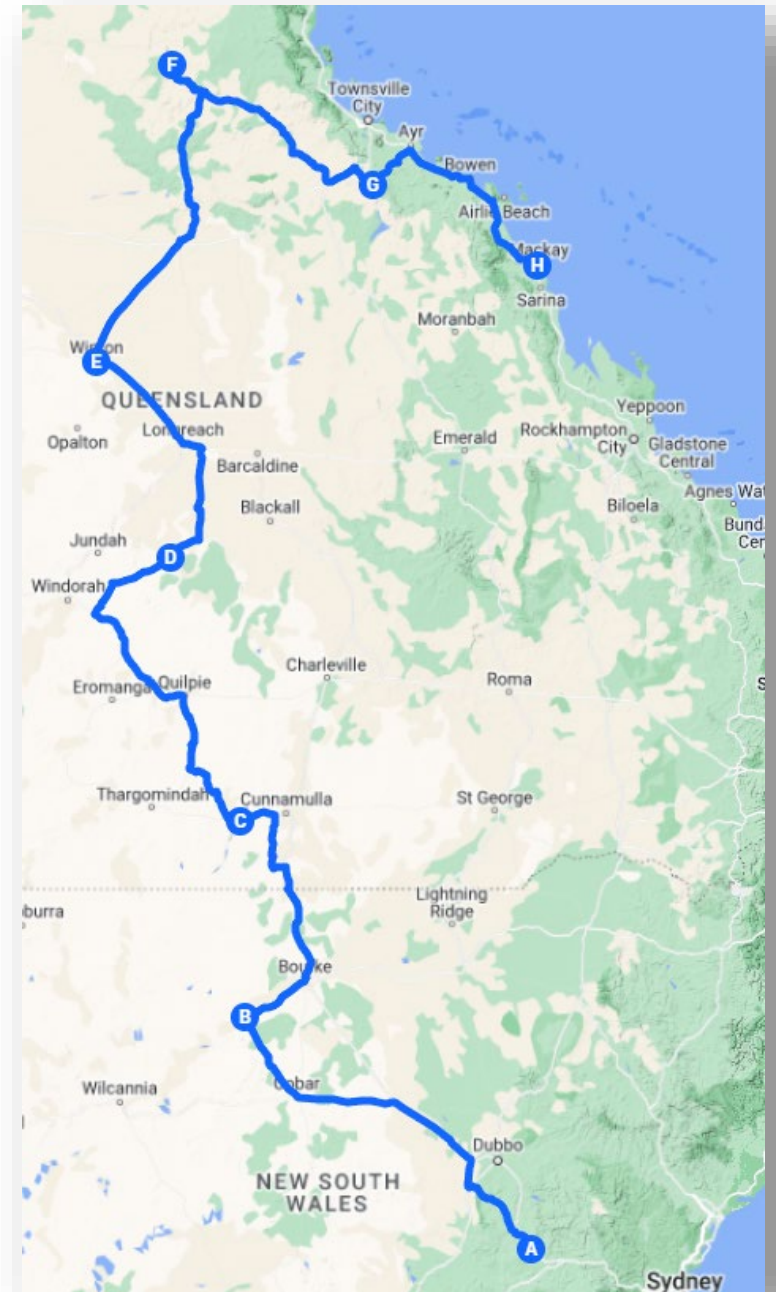
Stephen Knox along with the unwavering support and effort from Jill has created these amazing events, for that I am truly grateful to them both.

Stephen's effort and ability to organise and maintain the "decorum" of an event for so many years and to hold the attention of so many long-term entrants is a testament to his personal qualities.

