



Desert Sky Tours Personalised Tours 2021



DARES HILL CIRCUIT

2 day trip

Day 1

Our journey to this interesting part of the mid north begins when we "Travel in Goyder's Footsteps". Travelling through the mid north towns of Riverton, Saddleworth and Manoora, we visit the superbly preserved historic town of Mintaro, then enter the Clare Valley through Sevenhill. There is an opportunity to visit the Seven Hill winery, which was established by Jesuit priests in 1851 to produce sacramental wine. While this tradition continues today, Sevenhill is also highly regarded for its premium table wines. We continue through to Clare, Spalding, Gulnare and Gladstone.



The town of Laura has a number of attractions – including the magnificent copper statue of C J Dennis, the Australian poet who was born in Auburn, and spent most of his boyhood in Laura.

Another attraction is the Golden North ice-cream factory! On to Appila, where there are excellent murals on the CFS building next to the Hotel.

Appilla Springs is an excellent lunch stop and the local people have done a fantastic job in putting picnic facilities there without disturbing the natural beauty and tranquillity of the place.

We head to Pekina, and a detour to Magnetic Hill, where we park the car at the bottom of the Hill (formerly known as Bruff's Hill) and watch it roll uphill!



The Railways played an important part in the history of Peterborough and although they have now all but left the town, the assets and memories of that great steam era have been preserved at Steamtown which is situated in the original railway workshops.



There is opportunity this evening to view South Australia's first and only Sound & Light Show, from a historic Transcontinental carriage, now transformed into a viewing car and placed on the 85 foot long turntable.

Overnight: Peterborough Motel

Day 2

After breakfast, we drive to Historic Terowie, where our activities include a tour of the town to capture the "unique Terowie Experience".

Today Terowie is declared a historical township with a fascinating Main Street frontage from the 1800's.

To the east of Terowie is the Dares Hill Road which passes through changing scenery of salt bush, blue bush, and dense Mallee woodland past Pandappa Homestead and further to the Ketchowla Homestead ruins.

Near the Mallett Homestead, the road climbs to the summit of Dares Hill for spectacular panoramic views.



From Dares Hill we continue to Hallett, Mt Bryan and Burra.

It is a pleasant drive through interesting mid north towns to arrive in Adelaide at approximately 6pm.



Package Fare	:	\$800 per person
Departure Date	:	On demand





Dares Hill Circuit Tour

- 00.0 Leaving the Barrier Highway, we take the Dares Hill Circuit Road out of Terowie, travelling through grassland scattered with low shrubs.
- 06.20 Over crest of hill and instantly into woodland. For 3km the road climbs and winds up the eastern flank of the hills, but the expected long views across the plain do not eventuate because of the forest like character of the mallee.
- 11.10 Edge of the Waupunyah Plain.
- 12.40 Road on the left leads to Franklyn Homestead, past the site of another surveyed township (Franklyn), which was not developed. As with Mallett, which we come to later in the drive, the survey was made at a time when expected closer settlement would see an influx of many wheat farmers; it soon became abundantly clear that grain crops could not be grown here, thus the larger pastoral stations remained and towns were no longer justified.
- 18.70 We come into The Waupunyah Plain, which is practically ringed by hills. Some cattle may be seen here.
A long view down the plain is evident to the right, beyond which is the massive block of hills which include Mt Bryan, Uloloo Hill and Mt Scrub.
- 21.70 Grid. Pandappa Conservation Park is now on the right, beside the road.
It extends to the northerly ridges of the Wonna Range. There are no internal tracks or visitor facilities. The Park was dedicated to preserve characteristic semi-arid vegetation of the area. Varying from open scrub to tall shrubland, the major vegetation consists of red and white mallee, summer red mallee, yorrell, gilja and mallee box (all forms of eucalypt), together with various forms of saltbush and bluebush, false sandalwood, bullock bush and smaller shrubs.
Echidnas, western grey and red kangaroos and euros inhabit the Park. Woodland birds, parrots and cockatoos and occasional birds of prey may be seen.

- 24.60 The road now winds across a level plain. The Wonna Hills are on the right, and the Porcupine Ranges behind to the left. A track on the left leads to Pandappa Homestead.
To this Station in 1859 came Peter Waite, straight off the ship from Britain.
It was the start of a pastoral career which culminated in Waite donating to the State his Urrbrae property, resulting in the creation of the Urrbrae Agricultural High School and renowned Waite Institute.
- 28.50 Grid. Signs of vegetation change, with mallee becoming dense.
- 28.50 to 33.50 Dense mallee woodland.
- 35.30 The long ridges and peaks and Porcupine Ranges can still be seen to the left behind us, at about 15kms.
- 36.00 Wonna Range visible with the isolated peak of Chinamans Hat Hill in front of the main range.
- 37.40 The road crosses a creek and bears hard left. There is a windmill and stone tank here, among a rugged scenario dominated by extensive steeply bedded rock outcrops and the winding course of a creek. Known as The Springs, because of permanent water in the vicinity., it marks the point where the road re-crosses the fault line to the Tapley Hill formation. It is also the place where Christopher Giles, father of explorers Ernest and Alfred, established his first Ketchowla headstation.
Away from the road, rocks along the creek possess examples of Aboriginal art. The road bears right around the Mt Pullen Hills.
- 40.40 Ketchowla Homestead on the right. Note the early station buildings just before the main homestead. The gravel road surface has been known to contain scattered pieces of specular haematite (a form of iron ore).
- 41.70 Gate, thick saltbush. We are travelling over the extreme eastern edge of the Adelaide Geosyncline - that is, the huge area of accumulated sedimentary rock which includes the Mt Lofty and Flinders Ranges. The flat plains to the east mark the edge of the wide Murray Basin which stretches into New South Wales and Victoria.
An unusual formation is seen to the left with pillar like outcropping on the ridges, and a little further is an abandoned windmill and water tank.

