



National Trust

Northern Territory

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

2022



**Wishing all our members, volunteers and supporters
a Happy Christmas and New Year.**

National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory)

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PRESIDENTS REPORT DECEMBER 2022

As 2022 draws to an end I wonder where the year went. I have to look in my diary to remember what I did last week. I recently travelled to Borrooloola, and it is good to see substantial work being undertaken on the Carpentaria Highway. Built in the 1960's as a single lane beef road the upgrade is most welcome. The Gulf Branch recently held their AGM and now have a new committee makeup. Welcome to new Trust and Gulf Branch Committee members Jim Hammond and Melanie Hurkett.

The Committee is Eddie Webber, Jim Hammond, Casey- Leigh Hucks, Janet Leather, Melanie Hurkett, Patsy Shadforth Ted Firkin and Glenn Thompson.

Joan Carpenter, a stalwart of the National Trust, ICPA and a considerable number of other organisations in the Barkly and Alice Regions sadly passed away after a short illness. Our heartfelt condolences to Gavin and family.

Pine Creek volunteer Mark Hoskins is steadily rectifying OH&S issues identified by the Victoria Daly Shire with the Locomotive carriage and steps at the Pine Creek Railway Station prior to the hand over to the National Trust.

On Friday night we dropped into the fair at O'Keeffe House in Katherine. The light display was again excellent and will certainly rate a mention in the annual Christmas light competition in Katherine. A considerable achievement considering the recent spate of break ins and vandalism on the property.

It gave me considerable pleasure to present Julie Mastin with life membership of the National Trust at the combined Darwin Branch, Roadmasters House and Secretariat end of year function held in Audit House. Julie was nominated by the Darwin Branch and unanimously supported by Council.



Julie has been with the National Trust and operated at all levels including Branch Chair, Trust Councillor and coordinator for Speaker Nights at Burnett House for almost twenty years. The speaker nights are essential in attracting other interested persons and broadening the outlook of the National Trust members. It is very easy to become totally immersed in the operations at branch level.

The Heritage branch has advised that we have been successful with several grants, so far Pine Creek Railway Station, Jones Store and Borroloola Meat House. It has taken nearly seven months to access our grant proposals. It does put us under the pump a little. Quotes gained seven months ago are no longer valid and the extreme heat conditions at the locations and running into the Christmas period and impending wet season means we start negotiations with potential contractors all over again. Painful but not life threatening.

The National theme for heritage week in 2023 is *Shared Stories* so there should be plenty to work with.

I recently attended the National Archaeology Conference in Darwin and the fallout from the Jurrkan Gorge Rock Shelters site destruction is still reverberating and there will be changes to legislation on the protection of Aboriginal Sites across the states and territories. A national approach seems to be the preferred option.

A big thank you to all our tireless volunteers who have helped keep all our properties maintained, running and open in 2022 - your tireless work is always appreciated. And to our NT Secretariat volunteers and Suraksha who keeps the bills paid and our doors open.

A merry and safe Christmas to all and a prosperous new year. Santa will probably be the judge of your performance this year. Who was naughty and who was nice...

Cheers

Eddie Webber

PS Don't forget to go to <https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/annual-reports> and read your Annual Report for 2021/2022

DARWIN BRANCH

The Darwin Branch held their Christmas Party on 17th November in Audit House, to thank all members and volunteers and celebrate the 2022 year. A highlight was Julie Mastin being presented Life Membership of the National Trust after nearly 20 years of service with the Darwin Branch.



GULF BRANCH

The Gulf Branch received a great early Christmas present with a new ride on lawnmower purchased by a Community Grant from Roper Gulf Regional Council. Ted Firkin our caretaker was very happy to take it for a spin around the precinct.

The Branch also very happily welcomed three new members recently - Melanie Hurkett, James Jim Hammonds, and Trevor Bates.

The Branch had a successful AGM and Branch meeting on the 29th November and have a new committee for the 2023 year ahead. We welcome the new committee members and wish all our new and old committee a very enjoyable year.