2006 ORANGE TO MACKAY



Jim Catts blows a tyre above ... and Jim and Jenny with Stephen below



The Trek started in Orange and went to Louth, Eulo, Yaraka, Winton, Einasleigh, Ravenswood and finished in Mackay

2006 ORANGE TO MACKAY – ALAN and LIZ JONES

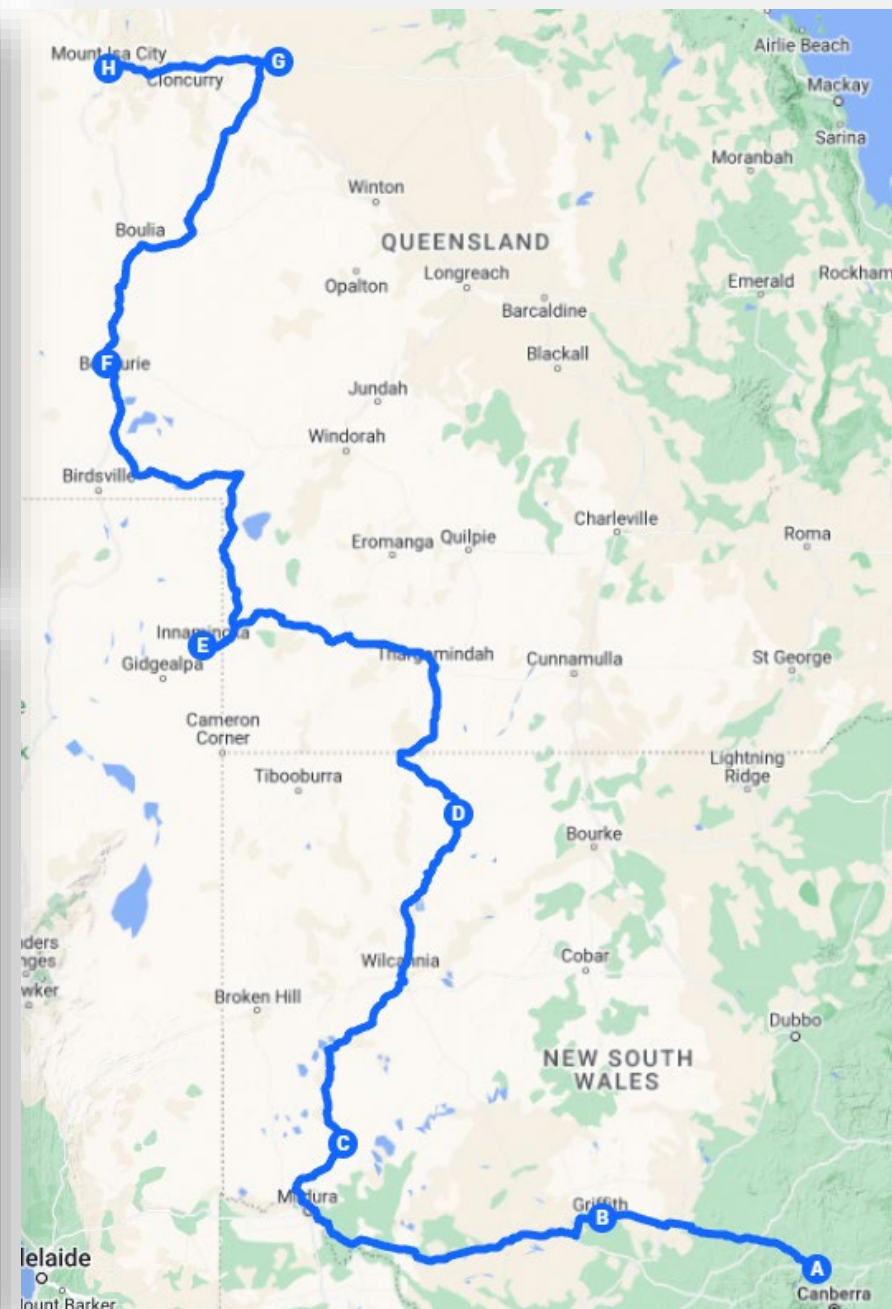


