

AREAS - STRANGWAYS SPRINGS
Unincorporated

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Historically, is item of enormous importance in illustrating the themes of early pastoral settlement of the north of the State and the construction and operation of the Overland Telegraph line, linking Darwin to Adelaide and hence Australia to the outside world in the 1870's.

Physically, the site consists of a complex of ruinous buildings, a cemetery and two telegraph poles located on an isolated hill rising from low scrub. The hill contains a number of once active Mound Springs.

Environmentally the site is powerful, unique and evocative and set within country with very little evidence of European settlement.

The integrity of the complex is good.

NOMINATION SOURCE/THREAT/OWNER

This report has been prepared as a result of a site visit by the Branch in July, 1985. Strangways Springs complex was nominated by Donovan and Associates in 1984 as an item in the Mound Springs Study and recommended for National listing. It is now under Pastoral Lease and designated an Historic Reserve.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION BRANCH RECOMMENDATION:

Bang C. R. R. R.
Manager

It is recommended that this item be included on the Register of State Heritage Items, and that it be categorized A1, H1, H2, 3.1.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

Chairman

| | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| South Australian Heritage Act 1978-82 | Register of State Heritage Items ITEM EVALUATION SHEET Historic Site | Ref. No. 6140-10320 |
| | Item AREAS - STRANGWAYS SPRINGS | Prepared By: ROBYN TAYLOR |

Supplementary Information

Adaption:

An ideal site to provide interpretative information concerning early European use of the land for pastoral purposes and the construction and operation of the Overland Telegraph Line.

History and Sources

- 1 -

Strangways Springs was discovered in 1858 by Peter Warburton, the South Australian Commissioner of Police. Warburton had received orders to follow another government sponsored exhibition led by Benjamin Babbage and assume control because of slow progress and a lack of results. On the 28th October, 1858, Warburton accompanied by Arthur Baker and Thomas Coward sighted "a remarkable-looking jumble of little hills. These I found to be a third batch of Springs exceeding the first two in number and extent of country covered, but, on the whole not so active". Warburton named the Springs after State Parliamentarian H.B.T. Strangways and declared the surrounding country as "fit for pastoral purposes".

The Pastoral Station

Following Warburton's discovery a Victorian syndicate led by Hugh Glass lodged a pastoral claim in the area, site unseen. In mid 1859 Alfred Howitt, the proposed Manager led a small party to inspect the site and following this the Glass syndicate dropped plans to stock Strangways Springs and hence forfeited their claim.

The partnership, Warren, Jeffreys and Bakewell, after an inspection of the property by Julius Jeffreys in mid 1862, applied to the Government for a lease. They were refused. In November 1862, the run was put up for public auction and acquired by the company at the low price of one shilling and sixpence per square mile per annum. Jeffreys in his capacity as Station Manager reached Strangways Springs in March of 1863 (two months after the pastoral lease was granted) with more than 3,300 sheep, 40 head of cattle and approximately 20 horses and supervised the establishment of the head station at the Springs. Early in 1865 the run was carrying a total of 9,300 sheep.

A severe drought occurred from 1863 to 1866 and when finally flooding rains fell, half of the station's stock had perished. The original lease was thrown up by the partnership in 1865 as the property was understocked due to drought losses. From this time until 1888 the property was held on pastoral claims and the company went on to an assessment rental.

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| | Item Areas - Strangways Springs | Prepared By: ROBYN TAYLOR |

History and Sources

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The wool from Strangways Springs was carted to Port Augusta and shipped to Britain for sale. The cost of transport of wool and rations and increased wages paid to shearers to induce them to travel to this area reduced the profits of the company. The wool quality from this area due to the nature of the country was poor, further reducing profits. By 1866 both Jeffreys and Bakewell had divested themselves of shares in the run. Warren remained involved and established a partnership with his father-in-law, Thomas Hogarth, M.L.C.

With the change in partners in 1867, construction began on new facilities at the head station, replacing previously existing ones. James Oastler, Station Manager and with some experience as a mason supervised the laying of the stone and later hired a first rate mason. The stone used for the complex of buildings is the local material, blasted out from the site in an effort to level and provide building material. Bush timbers from Anna Creek were used for the roof frames. Records of the progressing construction are recorded in a letter from Warren then visiting the station in May of 1867. By early 1868 the smithy and woolshed were completed.

The Telegraph Line

The construction of the Overland Telegraph line from Pt. Augusta to Pt. Darwin was announced in July, 1870. The line was to pass through Strangways Springs and a Repeater Station was planned for the site. Hogarth and Warren met with Todd and other officials and organized the removal of the Strangways Springs lease and the granting of a lease to the Anna Creek run, finalized in July, 1870. A six or seven year period elapsed before permanent structures were built at Anna Creek.

Both John Ross (employed to establish the most suitable route through the unsurveyed country) and Charles Todd passed through Strangways Springs in 1870 on their way to the Peake. Animals used for rations were purchased from the property and formed the majority of the flock, the first to be overlanded to the Northern Territory. During this time, a considerable amount of traffic passed through the Springs although much of it went unrecorded.

Poling to Strangways Springs was completed by October of 1871 with cypress pine poles used from Hergott Springs (Maree) to Strangways and iron poles used between Strangways and The Peake. A Repeater Station and Telegraph Office was opened at the Springs on 22nd August, 1872 and housed in the former Manager's residence. It remained in operation until closure was announced in the Government Gazette on the 8th October, 1896. Services were transferred to the new Post and Telegraph Office at William Creek. The original telegraph line beside the old cartage route (between Strangways Springs and Hergott Springs) was retained until 1887 when iron poles were erected alongside the railway line and the old telegraph line dismantled.

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History and Sources

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Strangways Springs during this time was an important centre with a Police Station erected and opened on April 12th, 1886 and a turf club opened in the same year. In 1884 the Great Northern Railway was extended from Farina to Hergott Springs using the labour of five to six hundred unemployed men hired in Adelaide. The line paused at Oodnadatta and construction ceased in 1891, passing Strangways Springs during that time. Although the Springs are some distance from the track, its importance as a supply centre is indisputable.

The Police Station was closed between September, 1893 and 1894 and the buildings of the settlement have remained unoccupied from about that time on.

Thomas Hogarth's interest in the Anna Creek Station, including the ruins of Strangways Springs settlement, passed to his sons on his death in 1893. John Warren's interest was transferred to his sons in 1914. James Oastler remained as Station Manager until 1905 and continued connected to the station until 1914.

Anna Creek Run (including Strangway Springs) was sold by the families of Warren and Hogarth in 1918-1919 to Melcolm Reid and Lesley Taylor. Their company Strangways Springs Limited, was within months acquired by the Kidman family. Reid retained an interest and continued to manage and supervise the running of the property until 1934-35, when the Strangways Springs syndicate was formed by Kidman, Reid and others. It is currently owned by Strangways Springs Pty Ltd.

At the moment the site contains the remains of ten identifiable structures in various stages of decay. The most complete building of the group is the water tank with all walls remaining and concrete capping in place. However only some walls and fireplaces remain of the other structures and the Police Station is rubble. The site also contains the graves of Mary Hewish and Walter Randall who were buried in 1895 and 1893 respectively. Two timber telegraph poles remain close to the site. Most of the telegraph poles within South Australia were removed. The two poles located near Strangways Springs are the only two located during the inspection. One is located between the homestead buildings and cemetery and the other close to the roadway leading into the area. The dry stone walls used in the stockyard construction is a superb example of this technique and remains in relatively good condition.

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History and Sources

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The heritage significance of this complex is undeniable. Although in ruinous condition, the site is a powerful, evocative and unique one that embodies much of the early exploration, pastoral settlement and construction of the Overland Telegraph Line - all significant events in the history of the State. The ruins on site are in urgent need of stabilization and maintenance to prevent further deterioration caused by vandalism and the processes of time. The two telegraph poles remaining in the area present a problem in terms of management. Removal to a safe location for either storage or display may be preferred to leaving them at risk from vandalism in situ.

The entire site has high potential in illustrating the early history of European settlement in the northern region of the State and the development of the Overland Telegraph Line. As with other ruins set in this landscape, it is particularly powerful and unique and although isolated provides an excellent opportunity for interpretation.

Sources

Pearce, Howard, "Remote Sites Documentation"

SAPP, 191-1884; pg 6 -44

Donovan and Associates in Association with Kinhill Stearns.

"Assessment of Exploration and Post-European settlement significance of the Mound Springs of South Australia". Prepared for the Department of Environment and Planning, December, 1984.

Taylor, Peter. An End to Silence. The Building of the overland Telegraph Line from Adelaide to Darwin. Methuen Australia Pty. Ltd Sydney, 1980.

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| South Australian Heritage Act 1978-82 | Register of State Heritage Items ITEM EVALUATION SHEET Historic Site | Ref. No. 6140-10320 |
| | Item <u>STRANGWAYS SPRINGS</u> | Status National Trust [Recorded] |
| Age C 1867 | Subject Original Use: 1806 Telegraph Station 1004 Pastoral Homestead Present Use: 0000 Disused | Ab+ Historic Rel Site Type '71 - |

