

TEACHER'S PACK

Travel Trivia

Effective January 2008

Four (4) pages including this one



428 Conrod Straight
Mount Panorama
Bathurst NSW 2795
Ph 02 6332 2022
Fax 02 6332 3441
info@bathurstgoldfields.com.au
www.bathurstgoldfields.com.au

TRAVEL TRIVIA

1. BLUE MOUNTAINS - little is known of the Aborigines who inhabited the Blue Mountains Area, but it is believed that their presence dates back 22,000 years.
2. BLUE MOUNTAINS - in the early days of the road across the Mountains it was very hazardous. In 1822 a family by the name of Hawkins moved to Bathurst from Sydney. It took 18 days to get there and was difficult and uncomfortable. This compares to a 3 - 4 hour drive today !! The road became the reason for the existence of the Blue Mountains with military posts and inns in place to cater for those crossing to farmland out west and to the goldfields. In many cases these same areas are where the townships developed that you will pass through today. An example is Wentworth Falls which was then known as Weatherboard, was where Cox built a weatherboard hut in 1815 to act as a second depot during the construction of the road.
3. BLUE MOUNTAINS - when the road became too congested with people and freight for the goldfields and the farmlands out west - people started pushing for a railway to be built. The western railway was opened in the late 1860s. This brought dramatic changes not only to the areas out west but to the Mountains. There was rapid growth in the Mountains and the wealthy people from Sydney started escaping to the cool climate of the Mountains for weekends and holidays. In the 1870s & 1880s people came to the mountains for the mountains air, the scenery, for art and for romance! Later in the 18th Century the wealthy and well educated enjoyed the mystery of the bush tracks in the area and then in the 1920s & 1930s the middle class honeymooners and holiday makers started to visit. It wasn't until after World War II that the day trippers and the overseas visitors started to come. So the goldfields started quite a movement to the Mountains. It is still a popular weekend and holiday destination today.
4. SPRINGWOOD - by June 1851 1,800 people had been counted making their way across the Mountains to the goldfields. Many of them camped here at Springwood.
5. LINDEN (Bull's Camp Reserve - on the right as you are coming up the Mountains - between Linden & Woodford) - this was a permanent convict community. The convicts used to form iron gangs (working in chains) and work to repair the road. The soldiers used to make them work by using a lash, a cot-o'-nine-tails whip. The area was named after Captain Bull who did away with the punishment when he arrived and became known for being fair and humane. At this rest area is 'The Flogger's Stone' where a convict would be tied across a rock and then flogged....there are apparently marks on this rock that show how the whip ends would sometimes hit the rock ... as well as the convict ! I'll tell you more about Captain Bull when we reach Blackheath.
6. WOODFORD (Woodford Academy - stone buildings approx ½ kilometre on the right after Woodford railway / township) - the original part of this complex is said to be the oldest building still standing in the Blue Mountains. It dates back before the Gold Rush to the early 1840s. It was originally Buss's Inn run by William Buss. Mr Buss used to hurry out to meet coaches in his very distinctive red waistcoat. The buildings have also been used as a home and as a boys' boarding school. The buildings are now owned by the National Trust.
7. WENTWORTH FALLS - this is Wentworth Falls which I mentioned before. It used to be called Weatherboard after Cox's weatherboard hut. Weatherboard houses are still popular in the Mountains today. If you look around you will see them - they have timber on the outside running parallel to the ground. They are often quite colourful - because unlike brick homes - people paint them all sorts of colours. Wentworth Falls was also the first railway terminus in the Mountains. When the railway was built it only went this far for a year, before it was opened up to Mt Victoria, then through to Bathurst. So if you came by train in 1867, you would have got off the train here and continued your journey by horse drawn coach.

(the following anecdote is for those doing the Scenic World Presentation))

8. SCENIC WORLD (before you get off the coach) - when we go in for the Scenic World Presentation you will be seeing a lot of old photography. Much of the photography was taken by a gentleman by the name of Harry Phillips. I'm telling you this because his parents came out from England during the Gold Rush Era and he was largely responsible for building tourism in the Blue Mountains.

9. MEDLOW BATH (Hydro Majestic Hotel - on left as you enter Medlow Bath - can't miss it) - Edward Hargraves' home (the man who was attributed with the discovery of gold in Australia) was located in the grounds of what is now the Hydro Majestic Hotel.
10. MEDLOW BATH (Hydro cont'd) - the Hotel is about 100 years old. Known firstly for its therapeutic baths, it became a famous tourist hotel and during World War II housed American servicemen wounded in the Pacific. It has recently been refurbished.
11. MEDLOW BATH (before or as you cross railway bridge) - as you will have noticed the railway line and the road share the same ridge. The road originally crossed the railway 12 times between Lapstone and here and each crossing had a gatekeeper and a residence. The gatekeepers were usually women. The Medlow Gatehouse still stands (to the left after the bridge - but on the other side of the line) and is now privately owned.
12. BLACKHEATH (after leaving Medlow Bath) - remember Captain Bull from Bull's Camp reserve - well he established a stockade in Blackheath (which is the next town we come to) from 1840 - 1849 (just before the Gold Rush started), where he built a house for his family and quarters for his soldiers and convict workers. When a convict died Bull asked what usually happened in these circumstances. The answer was "We just take the body into the bush and throw it away". Bull was so angry at this reply that any future death was followed by a proper funeral service and burial in a grave with a headstone. As the town grew, these graves and headstones were removed to the town cemetery, where a small number of graves can still be seen in a special area marked "To the Graves of Stockade Soldiers and Others".
13. BLACKHEATH (point to the left then right of the highway when you enter into the Blackheath 60km zone before the township) - as the goldfields started to decline many of the Chinese who had worked mines out west started moving to the larger country towns. Many became storekeepers, market gardeners and cooks - jobs they had done at home. The Chinese lived in the Mountains for about 50 years. Before they arrived most of the fruit and vegetables was brought from Sydney. The Chinese set up market gardens in Katoomba and Mt Victoria, down to our left in the Megalong Valley, and probably the largest was to our right where the Blackheath Golf Course now stands. This was a successful venture and the Chinese also sold their fruit & vegetables in Sydney.