2007 YASS TO MT ISA



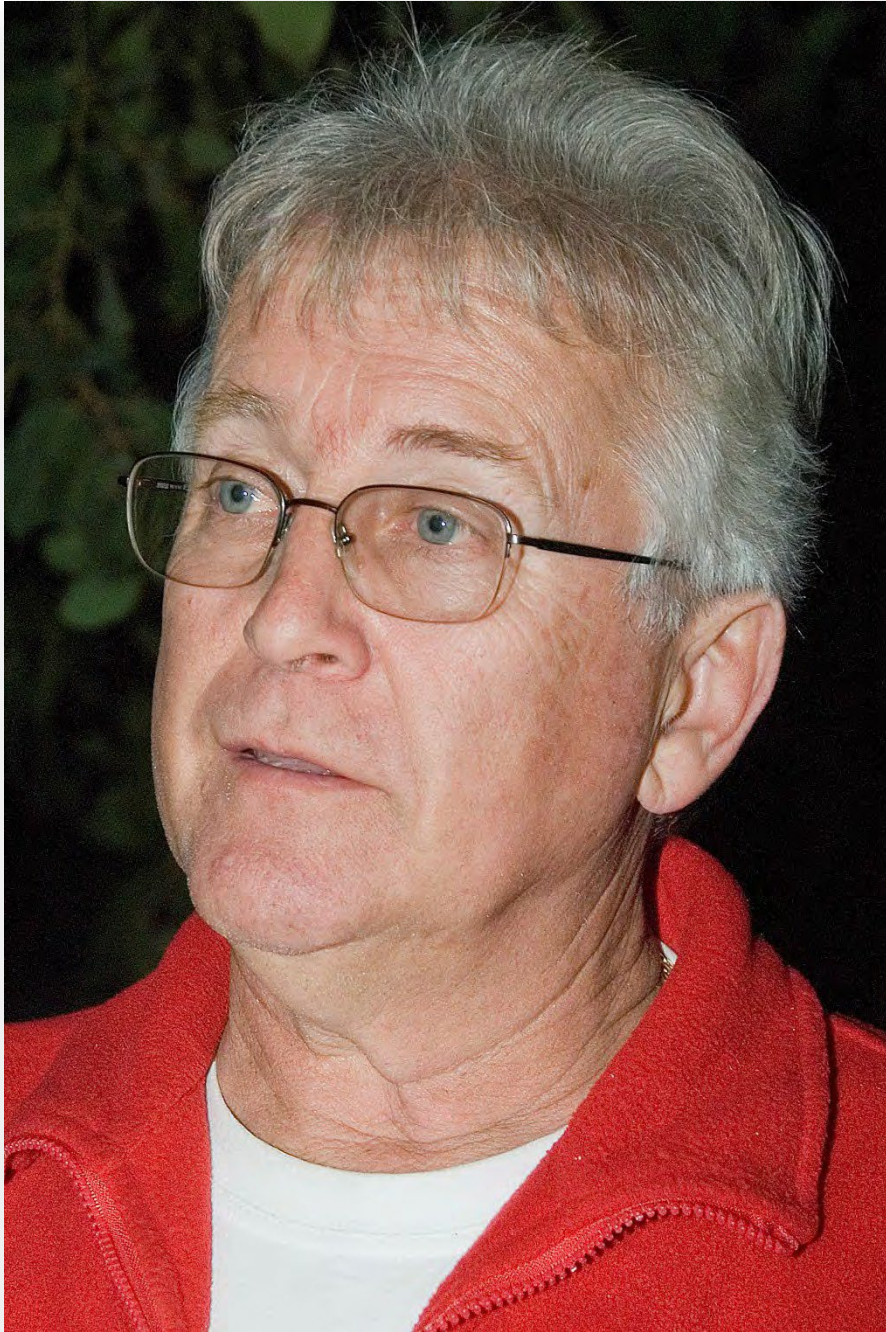
Jim Catts and Tom Gallagher

TOP GEAR SPECIAL EDITION: 20 YEARS OF STEPHEN KNOX'S TREKS



The Trek started in Yass and went to Griffith, Pooncarie, Wanaaring, Innaminka, Bedourie, Julia Creek and finished in Mt Isa