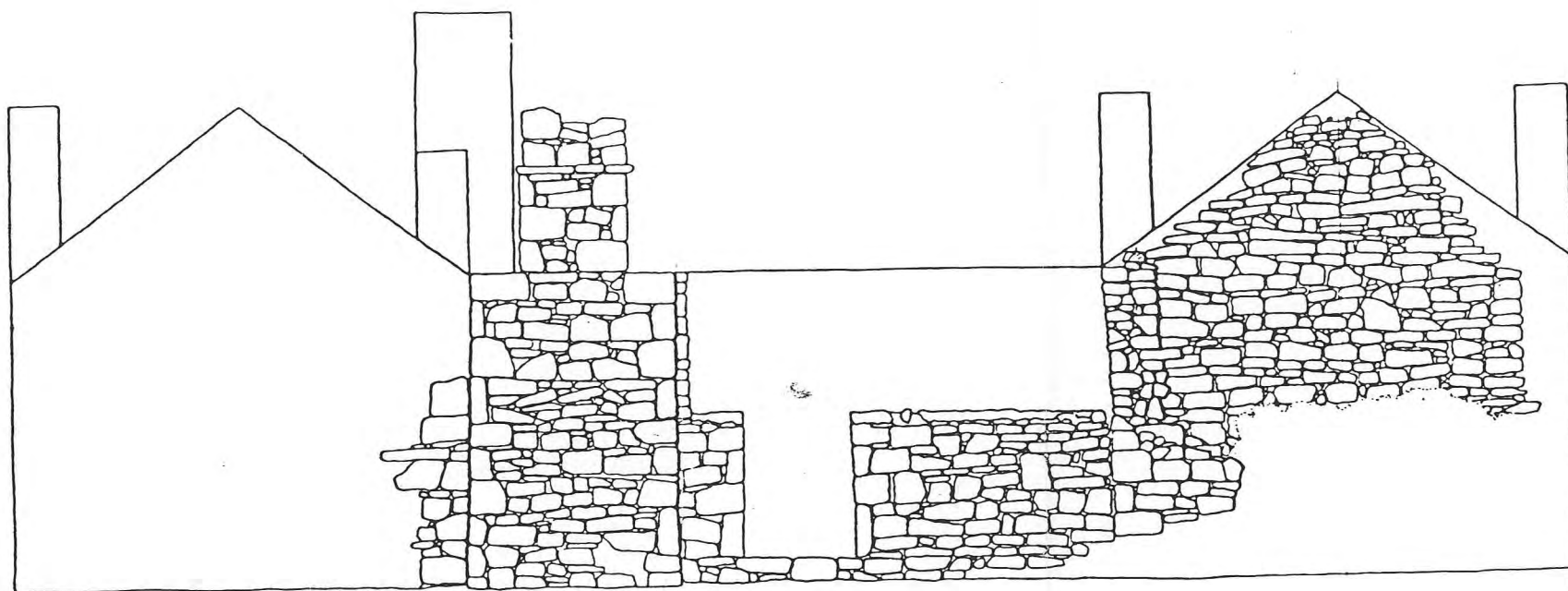
History

Physical

Environment



Integrity

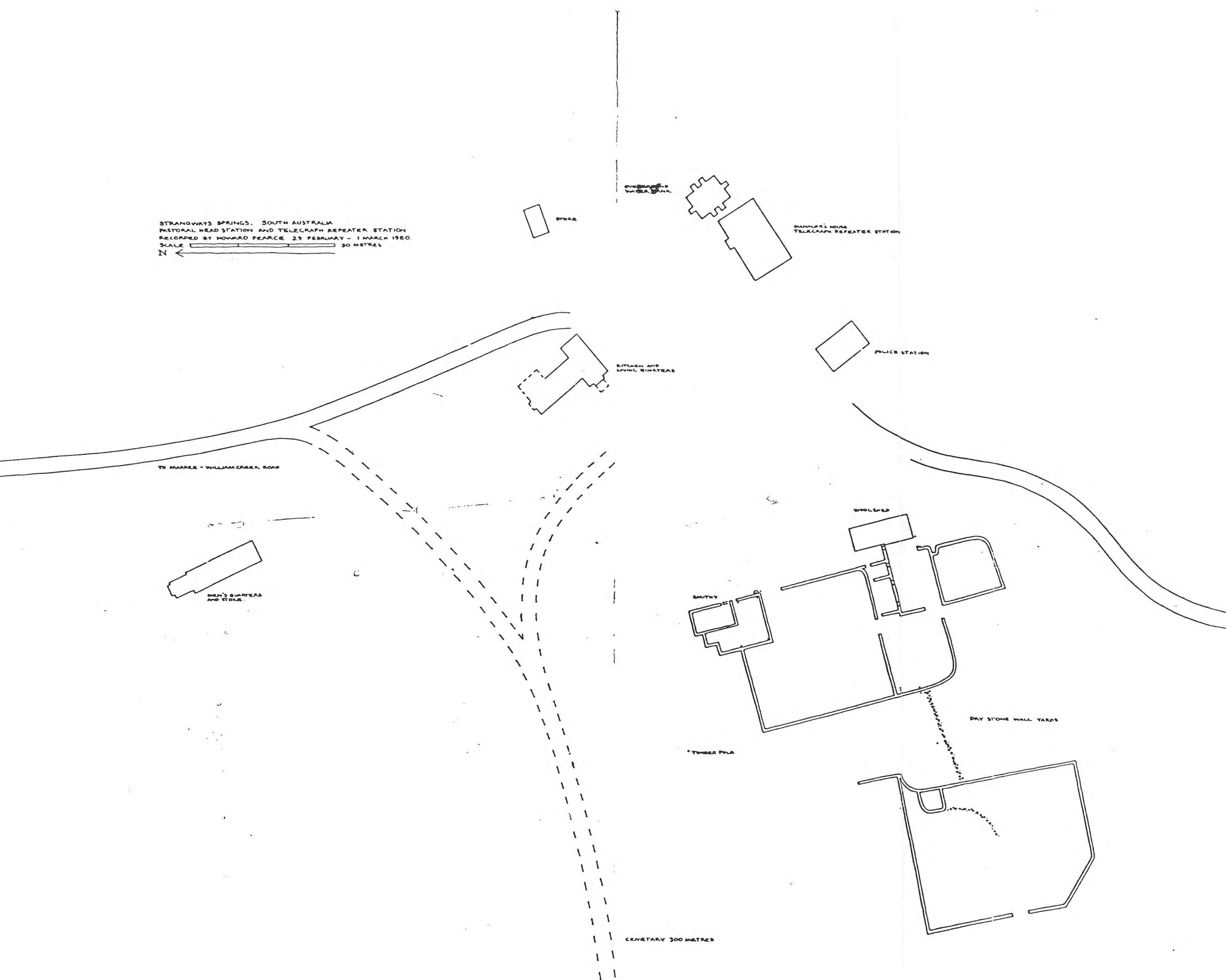
| | | E | VG | AG | FP | NA |
|-------------|--|---|----|----|----|----|
| History | Context The Strangways Springs site is significant in illustrating the first European settlement of the area for pastoral purposes. The site includes a Repeater Station and thus illustrates the Overland Telegraph. From 1896 the site has remained abandoned. | X | | | | |
| | Person/Group The Springs were discovered in 1858 by P Warburton. Land purchased in 1862 by South Australian pastoralists, Warren, Jeffreys and Bakewell. Land sold to Kidman family in 1918-19. | | X | | | |
| | Event 1867 - 1872 main homestead of pastoral station 1872 - 1887 Overland Repeater Station | | X | | | |
| Physical | Natural Elements Complex of ruinous buildings are located at top of isolated hill rising from band of low scrub. The hill contains a large number of mound springs and soda deposits. Sand plains extend to the north and east with undulating gibber plains and low hills extending southward. | | X | | | |
| | Man-Made Elements Ten identifiable buildings and structures located on the site including house, stores, hut, smithy, kitchen, woolshed, mens quarters, overground water tank, police station and stockyards. All buildings are without roofs and in varying stages of disintegration. Dry stone wall used around stockyards. | | X | | | |
| | Representation Built as homestead during the early years of pastoral expansion in the north. A rare example of telegraph repeater station, one of only three in South Australia. | X | | | | |
| Environment | Continuity Located on hill in arid country. All buildings on site of similar age, mass, and scale providing complimentary complex. | | | X | | |
| | Local Character Significant in establishing early history of the area - pastoral use and Overland Telegraph. | X | | | | |
| | Landmark A significant natural feature in the landscape. | | | X | | |
| Integrity | Alterations No alterations made to items. | | | X | | |
| | Condition In ruinous condition. Roofs removed, walls crumbling, some buildings have entirely disintegrated. | | | | | X |
| | Compatibility Unused, except for tourist visits. | | | | | |



STRANGWAYS SPRINGS
 MANAGER'S HOUSE AND TELEGRAPH REPEATER STATION
 NORTH WEST ELEVATION - SHOWING ORIGINAL ELEVATION IN OUTLINE.
 - ALSO SHOWING SELECTED AREAS OF INTACT RUBBLE MASONRY -
 (INCLUDING LATER CHIMNEY AND PARAPET)
 RECORDED BY HOWARD PEARCE 29 FEBRUARY 1980.

3 METRES

STRANDWAYS SPRINGS, SOUTH AUSTRALIA
PASTORAL HEAD STATION AND TELEGRAPH REPEATER STATION
RECORDED BY HOWARD PEARCE 29 FEBRUARY - 1 MARCH 1980.
SCALE  30 METRES
N 

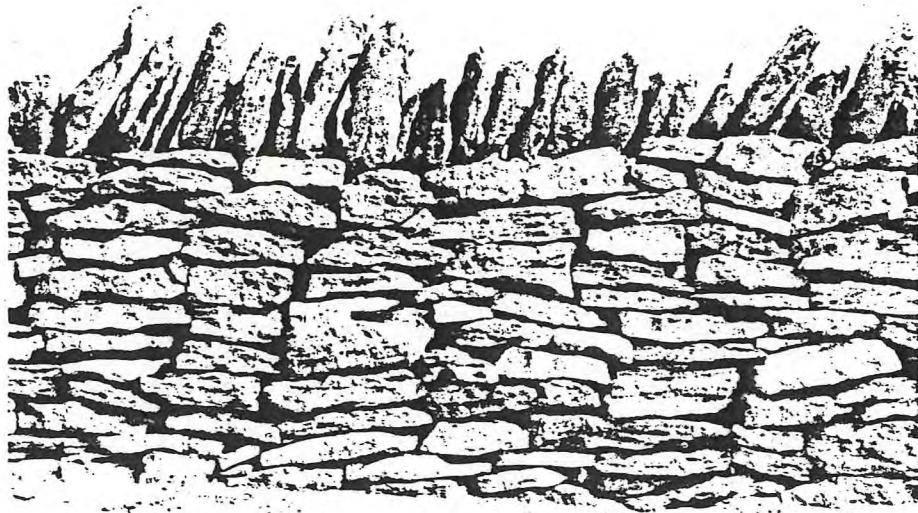


with yard adjoining it, are integrated with the dry stone wall fences of a stock yard. The building may originally have been covered by a thatch skillion roof, and finally an iron gable roof. Several long vice benches of deal and gum, ran along two walls and a forge was incorporated into a third. The smithy walls were still standing intact in 1926, though the iron roof had been removed. The building is now partly demolished.

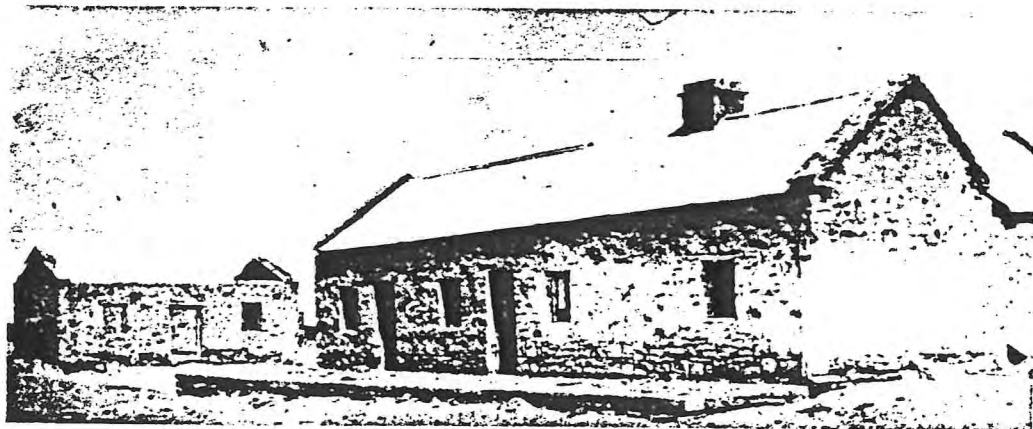
The woolshed, or more properly, the dumping press room and wool store, was begun in 1867. It was erected of local taverntine rubble masonry. The west wall was integrated with dry stone wall fencing dividing the shorn sheep yard and sweating pens. The building originally was covered with a thatch roof, later partly covered over with iron c. 1870's. The southern room remains although partly demolished. However the northern room is totally demolished and most of its stone has been removed from the site.

