

Historic Overland Corner Hotel

Open: Tuesday-Sunday From 11am

Meals : Lunch Tuesday—Sunday 12pm-2pm

Open Monday Public Holidays 11am-6pm

Lunch available 12pm-2pm

Dinner : Thursdays, Fridays, & Saturdays 6pm-8pm

Evening Meals available Tuesday & Wednesday

By prior arrangement.

Closed Christmas Day & Good Friday

Due to small size of hotel it is recommended to book.

Old Coach Road, Overland Corner

Phone: 08 8588 7021

Genuine Old Pub Atmosphere

Pool Table & Games Room

Outdoor Bar & Beer Garden

Memorabilia from yesteryear

Neat Casual Dress

Eftpos Facilities

NO POKIES

*The Riverland's Oldest
Surviving Building*



Barmera Visitor
Information Centre

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Open Mon - Fri 9am to 4pm

Sat & Sun 10am - 1pm

Public Holidays 10am-1pm

Closed Christmas Day &

Good Friday



Disclaimer: Information in this brochure is given by way of a guide only, and is believed to correct at the time of printing (August 2009). However, you should verify details with relevant organizations.

Thanks is given to the owners (Managers of the Overland Corner Hotel). Information sourced through National Trust of SA, "A history of Overland Corner and it's People" written by G. Woolmer...

historic overland corner



Discover the Secrets of the**Riverland South Australia**



The romance of drover's life is a fundamental part of Australia's pioneering history, when courage and determination were an essential part of daily life. It is testimony to the strength and character of our overlanders who played a key role in linking the remote colony of South Australia with New South Wales, that Overland Corner exists.

Eight Years following the first whaleboat expedition down the Murray River, and two years after the first migrants had settled in South Australia, stock from N.S.W. were being overlanded into the new colony. Within a short time, Overland Corner became an important camping place for drovers to rest their stock and graze them on the lush river flats.

The same site had been inhabited by the Ngawait Aboriginal tribe for thousands of years. The tribe obtained quality ochre from the cliffs and carried on a regular trade. Testimony to the tribe's existence are the many artifacts found, including canoe trees and burial grounds.

When the N.S.W. goldrush struck in 1851, there was a large movement of people heading north to the gold fields via the corner. Two years later, river trade began with the first wood fueled paddlesteamers coming through, and soon a large woodpile was being maintained at Overland Corner.

As a result of increasing population in the area, a few cattle duffers, escaped convicts and the odd bushranger, the South Australian Government established a small police post at Overland Corner in 1855.

Although some other buildings had been erected at Overland Corner, it was the building of the hotel in 1859 which proved to be the most important. Using fifteen million year old limestone from the nearby quarry, they constructed 50cm thick walls and used red gum for some of the floors. Soon the hotel became the staging place for mail coaches on the run between Wentworth and South Australia, and the first publicans license was issued in April of 1860.

THE UNIQUE GEOLOGICAL MYSTERY OF OVERLAND CORNER



The Riverland's ancient past is nowhere more visible than at Overland Corner. It is here that the Murray river flows from it's 8km wide floodplain through sandstone country to it's 1.5km wide gorge into limestone country.

Formed over 15 million years ago, the area shows evidence of the ice age. Evidence shows that the area may have resided 50 metres below sea level with a continually rising and ebbing sea tide. This is shown in the layers of debris and limestone accumulations on the cliffs at Heron's Bend and in the quarry area at the hotel. These creamy cliffs of richly fossilised limestone are the most spectacular of all evidence. Layered with differing formations of limestone, fossil remains of such animals as lace corals (bryozoans), sea urchins (echinoderms), scallops, oyster shells, lamp shells (brachiopods), sea snails (gastropods including screw shells, cones and cowries). Changes in the sea floor led to the layers of limestone forming and differing fossils are found throughout the layers at differing depths.