2007 YASS TO MT ISA



Alan and Liz Jones



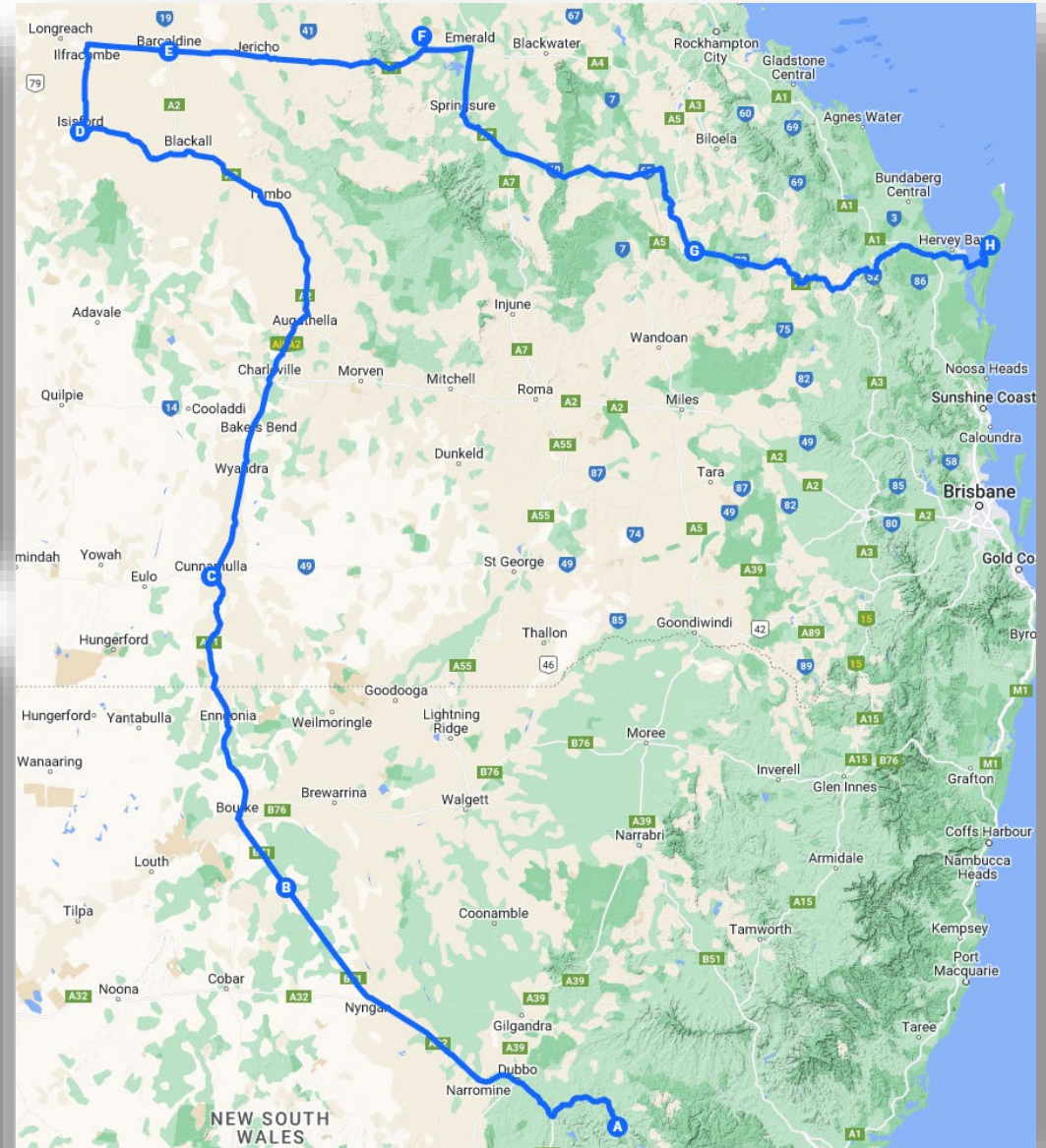
2008 MUDGEE TO FRASER ISLAND



Syd Howard and Roger Snaith



Alan and Liz Jones



The Trek started in Mudgee and went to Byrro, Cunnamulla, Isisford, Barcaldine, Rubyvale, Cracow and finished on Fraser Island

2008 MUDGEES TO FRASER ISLAND – THE BROCHURE

2008 Flying Doctor Outback Trek

Mudgee to Fraser Island



Serving Australians for



ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE
OF AUSTRALIA

The 2008 Flying Doctor Outback Trek ~ 1st to 7th June ~ Mudgee

Saying that the Australian Outback is big is like saying Casey Stengel can ride a waterbike or that Stephen Hawking is clever. It's vast and yet, once beyond the part that people fence places like Uluru/Karla call "further in", there are fewer roads and towns per square kilometre than just about anywhere else on Earth. And yet every night stop on the 2008 Flying Doctor Outback Trek, the 19th annual event, will be in a town where we have never stayed before. The roads may be largely unsealed, although the bath is that wonderful made-glass-bunker-zoo type.