Back L-R: Borroloola Roper Gulf Regional Council Coordinator Joe, Roper Gulf Regional Council Rep Sammy Evans, Gulf Branch members Eddie & Janet

Front: Gulf Branch Caretaker Ted Firkin

KATHERINE BRANCH

The last weekend of the Christmas Lights at O'Keeffe House is this Friday and Saturday night (16th & 17th) from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. Entry by donation. There will be loads of Christmas Goodies for sale and the Christmas Hamper Raffle will be drawn on the Saturday. Remember to also visit the Old Steam Train on Railway Terrace wrapped in Christmas lights thanks to AusProjects.

The O'Keeffe House Garden Nursery will be open on Saturday 17th from 9am to 12noon for all your plant needs. Perfect for Secret Santas, friends, neighbours or yourself. A variety of native perennials, bougainvillea, large block trees and small ornamental trees for town yards. Indoor plants, Succulents, Portulacas and LIVE XMAS TREES. Gift wrapping available.

The Branch would like to thank the Katherine community for the amazing support in 2022 including throughout the three break-ins, and by buying plants and visiting O'Keeffe House to see the Christmas Lights.

Check out the Christmas Lights and keep up to date with Katherine branch activities <https://www.facebook.com/okeeffehouse/>



TENNANT CREEK BRANCH

Tennant Creek Branch Members recently held a Christmas dinner at the Tennant Creek Memorial Club. It is hoped this can become an annual event on the Branch calendar. Members contributed over 250 volunteer hours during 2022 and are looking forward to some time off over the Christmas break. Monday volunteer evenings have now ceased for the year and will resume in late January.

Keep in touch with Tennant Creek branch at
<https://www.facebook.com/TennantCreekBranchNationalTrustNT>



ALICE SPRINGS BRANCH

On Sunday 4th December, the McDouall Stuart Branch Committee and Volunteers had their end of year thank you Christmas Lunch at the famous Gap View. Though many could not make the lunch due to being away or having other commitments we still managed to get 12 of us all together at the lunch which everyone enjoyed very much. The food was fantastic, and we all had many enjoyable conversations of the year that was, and plans for this next upcoming year.

In attendance was Chairman of the McDouall Stuart Branch Bill Low, Board members and Volunteers Ian & Wendy Mann, Volunteers Loraine Braham, Neil Woolcock and his wife, Maureen Durbridge, Shell Urban, Alan Smith, Kevin and Eleanor Diflo and Volunteer Coordinator Joel Crawford.

Unfortunately, due to other commitments and being away were committee members David Hewitt and Brenda Shields and also volunteers Margaret Hewitt, Nancey Gory, Alan Penaluna, Marg Lawrence and also no longer active but long-term volunteer and one of the founders of saving Hartley Street School Museum, Mary Neck.

In all it was a wonderful event and finish to what was another busy year for the Alice Springs McDouall Stuart Region.



PINE CREEK

We welcome new Pine Creek Caretaker Mark Hoskins who has been busy constructing stairs for the Old Engine at the Old Railway station.

The Old Railway station has also just received a Heritage Grant to do renovations following vandalism earlier this year and ongoing maintenance issues. This work will start in the new year.





NATIONAL TRUST

Annual General Meeting - 14 October 2022, 5.30pm

Darwin Branch, NT National Trust

Chairperson's Report - 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2022

Introduction

As the National Trust financial reporting changed from a calendar to a financial year during 2021, this AGM is reporting on the 18 month period from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2022.

The committee as elected at the last AGM has remained stable.

During much of this reporting period the Darwin Branch was very restricted in what it could do as the Secretariat under a former Director had taken over Burnett House to set up for and conduct tours of Burnett and Audit Houses in association with Tourism Top End. The Burnett House grounds were unusable for almost six months due to the rehabilitation earth works needed to backfill and raise the ground level to that of the high concrete paths previously installed by the former Director. This prevented use of the lawn areas and restricted subsequent fundraising activities between November 2020 and May 2021.

Nevertheless, the Branch persevered and coordinated several Darwin Heritage Festival events and conducted afternoon teas during the 2021 dry season. Following a change of Director and the former arrangement with Tourism Top End being terminated, from late 2021 the Darwin Branch with the help of our volunteers was again able to gradually take back the house and coordinate the House Attendant and Tours roles as well as take on a more rigorous fundraising role.