At the Herons Bend Cliffs, the first thin creamy limestone layer is followed deeper by harder layers of orange/brown limestone. The information in the quarry at the hotel starts with an outer layer of the creamy white limestone followed by a resistant yellow limestone. The quarry, as well as being the building source for many homes as far as Mildura, has also yielded exciting evidence of animals extinct to this area. Fossilised remains of the Banded Hare Wallaby have been found.

Above the quarry exists a clay soil laid down 1 million years ago by river and creeks crossing at the time. The rocks at Overland Corner, also fossilised, are evidence of extreme erosion over millions of years.

The ochre, both red and yellow is found in the hills behind the hotel and was once a tradable item for the Aboriginals who mined it for thousands of years. In the same vicinity, some of the mines also produced flint and copper.

14. Red Gum Regeneration

This is an optional side loop from the trail. The creek can only be crossed when the river is at normal to low level. Note the dense regrowth of redgum sapling in this vicinity. This has only occurred since 1981 when the section was declared a natural reserve and sheep grazing was stopped. Regeneration has not occurred elsewhere on the reserve, probably partly because of the lack of seedling trees but also because of the appetite of the rabbits.

15. Freshwater Ecology

This was a popular camping spot for Aboriginal people in early European times. The creek provides an inlet to the billabong during high river. An enormous amount of plant and animal life can be found in these quiet waters.

16. Boat Ramp

Boats can be launched from here into the river.

17. Police Station

At the top of the cliff still stands part of what was a Police Station. Now it is privately owned area. Because of the gold rush traffic, brawling fishermen, bush rangers, displaced Aboriginals, and cattle duffers police were needed. The police station was built in 1840's and the stone-built cells alongside the police station in 1855.

18. Police Stables. (1869)

The horse stables for the police horse were very important, they felt the horse grazing on the flat was not enough security. The horse stables are still to this day double story the hay above and the horses below. The stables are on the flood plain and have been flooded many times. The solid stone construction has ensured its survival, and now owned by the National Trust but privately leased.

19. Heron's Bend

In the Dreaming, these spectacular cliffs and the prominent bend in the river were carved out by Ponde's thrashing tail as he was chased by the Aboriginal tribe towards the sea. The fossils in the lower part of the cliff are similar to those in the quarry at site 2. If you find any fossils, please leave them where they are.

20. Clifftop Lookout

This is another optional loop in the trail. Watch you step! From the top you can observe the dramatic change in the shape of the river valley that occurs at this location. The wide valley to the east is characteristic of the upper Riverland where the floodplain is around 5km wide.

From this point the river enters extensive limestone country and has carved out steep cliffs, narrowing to the valley. This changed character of the valley continues to the lower Murray. The youngest lime stone is along the top of this cliff and has a characteristic fossil oyster named "Ostrea sturtiana". It was named after Captain Charles Sturt who described fossils at this exact location during the first European expedition down the Murray in 1830. Two or three million years ago this clifftop area was a shallow sea or estuary.

21. Old Quarry

The rough cliff face is where the blocks for the police station may have come from. They seem older and smaller than the large regular blocks further along the track, which were probably quarried in the 1940's.

By the mid 1860's excellent crops of grapes and garden produce were grown on the rich alluvial river flats and Cobb & Co coaches stopped at the corner and business boomed. During the 1870's many other buildings were added, including a wheelwright and blacksmith, a post and telegraph office and a new police station.

As could be expected, the isolated hotel has seen many births, marriages and deaths during its long, colourful history.

During the 1880's, overlanding continued, however by the 1890's many of the surrounding properties were sold off for farming. Nearby village and irrigation settlements were created and resulted in Overland Corner losing its importance. In 1894, the police station closed followed three years later by the hotel

Overland Corner Hotel was purchased by the National Trust of South Australia in 1965, and steeped in history and having survived floods and ruin, the hotel is once again open for business.



MEN OF MYSTERY

South Australia is barren of bushranging history and therefore, Overland Corner's collection of legends is a unique part of our folklore.

"Captain Starlight" and his crew of bushrangers used the area as a crossing point for their stolen cattle, and on one occasion locked the local "coppers" in their own jail cell. "Starlight" then rode his horse right into the tap room of the hotel and demanded drinks for all, where he carved his name in the wall beside the red gum bar.