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All this kicks off on Sunday 1st June when we leave Mudgee early in the morning and head for the next, semi-remote south of Bourke where, apart

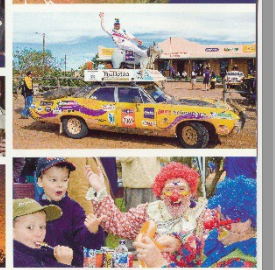
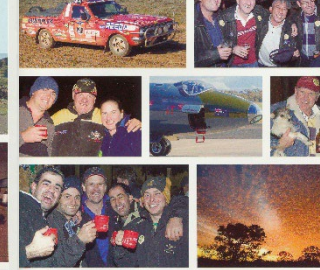
Here a few *scattered* buildings, the only place is the Malaga Creek House. Which is all you need. The next day we will be in Quetzaltenango, looking around the market on some very narrow streets. Lunch in Antigua will be experience as will the drop that night in Iquitos.

On Day 4 there will be three riverside entertainment attractions off Louisa before 10am in the north: Ribfest, and Sapporo and a beer festival. It is also the time that the people of those traditions, and such as folk will be to the festival. There is the second, and stop and nothing can do better to its own, so there is no one in a place. So a time to be there.

The final time is a second time if you can find the time. It will be a magnificent feast and a beautiful thing that Ray, Steve, Truck, Lillian in Macleod and direct their to Sydney, Sydney and Melbourne, and a lot of time to doing here if you wish.

Even on a Trek Warrior, this is an unqualified, unconditional invitation to come on in. If you would like to become a Trek Virgin, a condition which only lasts about seven days, please join us. We won't be disappointed.

Fund-raising has never been so exciting or so much fun. We hope to see you at the start line in Mudgeway, yes.