The kitchen, cook's quarters, and men's living quarters was probably erected c. 1867-8. The walls are of local taverntine rubble masonry and the roof was of thatch. The kitchen originally contained an interior fireplace and an outside bake-oven. The original oven was removed c. 1870's-80's and a second fireplace containing a new outside oven, substituted in its place. A large north-west wing extending off the kitchen, formerly contained about four rooms and a third fireplace at its north-west end. The walls and chimney of this wing were intact in 1926, but have since been demolished and their stone removed from the site. The two room south-east wing, containing the kitchen and cook's quarters, still stands though partly demolished.

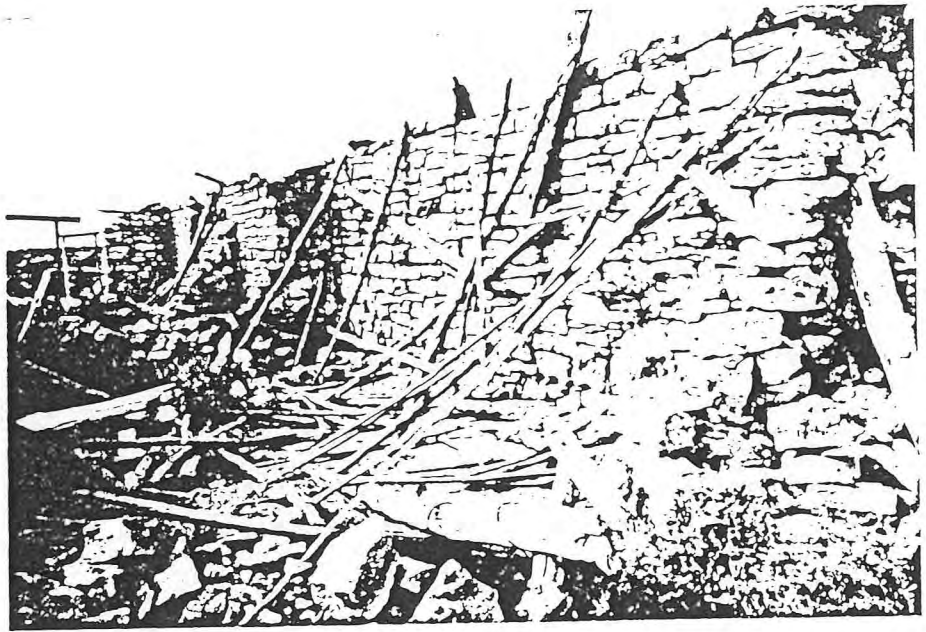
The men's quarters and store was probably erected c. 1867-8. The walls are of local taverntine rubble masonry and the roof was of thatch on a bush timber frame. The building as originally completed was half present size.



Strangways Springs stockyard - section of dry stone wall.
Photo - Howard Pearce, 1980.



"Remains of settlement, April 1926"
L. to R. - former police station, former repeater station.
Courtesy of S.A.Archives, Photo No. 3399.



Strangways Springs men's quarters.

Photo - Howard Pearce, 1980.



Strangways Springs.

L. to R. - overground water tank, former repeater station.
Photo - Howard Pearce, 1980.

The northern half is the later extension. A rubble masonry lean-to kitchen and fireplace of cruder construction was added still later to the northern end. This was roofed with iron and contained a medium size wrought iron Simpson's cooking stove. All additions were completed some time prior to 1888. In its final form the building contained four rooms with floors of concrete 25mm to 50mm thick. Among the fixtures were two bunks of mulga and deal. The men's hut retained most of its thatch roof until at least 1926, and though by then it was so old it was impossible to tell what variety of reeds had been used, it was apparent they had been fastened on with green-hide strips. The building is now mostly demolished, but the east wall remains standing though unstable.

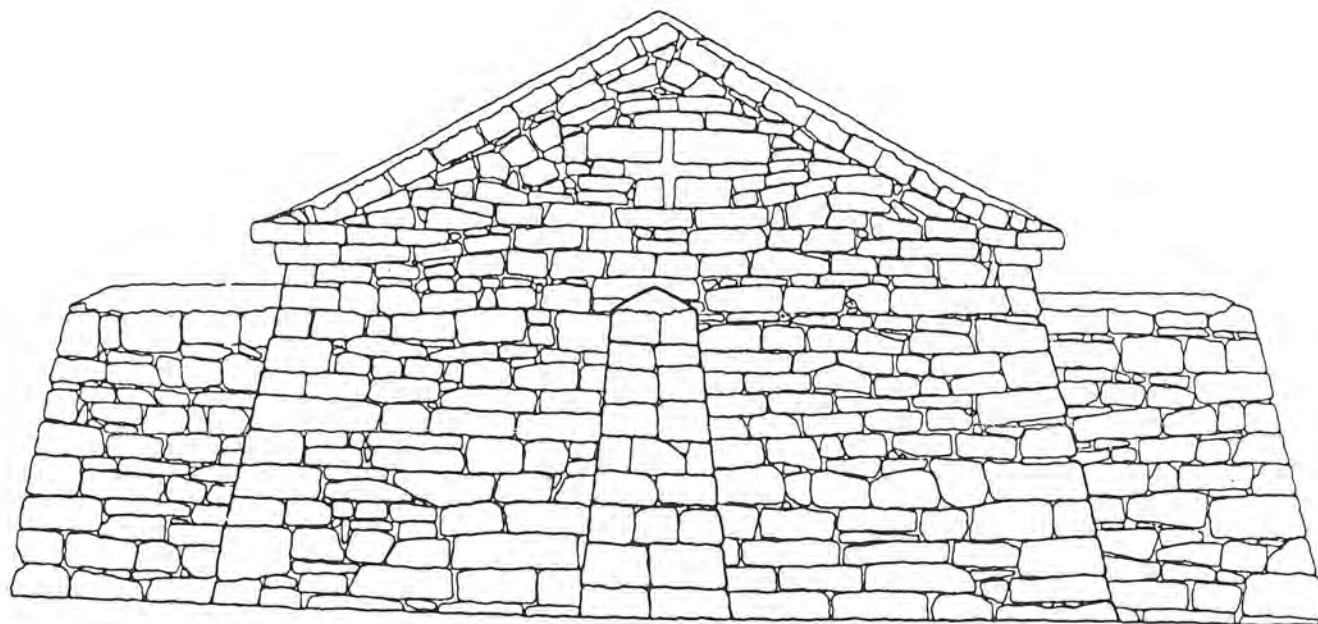
The 10,000 gallon (45.5 cubic metre) overground stone water tank was installed under government contract for the Posts and Telegraph Department. The stone used in this structure differs from that at the site, indicating it was quarried else where and carted to the site. It has not been established when the water tank was erected, though it appears to have been built some time between 1875-83. Its buttressed walls are a maximum 914mm at present ground level tapering up to a minimum 450mm at eaves level. Six heavy stone buttresses support the walls. The interior of the tank is 2.28 metres deep and lined overall in concrete which is still in reasonable condition. Most of the milled timber roof frame remains intact although unstable. It was originally covered by iron which has since been removed. Cement capping atop the buttresses and stone walls is showing signs of breaking up, but generally the structure is at present in fair condition though in need of stabilisation.

The Strangways Springs police station was erected under government contract, probably between January and March 1886. It appears to have been a simple one room structure with walls of local taverntine rubble masonry and a concrete floor. The roof frame was probably of milled

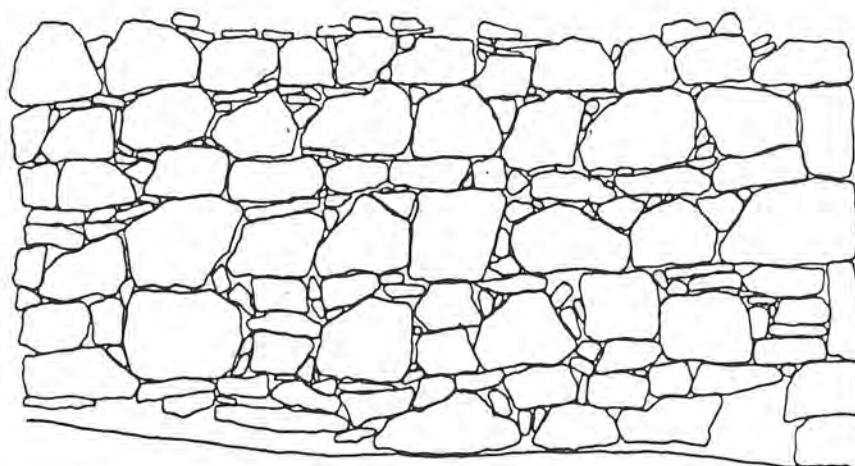
timber and was covered with iron. The walls of the building were still standing in 1926 though the iron roof had been removed. The building is now totally demolished.

The structures and ruins that remain from this burst of European activity include:

. Dry stone wall yards; Manager's house/telegraph repeater station; Store; Smithy; Woolshed: Kitchen, cook's quarters, mens living quarters; Mens quarters and store; Overground tank; Police Station; Two telegraph poles; and the cemetery (300 metres to the West)