Fundraising

Heritage Events 2021

A small volunteer committee coordinated Heritage Festival events for both May 2021 and April/May 2022.

Roadmasters House joined forces with the Heritage events and displayed special exhibitions on the Overland Telegraph and the Railway. They also conducted guided walks to historic sites in old Darwin including Goyder Park and coordinated an historic rail trail bicycle tour highlighting the historic sites along the old rail corridor.

The first Heritage events for 2021 held at Burnett House were the Barbara James Memorial Lecture on 12/5/20 given by Charlie King and on 16/5/21 and Kathy Mills's photographic display of the children of Kahlin Compound. The Branch sold refreshments at both these events.

Another Heritage Week event, Tall Tales and True - 'The boozy history of the Territory' was conducted on the Audit House lawn on 14/5/21. These events although not necessarily profitable for Burnett House, were a social success and met our objective of highlighting Heritage issues raising the Trust's profile.

Heritage Events 2022

To commemorate Heritage Month in 2022, the wonderful Annie Gastin again performed a play reading of Suzanne Spinner's play 'Dragged Screaming to Paradise'. This was originally premiered at Brown's Mart, Darwin in December 1988 but the script is as relevant today as it was then. Due to a previous sell-out performance at a previous Heritage Festival this was performed on not one, but two consecutive nights 29 and 30 April in the iconic louvred Audit House to a sell-out audience.

Trevor Menzies conducted Guided Heritage Walks 23rd & 30th April and 14th May commencing at Roadmasters House and highlighting the Overland Telegraph line as part of Darwin's Heritage Festival.

Thursday 12 May 2022, Derek Pugh delivered the Barbara James Memorial Lecture as part of Heritage Festival events. His topic was 'The Overland Telegraph: Connecting Australia to the World'. A most fitting topic since 2022 is the 150th anniversary of the joining of the Overland Telegraph Line.

Deckchair Cinema Fundraiser

Darwin Branch was selected for a fundraiser night at the Deckchair Cinema on 1 May 2022. The film was Oscar winning Director Jane Campion's film, the Power of the Dog. The evening was well attended and raised almost \$2000.

Afternoon Teas

The Darwin Branch resumed monthly afternoon teas from June 2021 (after the 2021 Heritage Festival and after the lawns were reinstated). The menu was simplified to only serve Devonshire teas (scones jam and cream and a beverage) and two sittings for afternoon teas were introduced, one at 2.00pm and the second from 3.30pm. At the same time an online booking system commenced where people booked and paid the then \$10 fee upfront. The online bookings streamlined the payment system and as the bookings were non-refundable, we still received payment.

Initially the bookings were capped at 50 people per session, but, due to high demand this was increased to 60 per session from July 2021. In addition to the bookings, we also took 'walk-ins' if they presented and if we had capacity. These paid on arrival. Afternoon teas took place on the third Sunday of the month being 20 June 2021, 18 July 2021, 15 August 2021, 19 September 2021 and the last for 2021 on 17 October 2021.

From May 2022 we increased the price from \$10 per person to \$15 per person, interestingly there were no objections to the price increase. Our first afternoon tea for 2022 was held on Mother's Day, 8 May 2022, where the 2.00pm and 3.30pm sittings were both fully subscribed with 60 people for each. A prize for the best hat was presented at each session.

To take advantage of high visitor numbers and Darwin's good weather the afternoon teas were increased to two per month from June 2022 on the first and third Sundays of the month concluding 4 September 2022. Apart from the last one on Father's Day, 4 September, the bookings for all sessions were generally fully subscribed. Again, our volunteers rose to the occasion and capably handled the extra sessions and extra patrons.

Speaker's nights

Due to the general disruption regarding access to the house and grounds, no Speaker's nights occurred in 2021.

Speaker's nights for 2022 commenced 22 April 22 when Roger Steele, former NT politician regaled us with tales of his early years as a drover, setting off at the young age of 13 he described getting through his many adventures despite no Work Cover or OH&S in those days.