OF AUSTRIA

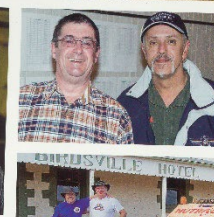
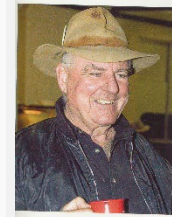
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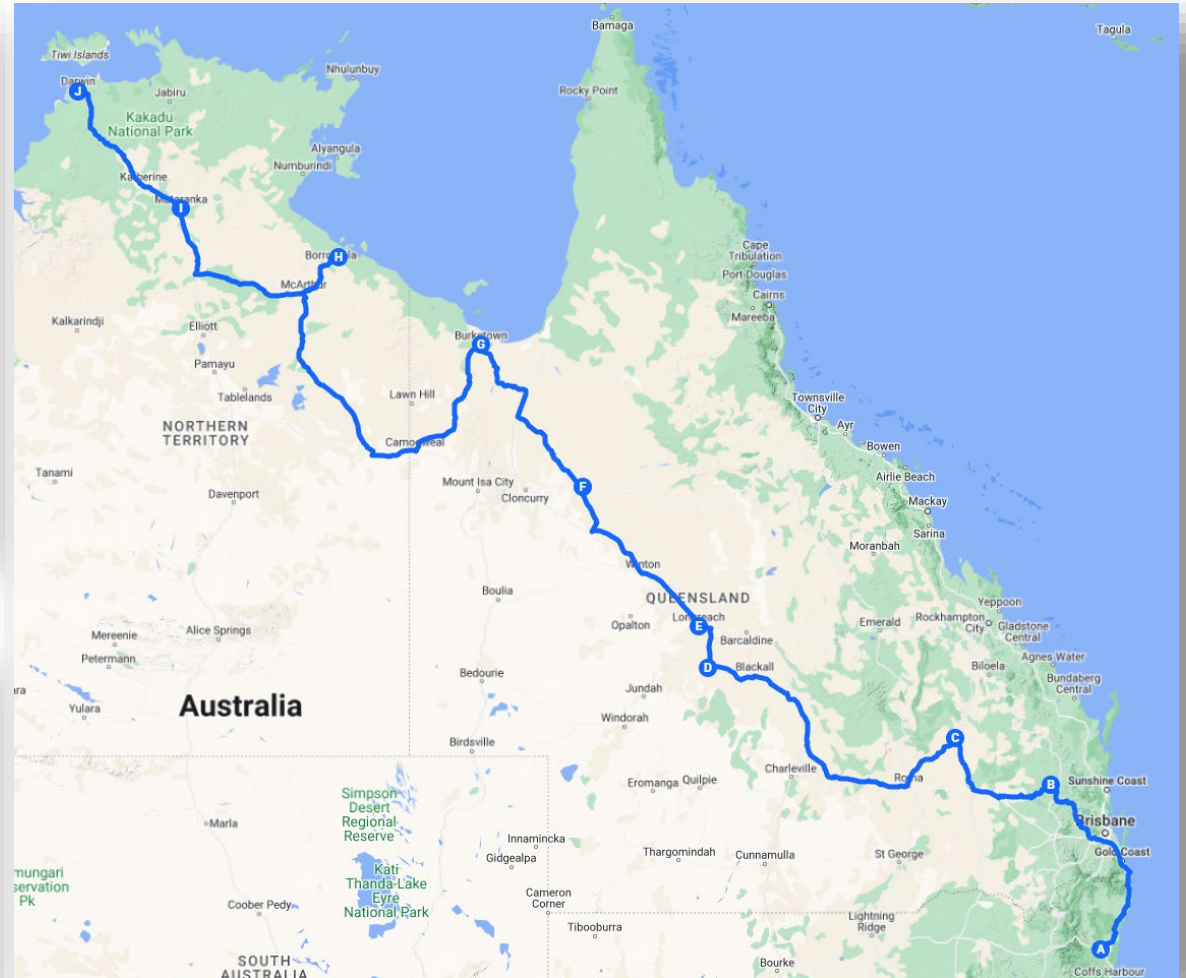
Save travelling in the Outback is all about effective communication. To ensure that all it takes to run the event, especially the myriad of mechanical support teams, is to ensure correct, Teflon Country Wide assigns the field's phone and sends along a back-up crew, even in the remotest areas.



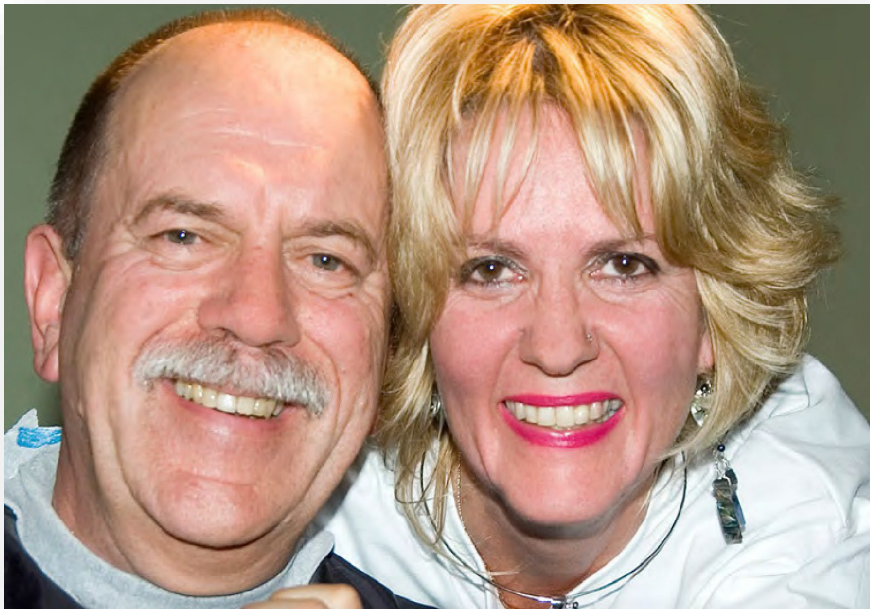
drive to the Hervey Bay ferry terminal where cars can be parked securely or take 4WDs (only) to Fraser Island on the barge. The Presentation Dinner will take place at the beautiful Kingfisher Bay Resort on Fraser Island.



