

TIP TO TOP



Rob and Anne went on a trip to Cape York at very short notice. Sorry none of you had the offer to join us, but we thought you might like to hear about it.

We flew to Cairns direct from Melbourne on 13th May 2010 and met our very own guide and driver Greg "Bart" Johnson at Cooktown Airport after the little ten-seater landed there safely late afternoon. Bart showed us to our lodgings almost right on the waterfront and a short walk to the beach-front cafe for Brekkie the next morning.

Bart showed us through this delightful town at the start of the Cape, where we were to stay one more night, and dropped us off at the Hope Town Community Reserve for an interesting tour of Aboriginal Rock Paintings with Willie Gordon ([Guurrubi Tours](http://www.guurrbitours.com) <http://www.guurrbitours.com>). In the afternoon we visited "Nature's Powerhouse" aka the Botanical Gardens and Gallery, where the magnificent water colours of Vera Scarth-Johnson's Flowering Plants of Cooktown and Northern Australia are on display. We also enjoyed seeing the excellent

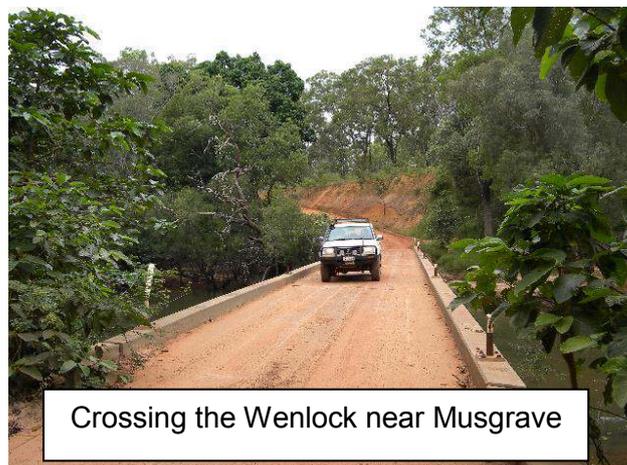


Cooktown Museum. Bart introduced us to his wife Penny (Manager of the Cooktown Museum) and his three children and we all dined at the gourmet Italian Pizza and Steakhouse. The Owner/Chef is so gourmet, that he didn't think Rob should be ordering a well-done steak! (He gave it to him anyway). On our leaving he asked Rob how it went. Rob's reply: "Well Done!"



Saturday 15th saw us heading north-west and stopping to look at the great art work at Split Rock. It was about a kilometre's walk return over nicely placed rocks and typical bushland.

That night we reached Musgrave Telegraph Station and enjoyed a pleasant night there midst the work going on to upgrade the electrics. John and Mary are delightful hosts well known to Bart. This couple has been in residence 10 years and their Roadhouse, virtually the same in structure as when it was built in the late 1800's, is now quietly on the market. The Cooktown Orchids growing on their trees were spectacular.

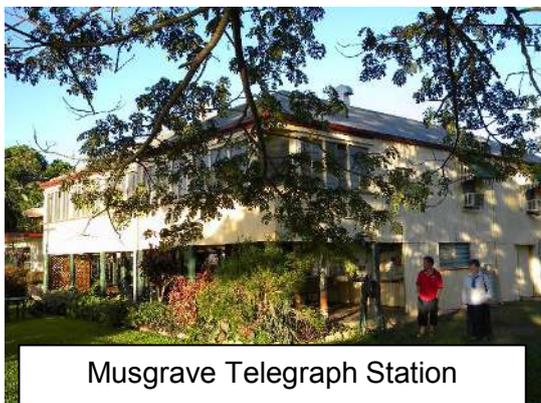


Crossing the Wenlock near Musgrave



Denis the Truckie delivers to Marluna

Next stop was a working Station, Marluna, where we ate at the table of Cameron and Michelle McLean (would you believe Clayton's mother lives at Whitlands!). They had a NZ (ex South African) couple working there (Outback Helpers on a B&B Basis). This couple, Michael and Beverley, were on an extended Aussie holiday with big caravan but their Ford's (Murray's type) electronics had just packed it in; we saw it on a truck at Musgrave! We received great hospitality and stayed in a self-contained unit there. Also met the neighbouring station owners from a few k's away, Cameron and Doreen, and their two young Canadian offiders



Musgrave Telegraph Station

Onto the Gulf and next stop was Loyalty Beach Resort. We were the only (spoiled rotten) guests as we were once again ahead of the tourists!