On another occasion, "Starlight" camped out at the corner after being involved in a gold heist on the Victorian Goldfields. After receiving reports of the robbery, and with "Starlight" long gone, a search was carried out and two saddlebags containing slithers of gold were found.



There was only ever one noted attempt at "Highway Robbery" at Overland Corner, when two men dressed as "Swaggies" lay in wait to rob the stage coach carrying Government payrolls. The suspicious driver took off with whips cracking and the robbery attempt failed.

The story of "Red Devlin" is one that has been retold for over 100 years. Supposedly murdered to gain his gold. "Red's" ghost can be seen on stormy nights galloping violently across the plains of Overland Corner on his magnificent white horse.

The "Ghost" captured in the photograph in the bar room of the old hotel remains a mystery. Pictured with Brand brothers (builders of the hotel), there are many stories as to who the ghost may be.

7. Overland Corner Cemetery

This is the largest cemetery in the area and is still used today. Members of the Brand family and other residents of the early European settlement lie here. The population of this locality has never recovered to that of pre-European times. About 200 Aboriginal people lived here permanently, generation after generation for at least 30,000 years. On this basis there must be something like 100,000 Aboriginal graves in the vicinity.

8. Black Box Tree (Eucalyptus largiflorens)

This tree, with dark rough bark, generally grows above the red gum zone and clearly shows various high water levels. Note the 1956 flood line. The species has fibrous roots that were chewed by Aboriginal women to make a tough fibre. The fibre was used to make netting to trap birds, animals and fish. Nets were up to 50 metres long and could take a year or more to make. Members of the Brand family planted many of the young box trees in 1987, they worked together with that of the Glossop High School students, provides hope of the future that one day it will be possible to restore the natural environment of this locality to the lush abundance of former times.

9. Canoe Tree

River red gum trees showing these large characteristic scars from their bark being prised off are known as canoe trees. They were once numerous in the Riverland. Unfortunately, many have been cut down and used for firewood and building materials. These trees were a well Used resource by Aboriginal people in many other ways. Climbing notches were often cut to provide access to the rich habitat of birds, animals and bees, which were sources of food And skins and feathers used for clothing and decoration.

10. Swamp

Lignum swamp which lies on the right. With flooding, dry sticks will be replaced by an impenetrable thicket of interlocking almost leafless green canes. Lignum prefers areas Which are intermittently flooded. Its tangled branches provide shelter for both native and feral animals, including echidnas, kangaroos, foxes, pigs and small birds. Before settlement the Banded Hare Wallaby, which inhabited small hollows in the cliffs, may have foraged here.

11. Dieback of Redgums

The many dead trees on the flood plain give Overland Corner a dreary visual aspect. For the past 140 years, the area has been cut by woodcutters and grazed by sheep, cattle, horses and rabbits. The few surviving old trees had their roots drowned when the lock system permanently raised the ground water table in the 1930's. It is anticipated that if young trees could be established they would readily adapt to the new water table.

12. Old Footbridge

Thick wire cables were used to support board flooring. Stockmen used the bridge to move sheep to graze on the other side of the creek and billabong when the river was high.

The existing trees were established using dripper irrigation.

Tubestock, grown from seed collected near site 14 was planted out in October 1988.

13. Revegetation Project

This project was initiated in 1986. Glossop High School students received an International Youth Year grant which paid for the cost of fencing materials. They experimented with direct seeding methods but had little success because the available pipeline was inadequate to properly flood irrigate the fenced area. The existing trees were established using dripper irrigation.

Tubestock, grown from seed collected near site 14 was planted out in October 1988.