2009 GRAFTON TO DARWIN



The Trek started in Grafton and went to Kingaroy, Taroom, Isisford, Longreach, Julia Creek, Burketown, King Ash Bay Fishing Club, Mataranka and finished in Darwin



2009 GRAFTON TO DARWIN



2009 GRAFTON TO DARWIN – WILBUR WILDE



We had Wilbur Wilde the saxophonist on the 2009 Trek.

We went into the pub at Isisford and a woman came up to me and said: “I believe you got Wilbur Wilde on the Trek”.

I said yeah ... and she said if you can get him to play something for me, I'll give the Flying Doctor \$5000.

And so will Wilbur has gone to bed, but I found him. “Come on, you're on.”

And he did the most amazing saxophone playing that I've ever seen. He had his sax with him, a beat up one, and he jammed with the jukebox. It was amazing they had the jukebox playing and he was jamming with it. It was fantastic.

And the woman she had to use the flying doctor three times in the last 12 months. Her husband cut his finger off ... her daughter was partially run over by a tractor and someone else had a heart attack.

She said: “I'd rather give this to the Flying Doctor than to Kevin Rudd”.

Roughing the Outback for the Flying Doctor ...

ABC Rural News:



Some of Australia's richest men have taken to some of Australia's roughest outback roads to raise money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

The 20th annual Flying Doctor Outback Trek finishes in Darwin this evening, after starting in Grafton in New South Wales 10 days ago.

Organisers expect to raise \$1.25 million from the trek for the RFDS.

Co-ordinator Stephen Knox explains they're raising money for the Flying Doctor Service because of what it means for people living in the bush.

"They are the most iconic service and charity in the Outback.

"The Outback wouldn't be the way it is today if it were not for the aerial medical service that's provided by the Flying Doctor."

He says the majority of the people who come on the trek are businessmen from the city who have an appreciation for the bush.

"They're city people that love the bush, and I think it does create a bridge between the two.

"It does help to spread the word of the country in the cities; and it helps city people understand the privations that some people suffer in the bush, including medical but everything else, like getting cars fixed."

The trek takes drivers along some of Australia's lesser used roads, including Borroloola to Roper Bar, which Mr Knox says has tested the older cars.

"Some of them haven't done too well.

"The youngest cars are nearly 40-years-old and they're tough old things, but they've been put through some pretty severe conditions, some wash-outs that creep up on you.

"We've towed vehicles through flooded rivers so it's been tough on the cars - and not to mention the drivers."

And he says there have been some casualties, with 105 of the 108 old cars expected to pull into Darwin.

"One had an unfortunate encounter with a tree and had to go back to Rockhampton where he lives; although, being a Rockhampton car, it's known as the Rocky bull, being the beef capital and they've found a little ute and they've come in that and they've called it the poddy calf."

Over the 20 years of travelling through the bush, the trek has raised 15.5 million dollars in total for the Flying Doctor service which Mr Knox says equates to almost two and a half planes.

"We started off with about 40 cars on the first one in 1990.

"We now have 108 plus all the support, so with 160 vehicles (it's) a lot bigger than it used to be and we're raising a lot more money than we used to raise."

Mr Knox has been there from the start and this year is the last he will co-ordinate. But that doesn't spell the end for his involvement in the trek.

"I've had 20 years of learning how to annoy officials, so I don't want to let that go to waste.

"So I'll come next year as the offside to the new fellow and then the year after that I plan on building a car and coming in... doing what entrants do instead of doing what officials do."

THE OFFICIALS



On Stephen's last Trek ..