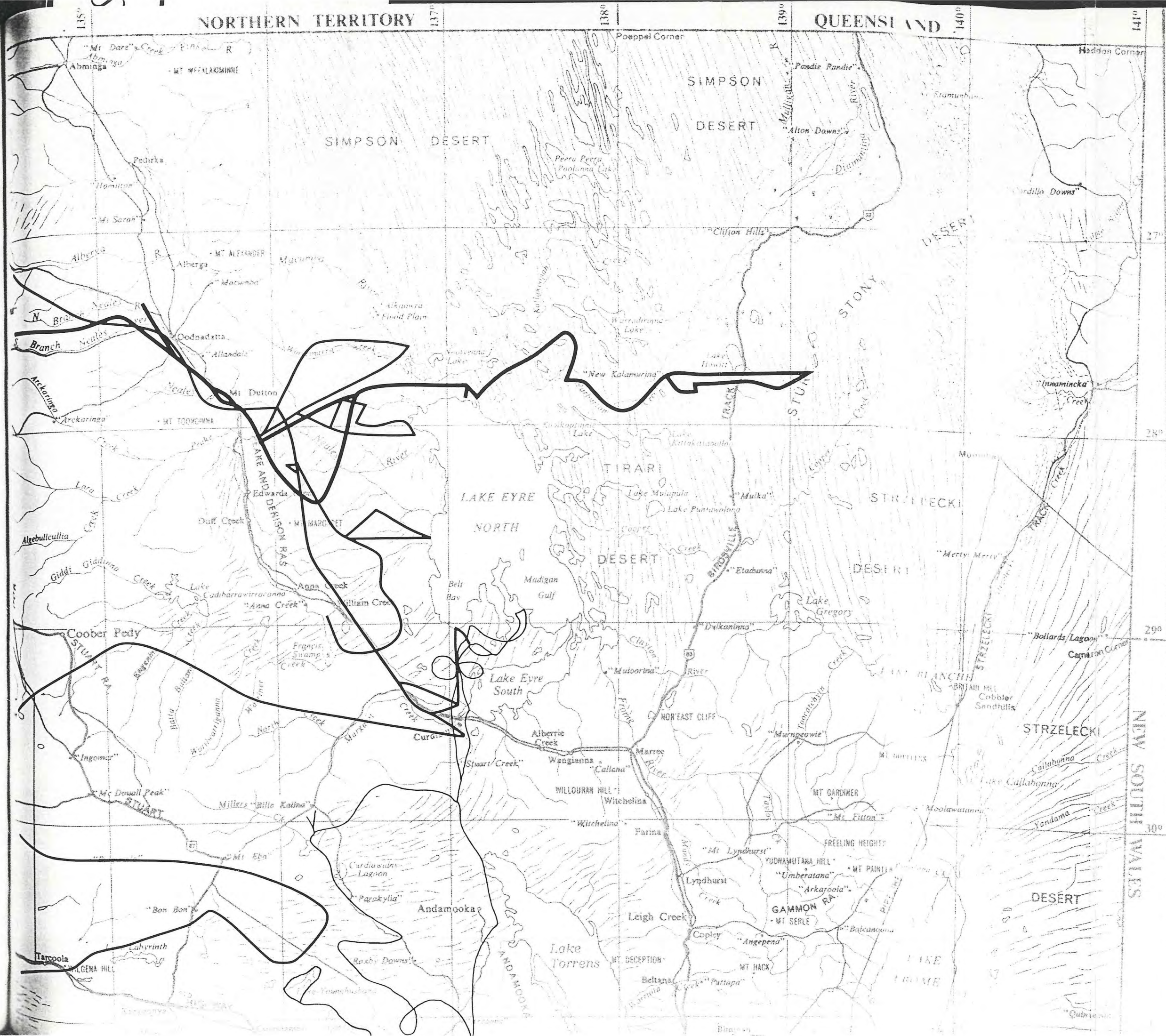
STRANGWAYS SPRINGS TELEGRAPH REPEATER STATION
WATER TANK : NORTH-WEST ELEVATION
RECORDED BY HOWARD PEARCE 1 MARCH 1960
SCALE  3 METRES

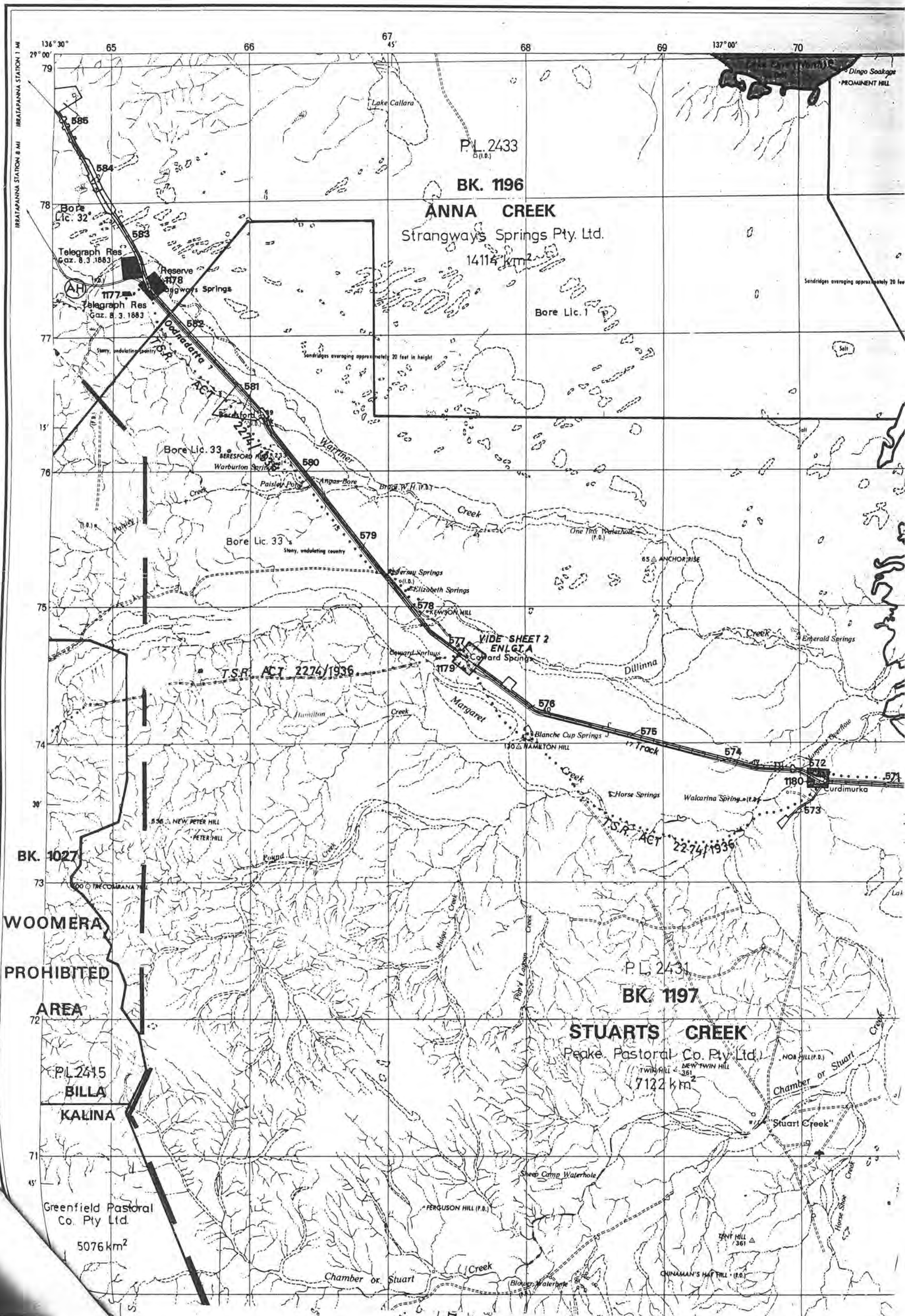


STRANGWAYS SPRINGS TELEGRAPH REPEATER STATION
WOOLSHED : SOUTH ELEVATION
RECORDED BY HOWARD PEARCE 1 MARCH 1960
SCALE  3 METRES

EXPLORER ROUTES

- W. (1858)-1866-1873
— S. (1853-1860-1862)
— B. (1856)-1858





Unincorporated 260

Strangways Springs Site

Warooka District

Orrie Cowie Homestead Complex

comprising the light tower, two keepers cottages, oil store, powerhouse, signal flag mast and all other associated structures.

Approximately 160km north-west of Marree, comprising all remaining buildings, structures, ruins and archaeological sites at the Strangway Springs pastoral head station and telegraph station and outbuildings including:

- . Dry stone wall yards;
- . Managers house/telegraph repeater station;
- . Store;
- . Smithy;
- . Woolshed;
- . Kitchen, cooks quarters, mens living quarters;
- . Mens quarters and store;
- . Overground tank;
- . Police station;
- . Two telegraph poles; and
- . The cemetery (300 metres to the west).

Comprising original cottage (1863), main house additions (c1901), overseers cottage (early 1860s) and cobbled floor of demolished stables, off Old Corny Point Road, 8.5km west-north-west of Warooka.

Attention Shire

Barron Valley Hotel

Barcaldine Shire

Barcaldine Shire Hall

Boulia Shire

Marion Downs Stone H

Marion Downs Midden

Brisbane City

Hotel Terminus

Hampton Court Flats

Residence - Blair Lodge

Ravenswood, Casa Del

Coronet Flats

Residence

Australian Mercantile I
Woolstores

Hartley Teakle Buildin

area, 98 square miles; grazing capability, 20,000 sheep, or 205 per square mile; old rent and assessment, £253 3s 4d; Mr. Goyder's valuation, £1078, excluding improvements valued at £2625. This run is on the plain to the E. of the mount Lock range, and takes in the Manannarie and Boniah creeks. It is 104 miles N. of Adelaide, 38 mile; N.E. of port Peri, and 50 miles S.E. of Port Augusta. It consists of well grassed land, undulating and plain, with sheoak studding the rises, and open mallee scrub, with grass and spinifex. It has 5 wells and troughs, and a good road to Koorunga, 50 miles N.N.W. This run also includes leases, Nos. 371 and 262, which have respective areas of 24 and 4 miles.

MANANNARIE RUN, No. 2 (Co. Frome;) lease, No. 64; occupiers, Hills and Chewings; area, 62 square miles; rent, £31 per annum.

MANGALOW AND POODNOW (OF FRANKLIN HARBOUR) RUN (Port Lincoln district;) leases, Nos. 463, 465, 477, 556, and 1124; occupier, P. Levi; respective areas of leases, 64, 26, 42, 32, and 12 square miles. This run lies on Franklin harbour, to the N. of port Lincoln.

MANNUM (Co. Sturt) is a township lately laid out in the hundred of Finniss, 50 miles E. from Adelaide, is situated on the W. bank of the Murray, and at present contains but few dwelling-houses. It has a large warehouse for storing produce and general goods for shipment per Murray steamers; 1 hotel, and other buildings are in course of erection. It is the spot where the first Murray steamer (the *Mary Ann*) was built for Mr. W. R. Randall, the earliest navigator of the Murray. The steamers *Gemini*, the ill-fated *Bunyip*, and the *Pearl*, were also built here, as well as the barges *Morning Star*, *Kulnine*, and *Menindie*. Two surveys have been made for lines of railway from Adelaide via Gawler town, and terminating here, and via mount Barker, terminating 7 miles further down the river. There is a good main line of road from Adelaide, macadamised two-thirds of the distance, passing through Gumeracka, Blumberg, and Tungkillo. Mail twice a week on horseback.

MANUWALKIUNA RUN (N. district;) lease, No. 1049; occupier, the Hon. T. Elder; area, 56 square miles. This run lies to the N.W. of Blanchewater, and on S. side of lake Blanche.

MARBLE RANGES (Flinders district W.) is a range of limestone hills, lying 30 miles N. of port Lincoln, and near the W. coast of Spencer's gulf.

MARCHANT'S HILL, 32° 15' S. lat., 138° 50' E. long. (Flinders district,) is a peak of the Ragless range, lying in the N. part of that range. A small stream, known as Rowe's creek, flows round its E. base.

MARGARET CREEK (Flinders district) is a fine creek, flowing through the pastoral country to the S.W. of lake Eyre into that lake.