THE OVERLAND CORNER WALKING TRAIL

1. The Overland Corner Hotel

Built 1859, this is by far the oldest surviving building in the Riverland. It's original construction was almost entirely of locally available materials, including limestone, red gum and native pine timbers, a dirt floor and thatched roof of river reeds. This rough bush inn, situated on a vital stock route from N.S.W., catered to drovers, explorers and other travelers and became the heart of the first outlying European settlement in the region. It is said that it was frequented by bushrangers. It's flood prone site is an alluvial fan. When an Underground tank was dug, twenty years after the hotel was built, it was discovered that there is a very old Aboriginal burial ground 3 metres beneath the building. The hotel represents the beginning of a time of great and rapid change. This rich river valley, was to be used for very different purposes. New human activities were to impact on the flora and fauna and change the hotel and the adjacent reserve, to preserve this heritage area.



2. The Limestone Quarry

This quarry provided the stone for the Overland Corner Hotel, and up until the late 1950's it has been the source of building materials for other buildings in nearby towns, including the Lutheran Church at Paringa. In pre-European times limestone was burnt in kilns to produce lime, a pigment for white paint, used in art and body painting. The rock is composed almost entirely of fossils. Corals, shellfish and the occasional shark's tooth give evidence that this area was once covered by warm, shallow seas, long before man walked on the earth, some fifteen million years ago.

3. The Small Cemetery

This is the oldest cemetery in the area. Notice the two children's grave's, reflecting the greater hazards of last century. Many died of infectious diseases like consumption, (T.B), influenza and dysentery. Aboriginal people suffered the most. Terrible epidemics of new diseases raged through the region from N.S.W. colony beginning many years before first contact with Europeans in this state, and decimated their population.

Look to your right: False Sandalwood: Dried twigs of this tree burn with a bright white flame. Aboriginal people burnt them in clay fireplaces built into the back of bark canoes. The bright fire provided a "spotlight" for attracting and spearing fish at night. These days the river water is too murky for spear fishing.. The foliage is eagerly grazed by stock and thus the species was much reduced here during the Overlanding era.

4. The Copper Mine

In 1938 a party of Cornish miners worked at this site for almost a year. Nothing of economic value was discovered and their diggings were suddenly abandoned. The tunnels are safe to crawl through but watch you head!

5. The Ochre Quarry

Ochre, both red and yellow was used by Aboriginal people to make paint. It is believed that colour from this quarry were highly prized and traded with people as far away as the Coorong and Flinders Ranges. The site is known to be pre-European and may have been used up to 30,000 years ago.

6. The Lookout

From here you have a panoramic view of the flats, river cliffs and hotel. Note the wide floodplain to the east and the sudden narrowing of the river valley to the west. You can also notice the changes in vegetation from the mallee country through to the river red gums.