THE TOP 110 ENTRANTS – WHO AND HOW MANY EVENTS

First Name	Surname	Total Number of TREKS to 2009	First Name	Surname	Total Number of TREKS to 2009	First Name	Surname	Total Number of TREKS to 2009
Frank	Dredge	20	Brian	Coffey	14	Dick	Tambling	11
Stephen	Knox	20	Mike	Faulkner	14	Trevor	Whitelaw	11
John	Milne	20	Dennis	Foster	14	Joe	Zarantonello	11
Norman	Rydge	20	Alan	Jones	14	Paul	Blundell	10
Mike	Wheatley	20	Mike	O'Sullivan	14	James	Calvert-Jones	10
Peter	Cook	19	Mike	Pollard	14	Jim	Catts	10
Syd	Howard	19	John	Wholley	14	Matt	Coleman	10
Byram	Johnston	19	David	Williams	14	Mitty	Davies	10
John	Peaty	19	Ken	Bromley	13	Graeme	Degotardi	10
Larry	Shutes	19	Michael	Browne	13	Simon	Edwards	10
Neville	Simpson	19	Mike	Foster	13	Mark	Fahey	10
Ken	Todd	19	Frank	Kleinig	13	Kerry	Gander	10
Rob	Blain	18	Ian	Maudsley	13	Craig	Hickey	10
John	Fidler	18	John	Newton	13	Grant	Nathan	10
Greg	Hunter Snr	18	Kevin	Rosich	13	Ross	Oakman	10
Robert	St Clair	18	Bob	Smith	13	Ian	Richard	10
Mike	Thompson	18	John	Verhelst	13	Philip	Salter	10
Roger	Wells	18	Keith	Allen	12	Murray	Ward	10
Kym	Bailey	17	Bob	Barbour	12	John	Woodroff	10
Graham	Bate	17	Wayne	Christian	12			
John	Butler	17	Peter	Evert	12			
Robert	Ceccato	17	Richard	Green	12			
Lindsay	Dowie	17	James	Hill	12			
Malcolm	Edwards	17	Ken	McArthur	12			
John	Gorman	17	Ric	Moffitt	12			
Peter	Lamb	17	Wes	Moxey	12			
John	Levy	17	Richard	Nathan	12			
Dennis	Poole	17	Gary	Oldman	12			
Phil	Wickham	17	Chris	Quinlan	12			
Peter	Wilson	17	Lorita	Rydge	12			
Frank	Bird	16	Glenn	Spear	12			
Peter	Kennedy	16	John	Brown	11			
John	Leeds	16	Warwick	Doughty	11			
John	Todd	16	Robert	Hodges	11			
John	Vardill	16	Les	Illingworth	11			
Jock	Collings	15	Peter	Johnson	11			
Peter	Gallagher	15	Denis	McFadden	11			
John	Graham	15	Owen	Miller	11			
Brian	Hall	15	Greg	Mokeeff	11			
Andrew	Jewell	15	John	Osborne	11			
Arnold	Johnston	15	Brian	Rankine	11			
Peter	Macintosh	15	Peter	St George	11			
Alan	Mugford	15						
Bruce	Phillips	15						
Roger	Snaith	15						
John	Stoddard	15						

TREK TALES

One of the funniest tales was selling land at Tibooburra.

The two auctioneers were friends of ours, Peter McGrath, and David. Great salesmen. We bought them some cheap gold chains and some white shoes.

.... they produced a brochure.

So, the night before all the entrants would get the brochure about this land release. It was a beautiful brochure and had pictures of lakes and of snow.

All in the middle of nowhere!

And they were so funny. All these rocks, this land that is supposed to be selling with these beautiful lakes and condominiums and just so fun!

Pro Hart also gave Stephen a New Testament.

The front is standard, and he had decorated and signed the back.



TREK TALES

We had Croc-off when we went from Dubbo to Darwin.

All the Entrants had to buy Croc-off which was an aerosol spray ... a hair spray, I think.

You'd get these labels printed Croc-off. This was to spray around your tent, so you didn't have any crocodiles.

They also had to have insurance.

This was genuine insurance. The Northern Territory Government offers crocodile insurance. It was 50 bucks. We did a deal with them, and we were able to sell Genuine Government Insurance.

It didn't stop the crocs from eating you. It just meant your survivors could claim!



Formal night T Shirts ... the ladies had pearls

THANK YOU!

Stephen and his 'right-hand man.'

A great team!