MARGARET MOUNT (Flinders district N.W.) is a postal station in the electoral district of Flinders, to the S.W. of lake Eyre. It is situated on the Davenport creek, at a place called the Mussel waterhole, and lies about 20 miles a little N. of E. of mount Margaret, and 40 miles W. of lake Eyre. The district is essentially a pastoral one, stocked with cattle and horses, and watered by springs, which raise up inolls or small elevations in the otherwise flat or undulating country—the water being found in small basins at the top. The nearest township is Nuccaleena, about 300 miles S., the nearest hotel being there. The communication is by horse or dray only, along a bush track, which passes the following stations, viz., the Strangways springs (sheep,) 60 miles; mount Hamilton (cattle and sheep,) 33 miles; Chambers's creek (cattle,) 18 miles; Finniss springs (cattle,) 27 miles; Calanna (sheep,) 37 miles; Leigh's creek (unstocked) 80 miles; and thence to Nuccaleena, 43 miles. With Adelaide the communication is from Nuccaleena by Rounsevell's mail coach, which runs weekly when the state of the weather and the country will permit, the distance being about 700 miles between mount Margaret and Adelaide; and horse mail going once a fortnight. The surrounding country is undulating and lightly grassed, with salt-bush and stunted timber in the creeks and watercourses. The soil is poor and sandy, containing a large quantity of salt and soda. On the mount Margaret station there are 7 men.

MARGARET MOUNT, 28° 25' S. lat., 137° 55' E. long. (Flinders district,) is a lofty peak of the Denison range, spurring from that range in a N. direction, and forming the source of several fine fresh water creeks. At its N. foot are several fresh water springs. This peak attains an altitude of 1400 feet above the level of the sea. There

is some good undulating saltbush country in the neighbourhood. Near this mountain several new species of lizards, and 3 specimens of a large green cicindela, belonging to a genus of insects hitherto unknown in South Australia have been found.

MARGARET, MOUNT, RUN (N. district;) leases, Nos. 978 and 979; occupier, P. Levi; respective areas of leases, 125 and 200 miles; rentals, £62 10s. and £100 per annum. This run lies at mount Margaret, in the far N.

MARIA CREEK (Co. Macdonnell) is a small creek flowing into the swamp of the same name from the E., near the township of Kingston. This creek receives the overflow of Geary's swamp.

MARIA CREEK RUN (S.E. district;) lease, No. 65; occupiers, J. and A. Cooke; area, 5 square miles; grazing capacity, 750 sheep; Goyder's valuation, £18 15s. per annum. This run lies on the coast, 190 miles by road, S.S.E. of Adelaide, and 10 miles S.S.W. of Kingston (Lacepede bay.)

MARIA SWAMP (Co. Macdonnell) is a swampy lagoon, lying to the E. of the township of Kingston, and running N. and S. in a line with the coast of Lacepede bay. It appears to be a S. continuation of lake Coorong.

MARINO (Co. Adelaide) is a small agricultural settlement, lying in the hundred of Noarlunga, adjacent to O'Halloran hill, and taken up by a few freehold settlers.

MARION LAKE, 29° 33' S. lat., 138° 15' E. long. (Flinders district,) is a sheet of water, lying to the W. of the Frome river, and forming one of the cluster of lakes of which lake Harry is the largest.

MARKULLET RUN (S.E. district;) leases, No. 155 and 980; occupier, A. McArthur; respective areas, 30 and 25 square miles. This run lies in the Tattiarra county, near Border town.

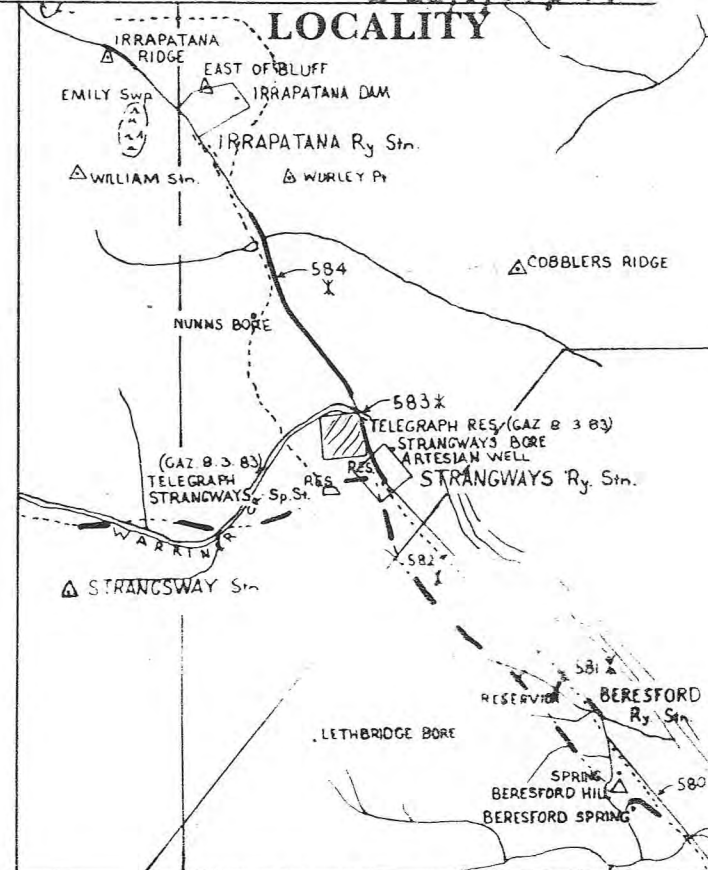
MARRABEL (Co. Light) is a postal township in the electoral district of Light, and hundred of Gilbert. It takes its name from Mr. Marrabel, formerly a landowner in the neighbourhood, and is situated on the main line of road from Kapunda to Koorunga (the Burra Burra mines) being about 15 miles N. of Kapunda. The road in course of formation, and nearly completed, is a fine macadamised one. Marrabel is adjacent to the river Light, which lies to the E. of the township, and in the course of which are several large and deep waterholes. The inhabitants of this township have a great advantage in being able to obtain, at a depth of 16 feet from the surface, fresh wholesome water, well adapted for domestic purposes of all kinds—no inconsiderable boon in the colony. About 1½ miles to the W. of the township lies a range of hills, portions of which are known as the Butcher's gap, Belvidere, and Finniss point. These hills abound in fine stone and timber, both suitable for building purposes. Marrabel has a steam flour mill, neatly and firmly constructed, and containing grinding and silck-dressing machinery of the best kind. There are also 2 general stores, 2 blacksmiths', 1 wheelwright's, 1 butcher's and 2 shoemaker's shops. There is a post office, and good school recently erected, a lodge of the M.U. order of Oddfellows (Marrabel lodge,) and a commodious hotel—the Marrabel. The district is an agricultural one, wheat being extensively grown in it. Gold is reported to have been found near the Belvidere range amongst some quartz-reefs, but it has never tempted the public to test its value, although many persons have visited the locality. The nearest places are Hamilton, 5 miles S. on the main road, and Steelton, 6 miles N. The communication is by Rounsevell's daily coach, and with Adelaide 63 miles S., by Rounsevell's coach to Kapunda, and thence by train. The surrounding country is flat, a plain extending for several miles between the Belvidere range on the W. and a smaller range to the E. This plain is well-watered, fertile, and much of it under cultivation. The township is only about 2½ years old, but it is in a flourishing and promising state. The population numbers about 90 persons.

MARYATVILLE (Co. Adelaide) is a small suburban township lying adjacent to Norwood and forming part of the municipality of Kensington and Norwood. See Norwood.

MARSDEN POINT, 35° 33' S. lat., and 137° 41' long., (Kangaroo island) the N. extremity of Kangaroo island, is a cliffy projection, rather lower than the land to the W. of it, and has a spit extending from it in an E.S.E. direction about 9 miles. It forms the N. head of Nepean bay, which is 6 leagues across its entrance to Kangaroo

S 30/11/604-1.

LOCALITY



STRANGWAYS SPRINGS REPEATER STATION AND ADJOINING OUTBUILDINGS

HUNDRED NORTH OUT OF
ABORIGINAL AND HISTORIC RELICS PRESERVATION ACT

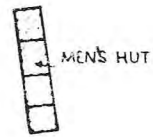


HISTORIC RESERVE

PROCLAMATION
GAZ. 13/5/71.

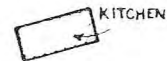
AREA

34

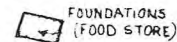


MEN'S HUT

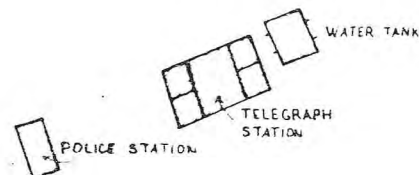
PASTORAL BLOCK 1196 (Anna Creek)



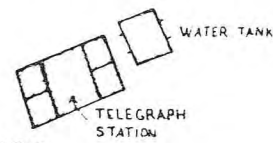
KITCHEN



FOUNDATIONS
(FOOD STORE)

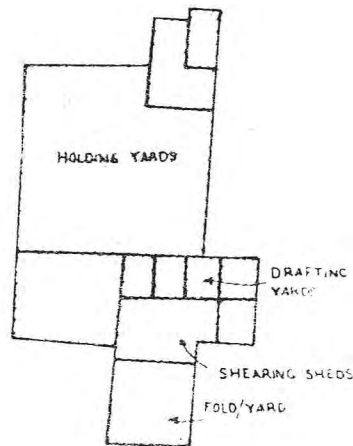


POLICE STATION



TELEGRAPH
STATION

WATER TANK



HOLDING YARDS

DRAFTING
YARD

SHEARING SHEDS

FOLD/YARD



SHEEP YARD/FOLD

Telegraph and Railway

Overland Telegraph Line

In 1870 construction of a 3178 km telegraph line, from Port Augusta to Port Darwin, was commenced to speed up communication between England and the isolated colonies of Australia. Strangways was one of many repeater stations established at intervals of around 250 km to re-transmit the telegraph signals along the line.

Construction of the telegraph line involved tremendous organisation. Some 36 000 poles had to be erected across the continent and hauled many kilometres by horses and bullocks into arid land and through searing heat.

Overall control of the project was given over to Charles Todd (South Australian Postmaster General, Superintendent of Telegraphs and Government Astronomer). The project was split into three sections: Southern, Central and Northern. By December 1871 the line from Port Augusta to Tennant Creek was complete, but progress on the Northern line, which started at Darwin, was slowed by the onset of the wet season.

The working parties persisted and on 22 August 1872 the final link of the telegraph line was made at Frew's Pond 500 km south of Darwin after much anxiety over the delays. Strangways Repeater Station and Telegraph Office opened officially on the same day.



Strangways was an important centre for many years, but on 8 October 1896 its post and telegraph services were closed and transferred to the nearby town of William Creek on the recently completed Marree-Oodnadatta railway.

The ruins that remain at Strangways illustrate the history of the pastoral and telegraph eras. Stabilisation of the ruins was carried out by the Heritage Branch of the Department for Environment and Heritage in March 1995.