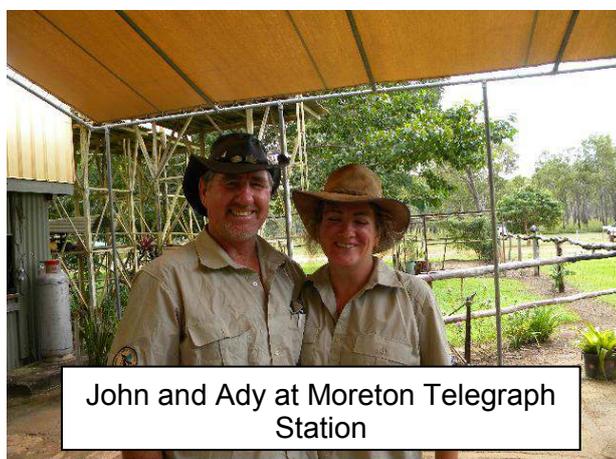
Chef Pauline even served us Crayfish on which we dined while overlooking the Torres Strait, enjoying a glorious sunset beyond the swaying palms. From here we drove to Moreton Telegraph Station where the new managers sat town with us to homemade Afternoon Tea! Somewhere round here (at the Fruit Bat Falls Park area) we met a man who photographs Road Test Trips for one of the magazines. He had a you

beaut 4WD with the video whirring and his wife looking the part in her Outdoor Kitchen, but there was a dodgy hose running across where it should not have been (or something). You might catch it in some glossy mag sometime soon.

Next, Bamaga, and on to the Top & Last, Bush Car Park. After about a half kilometer walk over a gentle rocky slope above the mangrove beach we reached the Tip of the Top! And the Torres Strait Islands beckoning while the Northerly was trying to dislodge us. There was a bit of a line up to stand in front of the pretty newly-placed sign, the previous one having been sawn off and souvenir. There were three couples from Sydney for whom Rob took on the role of professional photographer and who then returned the favour. (They had been staying in the peasants' quarters at Loyalty Beach Resort.)



With the South-African-New-Zealander-would-be-Aussies



John and Ady at Moreton Telegraph Station

After our second night at Loyalty Beach Bart drove us to the departure point for the Ferry Thursday Island Ferry. "Strait Magic" delivered us after about an hour and a half and 20 nautical miles of pleasant



cruising past several islands, with commentary. We did the obligatory bus tour of TI and found out it, unlike Horn Is, was not bombed in WWII, as there were rumours of a Japanese princess having inhabited it. There were plenty of Japanese pearl divers' graves, however, and islanders' as well. The tour included a brief tour of the War Museum near the Big Gun set up at Green Fort set to ward off invading Russians. The only time it was ever fired it scared the starch out of a school Ma'am tending her kindergarten on the next-door island.



Jardine River Crossing



Northern waters

We took the smaller ferry to Horn Island late afternoon and found our lodgings at the Gateway Torres Strait Resort. The 5th generation Aussie Chinaman who built it in 1990 also set up the fabulous Museum on the premises with the help and inspiration of his brilliant daughter-in-law Virginia Seekee and her husband. His widow now runs the resort offering her own Chinese cooking in turn with other menus at the Smorgasbord Restaurant.

Next day we took a Qantas jet direct to Cairns and boarded another to Melbourne where we hung out overnight at the Mantra, before driving back to the North-East, so as to recover in style from such a hard **Four Wheel Drive adventure!**



At the top of Beautiful Cape York



Bart has a stone in his disc brake



Mangrove Beach at the Top of Cape York

Rob and Anne Buchan