We now leave the Tapley Hill Formation and see Mt Pullen (better known as Ketchowla Hill) on the right.
- 44.30 Gate. We descend to high plateau country, completely open grasslands.
- 46.10 To the left is Dares Windmill and its very large old stone tank, one of the landmarks of the district. The road is slowly descending to the Wonna Creek plain.
- 47.70 Gate - check for brightly painted lizard in hole by gate.

- 48.70 Gate
- 49.10 Gate - Road junction beside the Mallett Homestead.
Mallett Reservoir is seen on the left, marking the site of the surveyed township of Mallett which was never developed.
We take the major road to the left, passing the reservoir on the right.
- 49.50 Gate
- 50.70 Gate
- 50.90 Cross Wonna Creek, and on to a very flat alluvial plain created by Wonna Creek - one of the main water courses in the district.
There is a climb to a crest, from which is a long view of the Wonna Range.
A road to the left leads to Collinsville HS, centre of a world renowned stud ram property. We bear to the right.
- 54.10 Gate. The landscape is open and offers long views of rolling country.
The vegetation now begins to change, as we leave behind the Tapley Hill formation (predominantly slate), and enter a siltstone formation which will influence the appearance until a major creek crossing - Dustholes Creek.
During the next 1 to 2 km the road is often among dense and attractive woodland.
- 59.10 Piltimitiappa HS ruins are on the left, a property started by William Dare in 1850s and one of the first homesteads in the region. The associated old windmill and tank are on the right. The next few kilometres are dominated by the Piltimitiappa Creek and tributary watercourses.
A steep and winding ascent is made to the summit of Dares Hill.
- 64.50 Summit of Dares Hill. Hills in view include the Wonna Range, Chinamans Hat Hill, and Ketchowla Hill.
- 68.20 Cross Goyders Line. Significant ecological change occurs here. New forms of shrubbery are seen. Saltbush disappears and vegetation becomes dense.
George W Goyder was Surveyor-General of South Australia at the time when a rapidly increasing population was putting pressure on the Government to open up more land for agriculture. In 1865, when many pastoral runs were in the grip of drought, Goyder was sent north to discover which stations would be eligible for drought relief.
On his return, Goyder depicted the border line of the affected areas with a looping line across a map of the Colony. It became known simply as Goyder's Line. It has stood the test of time as a surprisingly accurate delineation of the 10 inch line of rainfall.
- 69.0 The road crosses bed with numerous watercourses spilling out of the hills here, helping to explain the heavy vegetation. Note the creek to the left with its spectacular erosion chasm.
- 72.20 Major Creek crossing - Dustholes Creek.

- 74.0 The site of Mt Bryan East. Abandoned buildings on the left were a school and church. This little community is best remembered as the birthplace of the remarkable adventurer and Polar explorer Sir Hubert Wilkins.
George Hubert Wilkins was born at Mt Bryan East, youngest of 13 children. He went to the local school, and then continued his studies at the School of Mines in Adelaide, studying electrical engineering.
He went to England in 1909 and became interested in aviation, spending 3 years with an Arctic expedition as a photographer.
In 1916 he joined the “Great War” ; following which he took part in the famous England to Australia air race - which won fame for Charles Kingsford Smith. Hubert Wilkins was unfortunate to crash his plane “Kangaroo” at Crete.
In 1927 he made several unsuccessful attempts to fly over the Arctic, and was stranded on an ice- pack, having to walk for 13 days to reach habitation.
Later, his mission was successful and he made several flights over the Arctic region, receiving a knighthood for his work.
T Junction - turn right.
- 74.70 T Junction - turn left
- 75.80 Good view of Mt Bryan to the left.
- 77.40 The open grasslands give way to woodland.
- 78.80 Bear left on major road. Peppermint box mallee forms a dense woodland. Watch for parrots, cockatoos and other birdlife.
- 79.50 Passing through Peppermint Gully among stands of Peppermint Box.
- 83.40 Road is travelling part-way up a hillside, giving spectacular views to the right towards Uloomoo Hill and Mt Scrub.
- 88.20 Gradual descent of slopes which are outliers of the range dominated by Mt Bryan. At Road Junction we turn hard left.
- 89.00 Pianoleche HS on right.
- 91.50 Hallett