Great Northern Railway

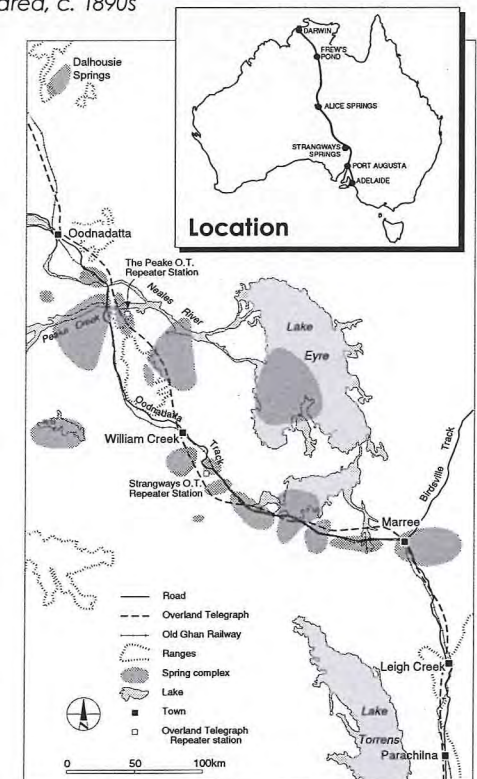
In June 1882 plans were announced to extend the 'Great Northern Railway' from its terminus at Farina to Hergott Springs (now Marree).

The track reached Hergott in 1884, and in July construction was started on the next section to Strangways Springs. Five to six hundred unemployed men, recruited from Adelaide, travelled northwards temporarily residing in the area and increasing the level of activity at Strangways.

A canvas and iron settlement arose about two kilometres north east of the repeater station with temporary structures such as Bennet's eating house and store catering for railway workers, iron sheds for clerks, and tents for a butcher and saddler. More substantial structures came with a hotel built in 1886, and a police station erected in the same year to deter sly grog sellers (with little success by all accounts). Race meetings kept workers entertained. Following completion of railway construction to Oodnadatta in 1891 most of the workers left, resulting in the closure of the police station a few years later.



A work camp in the area, c. 1890s



Mound springs and associated cultural features

For further information contact:

Department for Environment and Heritage
Phone 8204 1910 or www.environment.sa.gov.au



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South Australian
Tourism Commission

Early European Explorers and Pastoralism

Peter Edgerton Warburton, then South Australian Commissioner of Police, traversed this country in late 1858 and noted the springs at Strangways, naming them after State Parliamentarian Henry Bull Templar Strangways.

Another explorer, John McDouall Stuart, described numerous additional springs when traversing the area during his inland explorations of 1859.

With their assured water supply the mound springs were an essential stepping stone for early European exploration and development of the centre of the continent. Pastoral development of Strangways closely followed its European discovery and in November 1862 it was taken up under pastoral lease by a syndicate consisting of John Warren, Julius Jeffreys and William Bakewell.

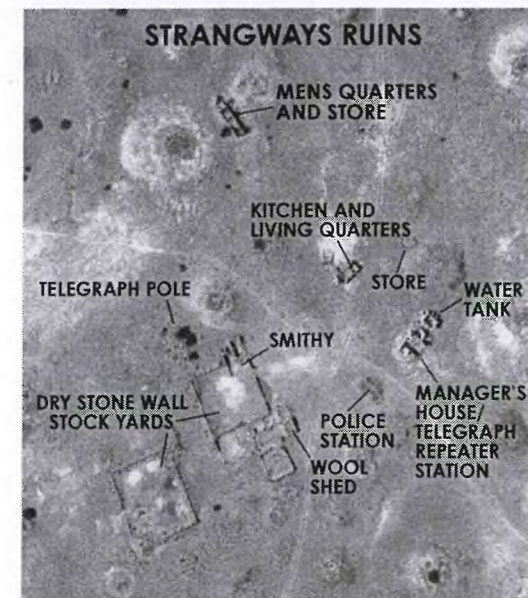
Woolscouring at Strangways Station c. 1870



Strangways in the 1870s

By 1863 3000 ewes, 300 rams and 40 head of cattle had reached the springs. Unaware of a developing drought the syndicate brought in a further 3500 sheep and by 1865 half the livestock and cattle had died. The drought ended in 1866 and the pastoralists continued their activities, with wool being carted to Port Augusta and sold to English markets. Many structures were built for the pastoral run including a head station and dry-stone wall yards. In 1870 Strangways was selected as a site for one of the repeater stations of the Overland Telegraph and the pastoral activities were re-located over a period of some years to nearby Anna Creek.

**In view of the age and condition of these ruins please take care during your visit.
Do not climb on the walls. Flat and enclosed footwear is recommended.**



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Strangways Springs/Pangki Warrunha

Strangways Springs is one of many clusters of mound springs in the Far North of South Australia.

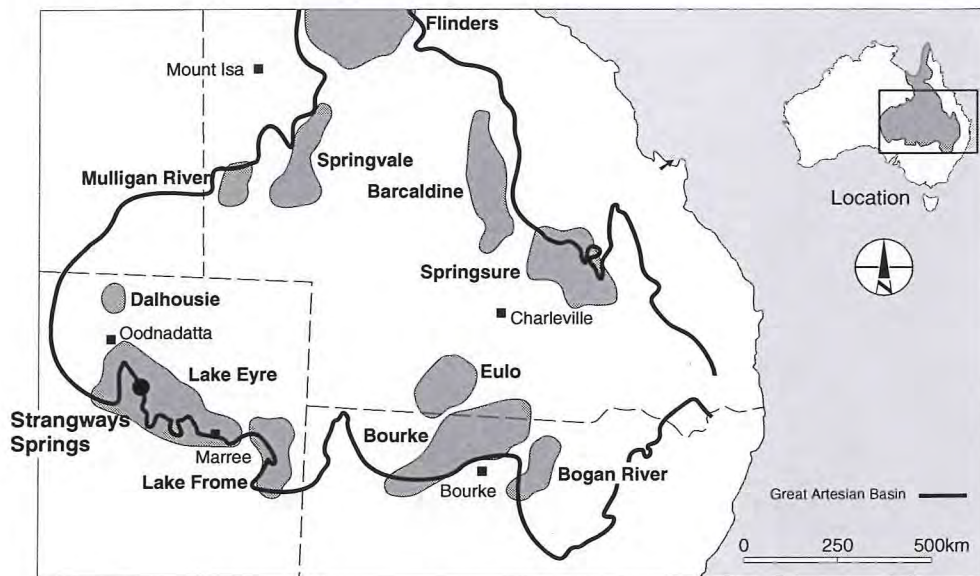
Mound springs are natural outlets for the underground waters of the Great Artesian Basin and many hundreds occur around the margins of the Basin in Queensland, north western New South Wales and northern South Australia.

Many, but not all, of the springs have the characteristic mound which has given them their common name. The mounds are composed of precipitates and sediments from the spring waters as well as wind blown surface material.

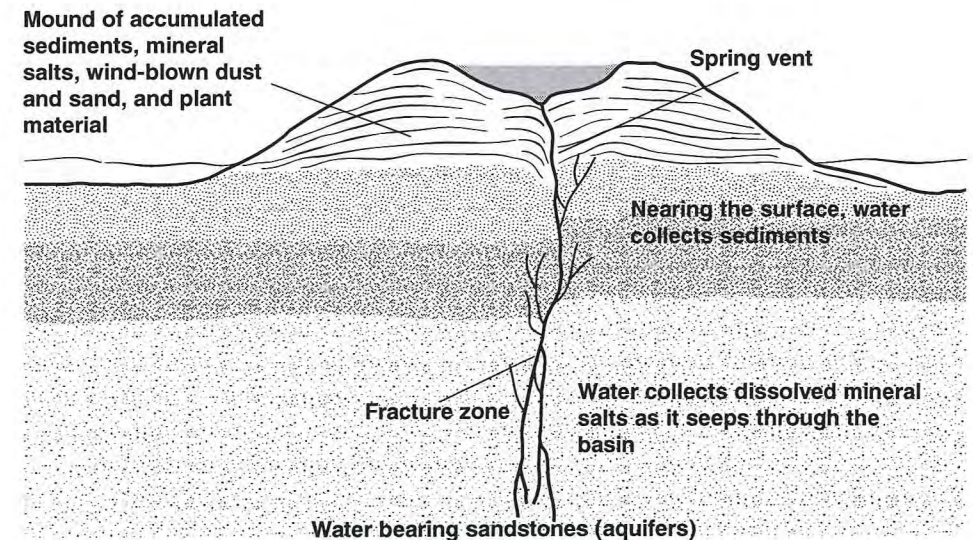
Spring activity varies greatly, with flows ranging from seepages up to a maximum of around 14 million litres per day from one of the springs at Dalhousie north east of Oodnadatta.

Many of the springs around Strangways (and elsewhere) have stopped flowing, a process which has been hastened since European settlement by the sinking of numerous artesian bores.

Protection and conservation of this area has been made possible by the co-operative efforts of: S. Kidman & Co, The Marree Arabunna People's Committee, the Commonwealth Government and the South Australian Department for Environment and Heritage.



Great Artesian Basin showing principal areas of mound spring activity



Cross-section of a typical mound spring

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Phone 8204 1910 or www.environment.sa.gov.au



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Strangways Springs/Pangki Warrunha

As permanent sources of water in an otherwise arid environment, the springs support distinctive plant and animal populations, with many species unique to the springs environment.

Human populations have also been supported by the springs for many thousands of years. Before European settlement they were an unfailing drought refuge for the local Aboriginal people, featuring prominently in the rituals and mythology of the Arabunna people, among others.

From the mid nineteenth century the springs were vital to early European exploration, the establishment of pastoral runs and the construction of the Overland Telegraph and Great Northern (Ghan) Railway.

Further information is provided along the short walking track to the Overland Telegraph Repeater Station and pastoral ruins.

This is a nationally significant site and visitors are urged to treat it with care and respect.

**In view of the age and condition of these ruins
please take care during your visit.**

Do not climb on the walls.

Flat and enclosed footwear is recommended.



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Strangways Springs — Fauna and Flora

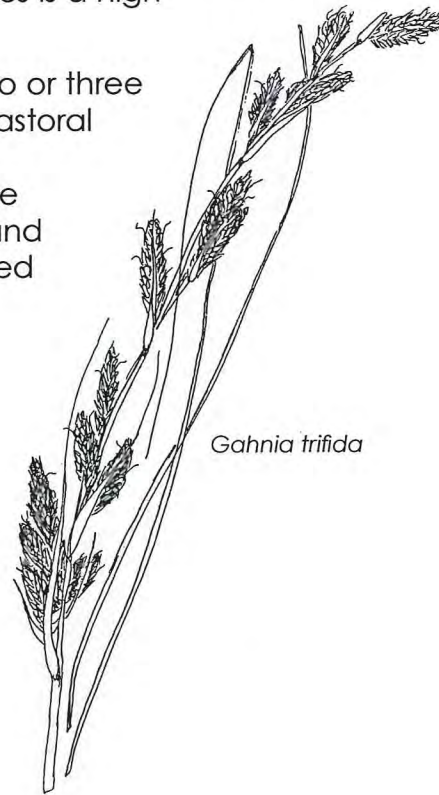
Having evolved within a desert environment the wetlands of the mound springs have a unique and nationally important range of native plants and animals, and Strangways Springs are no exception.