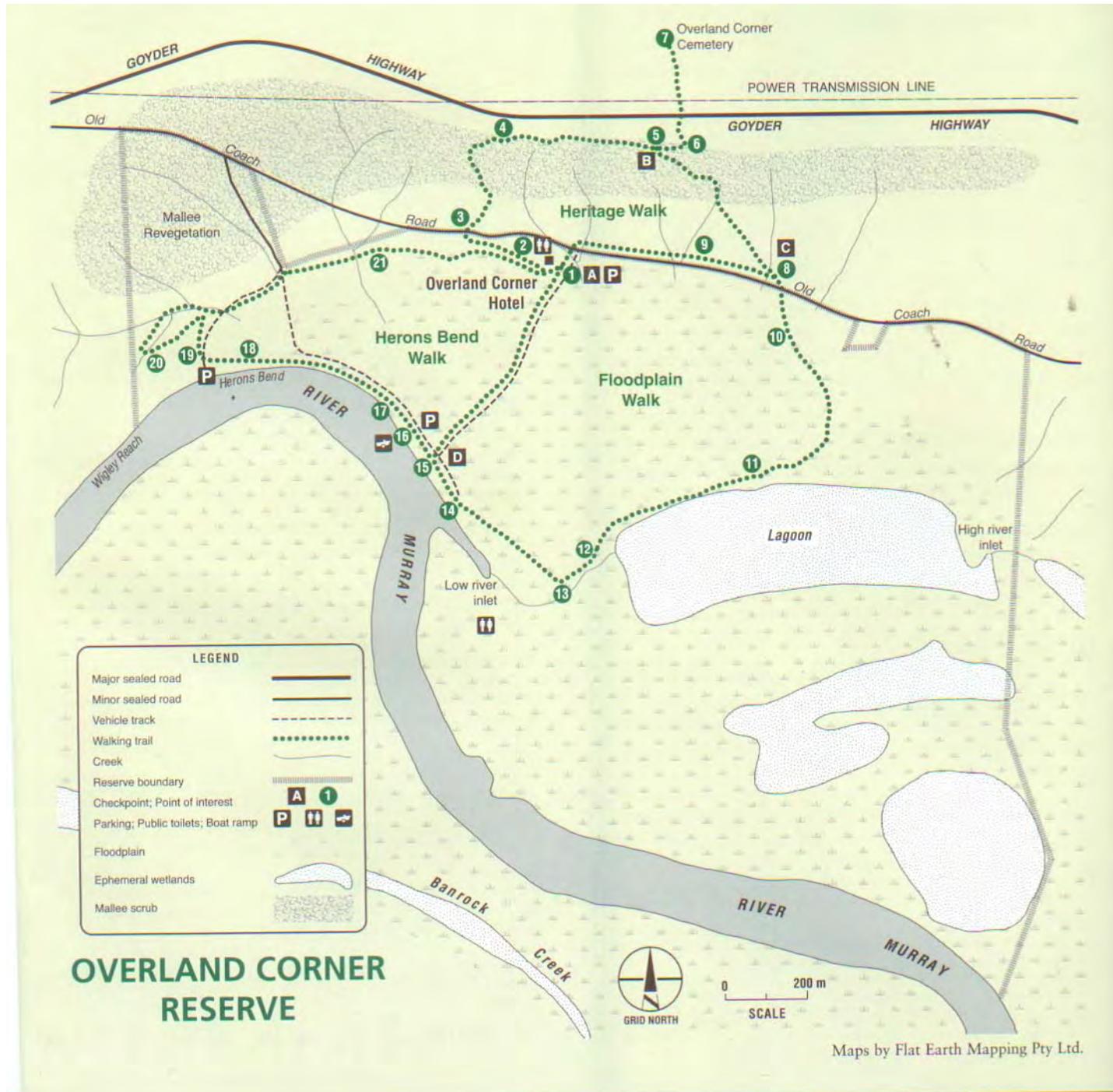
THE BRAND BROTHERS

Their Association with Overland Corner began with the building of the old hotel and remained through the ages. Frontiers men, their involvement saw the development of the colonial settlement



Above: The Brand brothers, Henry, William, George and James who migrated to Australia from Kent, England in 1851. Highly skilled, the brothers were commissioned by John Chambers, the enterprising pastoralist to build the Overland Corner Hotel in 1859. That the building remains is a tribute to these pioneer builders and their skills of construction. **NOTE:** in the top left hand corner, the 'Ghost' who's identity remains a mystery.

OVERLAND CORNER WALKING TRAIL



The trail was developed by the students of Glossop High School and generous sponsorship of SA Water Berri Barmera Local Action Planning Committee and the Berri and Barmera Council have also assisted.

Safety

Young children should be closely supervised particularly at sites 2 and 20 and everywhere in the vicinity of the river. Keep to the marked trail, watching out for snakes in the summer months. Be very careful crossing the highway between sites 4 & 7.

Surging High River

Check with the wardens of Overland Corner Hotel about accessibility of lower sections of the trail.

Footwear

Sensible footwear is essential as the trail traverses some rough ground with moderate slopes.

For the Less Fit

You may wish to avoid a particularly steep section between sites 2 and 3 by walking up the roadway.

Time Required

At least 3 hours is required for a casual pace over the full 8 km trail.

For a shorter walk of about 2 km visiting only sites 1 to 9, you may return from site 9 via Old Coach Road. This should take approximately 1 hour. Please help protect these places so that others can enjoy them in the future.