(the following anecdote is for those travelling to Jenolan Caves)

14. BLACKHEATH (Gardners Inn - to the right at the end of the row of shops travelling west after you go through the only set of traffic lights in Blackheath) - the Gardners Inn was originally the Scotch thistle in 1831, became popular as a stopover for people travelling to Jenolan Caves and was "suitable for respectable travellers".
15. MOUNT VICTORIA (as you come up to the lights at Mt Victoria) - Mt Victoria was once known as 'One Tree Hill'. The coming of the railway changed the fortunes of the town. By the 1880s it was a busy country holiday destination.
16. ZIG ZAG RAILWAY (once through the lights at Mt Victoria) - some 17 kilometres by car to our right is the Zig Zag Railway. After they decided to put the railway through to the west, they had to solve the problem of getting the train down the steep incline into the valley - soon we will be going down an incline into the valley ourselves - so if you have a good look out of the windows when we get there, you will be able to imagine how hard it would be to get a heavy steam train down. What they ended up doing was taking the train down by zig zagging. If you draw an imaginary big 'Z' on your hand - that is what the railway was like (and is like today - as a tourist railway). The engine had to be moved to the front of the train each time it came to a point in the 'Z'. The railway was opened in 1869. In 1910 the Zig Zag Railway was replaced by a system of 10 tunnels. The amount of traffic on the railway had become too great for the Zig Zag and a better method of getting down to the plains below had to be found.
17. MOUNT VICTORIA (towards the bottom of the pass) - before the railway line was built there was an Inn just at the base of the pass it was built 30 years before the railway. The Mount Victoria Inn as it was called prospered in the 1850s and 1860s with the Gold Rush. Coaches used to change their horses here. At the back of the Inn were stables for the horses and a Blacksmith's Shop. You'll be seeing some blacksmithing when you get to Bathurst Goldfields - I want you to think about why they needed a blacksmith's shop here.

- 18.MT VICTORIA - there was once an extensive convict camp at the bottom of the pass where convicts were barricaded in by upright stakes in the ground and there were iron rings in the trees so that they could attach the convicts to them. Stories are written about soldiers pushing the bayonets of their rifles into bushes to try to find escaped convicts and of convicts approaching travellers for money and tobacco.
- 19.LITTLE HARTLEY (at the bottom of the pass) - 7 or 8 kilometres out to our right is Hartley Vale and further again is Clarence. When they were constructing the western railway through there back in the 1860s, there was a tragic incident out that way involving a young man by the name of George Gamble. With a team of 6 horses he was bringing a load of gunpowder to the Hartley Vale area to be used in the earthworks for the railway. It was 7 o'clock at night and the newspaper reported that the gunpowder exploded, producing a tremendous noise, which was heard in Penrith, twenty-seven miles. The unfortunate driver, Gamble, was killed on the spot. A young man by the name of Kegan (who was driving another team) was also seriously injured. Three of the horses were killed and hardly a trace of the cart could be seen. The coach coming through from Bathurst came upon the accident soon afterwards. Several telegraph posts were on fire and the trees were blazing in all directions - having been blown 400 - 500 yards.
- 20.LITTLE HARTLEY (just past Cockatoo Cabins) - in 1816 soldiers were posted south west of here at Glenroy because local Aboriginal peoples had driven stockmen away and had plundered the Government Store. The soldiers also caught many bushrangers in the same area.
- 21.HARTLEY - the township was dominated by the Courthouse and Church, the Courthouse originally doubling as a church. Hartley was meant to become a sizeable town that was to act as a stepping stone to the west, but history proved otherwise.

(the following anecdote is for those travelling to Jenolan Caves)

- 22.JENOLAN (after turning off the highway to Jenolan Caves) - the first women to walk to Jenolan Caves from Katoomba did so in 1886. The 3 young women wore 3-4 layers of skirts to their feet, bustles, high boned lace collars, large hats and shawls. It was thought to be quite improper for these young women to travel with the party without being accompanied by a parent. The trip took 1 year to plan and 3 days travelling each way plus one day at Jenolan Caves. Their greatest problem was thirst - they didn't take any water. An interesting part of the tale is that one of the women wore a red shawl that attracted a bull and other wild cattle and the men had to protect the women !!