Strangways includes a large number of mounds, many of which have ceased to flow due, in part, to the sinking of bores in the Great Artesian Basin. Ten springs still support wetland communities. These active springs vary in size, age and flow rate, and have a diverse array of vegetation. Thirteen aquatic plant species have been recorded, including cutting grass (*Gahnia trifida*), which is of particular interest as it is normally associated with wetland areas hundreds of kilometres to the south.

In addition, there are other native plants not directly associated with the spring waters, the most noteworthy being a threatened species known as the shrubby pigface (*Hemichroa mesembryanthemum*), which is now being protected and monitored.

The fauna of the Strangways springs include four species of invertebrates found only in the mound springs area, and one fish species, the Lake Eyre Hardyhead (*Craterocephalus eyresii*). The conservation of these species is a high priority.

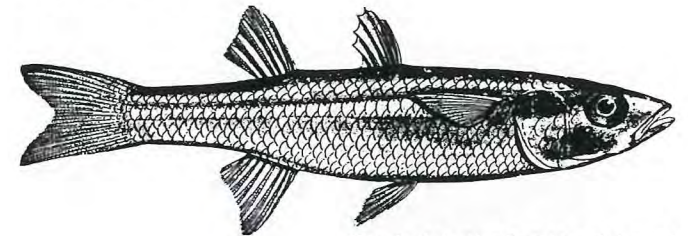
For the first two or three decades of pastoral activity at Strangways the springs' flora and fauna remained relatively unmodified.



Gahnia trifida

Conscious of the need to protect the water resource and to prevent stock being bogged, the early pastoralists fenced off many of the key springs. After bores were sunk to tap the vast underground water resources of the Great Artesian Basin the importance of the mound springs for stock watering diminished, and the protective fencing was allowed to fall into disrepair.

A long period of degradation by stock and other animals followed, and more recently off-road vehicles have added to the damage. In the mid 1980s ten springs, at Strangways and elsewhere, were fenced. The program of protective works at Strangways represents a further step in the conservation of the features of the Lake Eyre Basin.



Central Australian Hardyhead
(*Craterocephalus eyresii*)
Scale: approx. 1:7

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Arabunna People



Strangways Springs have been, and still are important to the Arabunna people both physically and spiritually.

Physically the springs were an unfailing reserve of water in the frequent dry times, although Aboriginal people did prefer the less saline water from rock holes, soaks and creek lines when available. Archaeological material such as grinding stone fragments, flakes, chips, cores, hearthstones and animal bones are very common around Strangways, and most other mound springs, providing abundant evidence of long Aboriginal occupation.

Spiritually Strangways has been an important mythological site. Until European exploration it was known as Pangki Warrunha which means 'White Ribs', a reference to the white banding that occurs on a number of the springs.

The myth relating to this site refers to the two ancestral Snakes Kurkari (Green Snake) and Yurkunangku (Red-bellied Black Snake). Yurkunangku had come from Kulatanha (Kurlarta) Springs in the Northern Territory, while Kurkari came from Arltunda (Erlunda), also in the Northern Territory.

The Snakes are involved in the creation of the mound springs and other natural landmarks and together they journey great distances, and have many adventures on the way. They camp overnight at Strangways and waking in the morning they say: 'Eh, old fellow my friend, our ribs have turned white! It's because we have travelled such a long way!'. The Snakes continue their journey south to Yarra Wurta cliff at the northern end of Lake Torrens before returning to their final resting place at Margaret Springs 21 km away.

The Snake mythology extends from the Northern Territory to South Australia, linking the Lower Southern Aranda, Arabunna, and Kuyani people who lived here before European occupation.

European settlement quickly followed exploration and Arabunna people were dispossessed. Cattle grazing and drought impacted heavily on traditional food sources and many Arabunna moved for rations and employment to the various major centres - Strangways, Anna Creek, Wood Duck, the Peake, Cootanoorina, Wandillina (near Mt. Dutton), Oodnadatta and Finnis Springs. Others camped near railway sidings living in semi-traditional fashion.

An influenza epidemic in 1919 wiped out whole families and even whole groups, particularly those camped by the railway lines. The majority of remaining Arabunna live in localities such as Marree and Pt. Augusta.

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FLINDERS RANGES RESEARCH



The Overland Telegraph

One of the greatest engi

Connecting Adelaide and the rest of Australia, through Darwin, with England by means of a single wire in 1872, was one of the greatest engineering achievements of the nineteenth century. It was completed by South Australians, under the direction of Charles Todd, in less than two years. It turned out to be a top business deal and a political triumph. Today government inquiries, feasibility and Environmental Impact Studies would take twice that time before the job could even commence.



The Overland Telegraph crossed Australia through mountains, flood-plains and deserts.

Before the completion of this line, Australians were fed on a diet of stale news, often months old. Charles Todd had already established a telegraph line from Port Augusta to Adelaide in 1865, connecting it with Victoria. A year later a telegraph station was completed at Melrose. Being well aware that a submarine cable from England reached as far as Java, it was planned to bring this cable to the nearest point of landfall, and Capital City, in Australia.

In 1870 the South Australian government, with the help and influence of Charles Todd, agreed to build a 3200 kilometre overland telegraph line connecting Darwin with Port Augusta, if the British-Australian Telegraph Company would lay a submarine cable from Java to Darwin. When completed in 1872 Australia could speak with the rest of the world.

Before it was completed though, John Ross, a Scottish born bushman in his fifties, had to mark out the trail which the line would follow. There had to be enough water and timber and no mountains. Ross followed John McDouall Stuart's tracks as close as possible but had deviate in the MacDonnell Ranges. It was during this trip that the Todd River, Simpson Gap and the Alice Springs were discovered.

The task of constructing the line proved immense, involving the penetration into mercilessly

cruel country of which little or nothing was known. Transport, of the 36,000 poles, many of them from the Wirrabara Forest, 36,000 insulators and pins plus the many tons of wire, had been one of the biggest problems. Todd bought horses from Beltana on his first trip north. As there was no refrigeration, fresh meat had to be transported alive, slaughtered and eaten when required. This herculean task through arid country of merciless heat, red sand dunes, little or no water but plenty of mosquitoes and flies was completed with the loss of only six men.

The completion of this exceptional feat, stimulating colonial pride, resulted in His Excellency the Governor in Council to declare in November 1872, that 'Friday the 15th instant shall be observed as a Public Holiday, in celebration of the construction of the Overland Telegraph, which has brought Australia in telegraphic communication with Europe and other parts of the world'.

The building of this line opened up the Territory, speeded up settlement, and the growth of pastoral and other industries. One of the side effects of the building of this line was the discovery of many gold deposits, a subsequent gold rush, gold fever, speculation and the formation of hundreds of Gold Mining Companies, in particular during the early 1870s. Maintaining the line proved to be a major problem. Many times poles and lines would be washed away as a result of heavy rains and floods.

Another problem during its early days were attacks by Aborigines. A particular serious one occurred on 22 February 1874 at the Barrow Creek Repeater Station. This resulted in the death of James Stapleton and John Franks. A number of Aborigines were shot later by a party under the command of Samuel Gason.

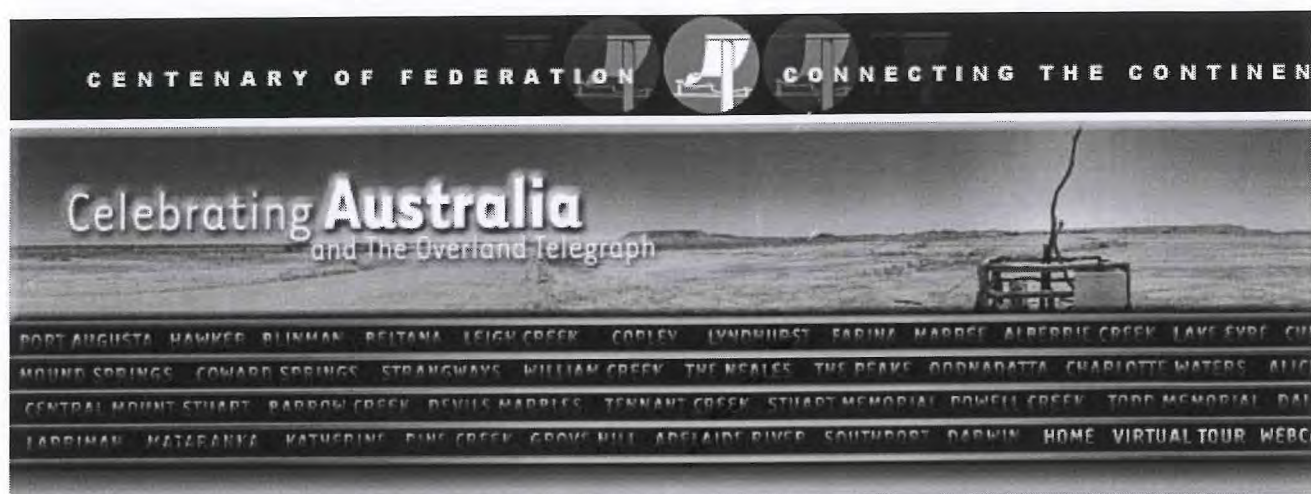
During the summer of 1895 rain washed out the line, and railway, just north of Strangways Springs. The stationmaster wired to Charles Todd, 'Tried to get wire across but, when the blackboy was nearly over, the binding wire broke and he was washed down stream and lost the wire. I was unable to do anything till the binding wire arrived by special train from Hergott. This afternoon I got the assistance of a good swimmer and we worked hard till evening. The wire proved too heavy to swim with, so we passed over a strong wire with the binding wire attached. The line was finally joined on the other side in complete darkness. When we hauled the wire with blocks and tackle, and got it almost out of the water, it caught on a snag in the middle of the stream. If it doesn't break we will have it joined after daylight'. Forty-seven years later, news of the bombing of Darwin in 1942 was sent in Morse code down this line.

On 22 October 1999, a plaque was unveiled at the G.P.O. in Adelaide, commemorating the reception of the first messages from overseas via the new line in 1872. It reads:

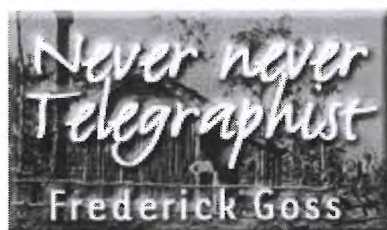
**THE OVERLAND TELEGRAPH,
ADELAIDE TO DARWIN, 1872.**

The 3178 kilometre line was built in less than two years and joined on 22 August 1872. It linked Australia to an undersea cable from Indonesia that came ashore at Port Darwin and made communication between Australia and the rest of the world possible in hours rather than weeks. The project was under the direction of Sir Charles Todd, KCMG, MA, FRS, FRAS, FRMS, FSTE, Superintendent of Post and Telegraphs. The first telegraph messages from overseas were received in Morse code in this building on 22 October 1872 via the Overland Telegraph Line.

Dedicated by
The Institution of Engineers, Australia, 1999



- [1. Life on the Overland Telegraph Line](#)
- [2. More Memories of Life on the Overland Telegraph Line](#)
- [3. The Railway Dream](#)
- [4. Overview of A Picnic with the Natives](#)
- [5. A summary of the Barrow Creek conflict as told in *An End to Silence* by Peter Taylor](#)
- [6. Kaytetye Country: An Aboriginal history of the Barrow Creek Area](#)
- [7. The Tragedy at Strangways Springs](#)
- [8. Northern Territory Survey Expedition](#)
- [9. Adelaide to Darwin by foot](#)



Review of Frederick Goss' "*Never Never Telegraphist*"

Overland Telegraph Stories

[Introduction](#) | [Special Dates](#) | [Centenary of Federation](#) | [Aboriginal Connections](#) | [Connecting the Kids](#) | [WebCams](#)

[Repeater Station \(Chat Room and Forum\)](#)

The Tragedy at Strangways Springs

Mr Adrian Hewish of Milang sent this information regarding his great great grandparents.



Adrian's grandparents, Albert and Mary lived and worked at Strangways Springs (102 miles north of Marree). One morning returning from work, Albert found his wife, Mary, dying in her bed. He threw back the bed clothes to find a huge snake in her bed which quickly slithered away and into the bush.

Mary was pregnant at this time and Albert was at his wits end. Albert knew there was a doctor at Marree, but knew the doctor would be unable to travel to them through miles of sand and drought stricken land. Hastily he sent a telegram to the train superintendent at Quorn (300 miles away), he requested the hire of an engine and her crew to bring the doctor to his dying wife.

This was granted, the doctor was on his way. Sadly the doctor didn't make it on time. Mary passed away before he arrived.

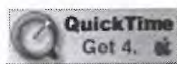
This description of service as a Telegraph Operator on the Northern Section of the Overland Telegraph, and covering the years 1878 to 1903, was published in serial form (10 parts) by TELECOM in 1978.

It is by far, the most accurate and detailed description of work and living conditions in the "Top end" of the Northern Territory that I have read. As such it is a most interesting and historically valuable document.

C Leonard AUGUST 1980



Click on an icon above to listen to a track from *THE SINGING WIRE* by Ken Ferguson with Bloodwood



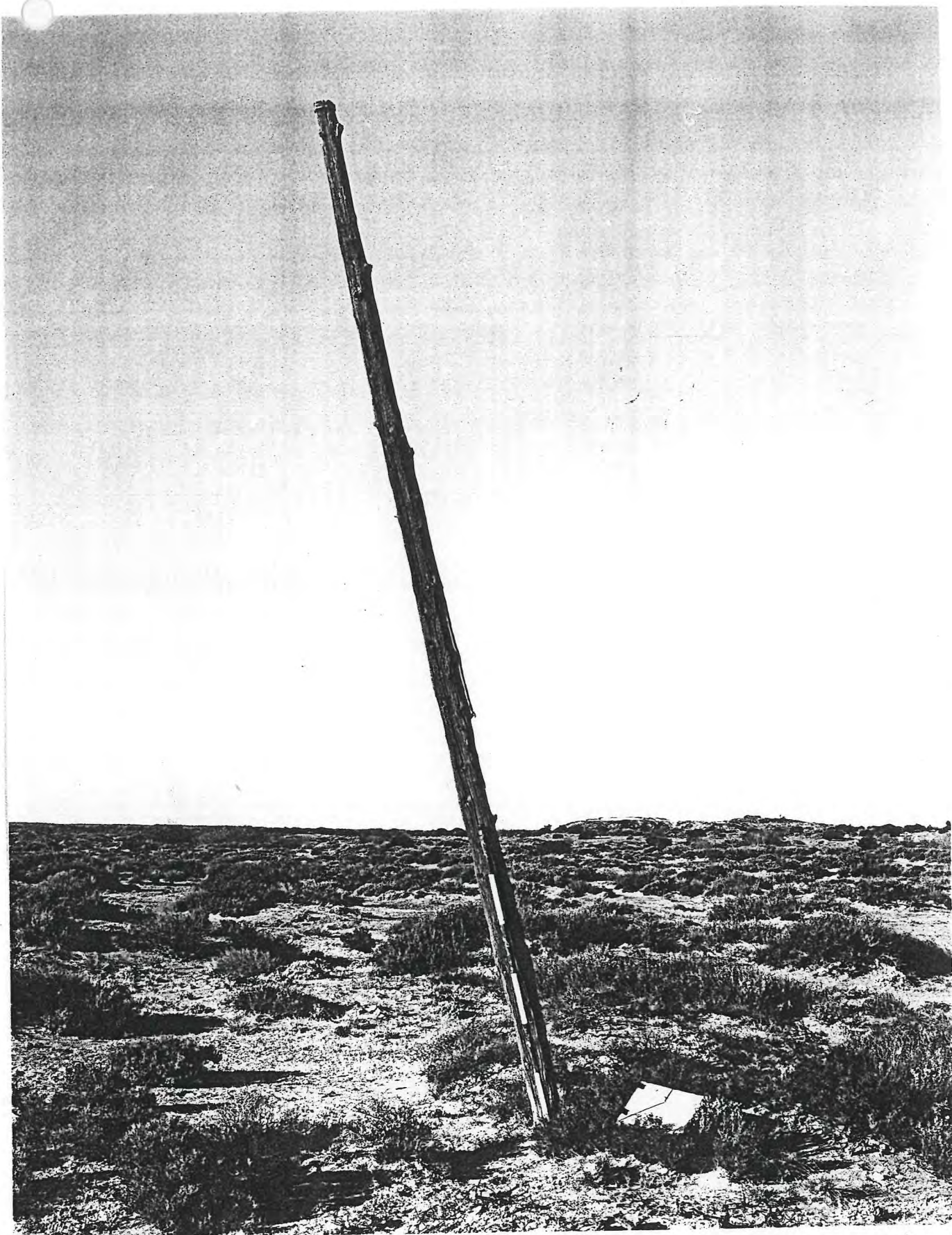
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ONE OF THE
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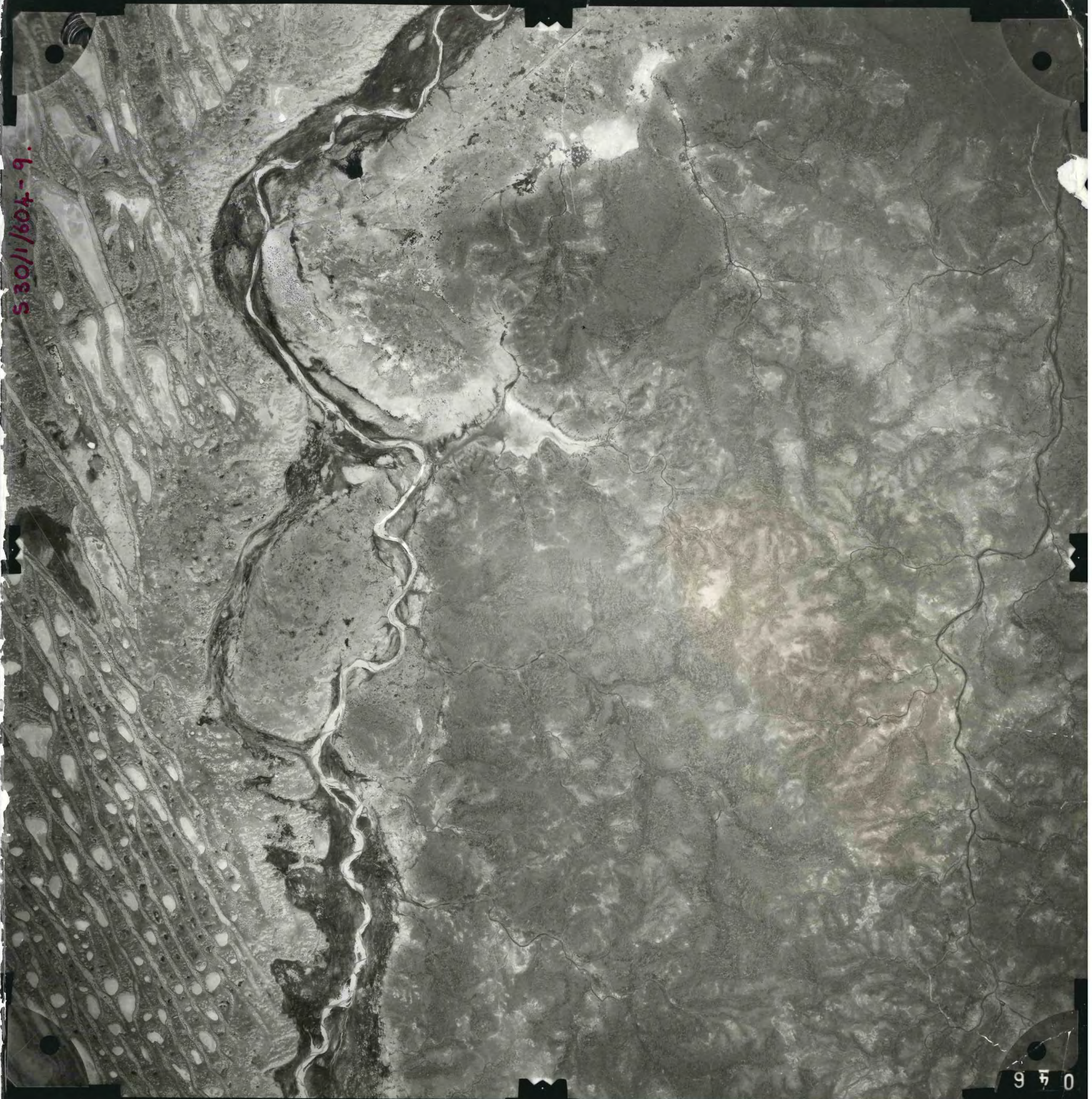
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STRANGWAYS SPRINGS

This is a nationally significant heritage site. It is the location of the Strangways Springs Overland Telegraph Station, an essential link in the Overland Telegraph constructed between Adelaide and the north coast of Australia, in 1870-72.

The Overland Telegraph connected with cables to Europe, enabling rapid communication between southern Australia and Britain. The Strangways complex is one of a number of repeater stations established at about 300 km intervals to re-transmit the telegraphic signal.

The Strangways site was chosen because of the water supply available from the natural springs (mound springs) in the area. These and many other mound springs in the Marree-Oodnadatta region

played a vital role in the early exploration of the Far North and greatly influenced the location of both the Overland Telegraph and the Central Australian Railway.

The Strangways Station employed six men and was an important stop-over point for overland travellers. It operated until September 1896, when nearby William Creek on the newly constructed Central Australian Railway took over its services. Subsequently, the buildings fell into disrepair.

The South Australian Government plans to stabilise the ruins and to provide overall protection for this outstanding heritage site. In the meantime, visitors are urged to treat the area with care and respect.

Erected with funds provided by participants in the Victorian CAE Simpson Desert tour 1987 & Escorted Outback Tours of Nhili, Victoria.



Department of Environment and Planning, 1988