Another Speakers night was held in the grounds of Burnett House on 29 May 2022 with guest speaker Skip Menhinnitt on the topic "Looking back on my time in the Troubles - Ulster Fifty years ago". Skip gave an interesting and insightful account of her first-hand experience working as a Military Police Corporal during those times.

Other bookings

Bookings for the hire of the grounds for weddings, parties and various functions occurred on an intermittent basis throughout both dry seasons. Burnett House has developed and maintained a reputation as a desirable event and wedding space.

During 2022, in addition to the scheduled afternoon teas the Branch responded to specific requests from small groups. For example, a tour for a group of interstate architects took place 24 May 2022. A tour of Burnett House including morning tea was conducted for a South Australian tour group of 23 people on 2 June 2022 and other groups are scheduled for July.

We welcome enquiries and bookings from individuals and groups interested in hiring our space for events or have us arrange tours and/or morning or afternoon teas for the various groups.

Finances

During this reporting period it became clear that the Secretariat's finances had become seriously depleted. Various items had been attributed to Darwin Branch but not necessarily with Darwin Branch's knowledge or consent. This practice is no longer occurring.

To curb Secretariat expenditure previous staff either resigned or their employment ceased as their contracts ended. Since June 2022 the only paid staff member is our part time admin officer.

Both the Branch and the Council have taken on extra responsibilities to compensate and our NT president Eddie Webber, NT Treasurer Tom Sawyer and Finance Committee member, Janet Leather have been spending countless hours reviewing the Trust's financial situation and covering some of the former roles done by the Director and other staff. A huge vote of thanks must go to them, to our committee and our many volunteers for working so hard to keep things going.

The Darwin Branch assisted the Secretariat in April 2022 by providing a sum of \$47,000 to cover the Insurance cost for the Territory, potentially to be repaid as and when resources permit. Even though our reserves have been severely depleted the Branch's annual income and expenditure is still making a small profit. Our efforts over the past year have demonstrated that we are on track to turn things around and with the continued support of our members and volunteers we will do this.

Volunteers

During both good and not so good times, our volunteers have always risen to the occasion and enabled us to carry out our varied activities for which we are most grateful. We have a group of willing and dedicated volunteers, without whom our activities would simply not happen.

Volunteers are both the public face and the backbone of our organisation, to whom we are indebted. Our heartfelt thanks goes to you all.

Conclusion

Despite a challenging start, our perseverance is paying off. By increasing the visitor numbers to events and using social media the Darwin Branch has attracted a large following and a much broader demographic than previously. This has raised our profile considerably within the community.

In fact, this year, Burnett House was even listed as a preferred place to visit on Trip Advisor!

It has been a pleasure to work with you all, our committee, our trusty band of volunteers, our members and all the others who support our endeavours. The past is now behind us and with your continued support and enthusiasm we can continue to move forward and go from strength to strength.

Chris Millowick
Chair Darwin Branch

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Did you know you can now purchase a membership to cover a 2 or 3 year period? To change from a single year to a multi-year year membership, simply click on 'switch membership type' when renewing. Existing members receive an email one month out from expiry and you just need to click on the link in that email to be taken to the renew page.

If you need to update your email used for membership, would like your newsletter mailed out rather than emailed or have any other issues, give the office a call on and Suraksha will be able to assist. Alternatively you can email admin@ntnationaltrust.org.au.

Life Memberships

We would appreciate any corrections or amendments you may have to the below National Trust NT Life Membership list so we can properly acknowledge all the Life Members from over the years. Please send updates to tours@ntnationaltrust.org.au or admin@ntnationaltrust.org.au

| First Name | Surname | Branch | Awarded | Mship Status |
|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Gillian | Banks OAM | Katherine | 1998 | Active |
| Ruary | Bucknall | Darwin | 1983 | Active |
| Prof David | Carment | Darwin | 1995 | Active |
| Dr Ian | Cook | Darwin | 1993 | Active |
| Mrs Penny | Cook | Darwin | 1993 | Deceased |
| Bob | Ellis | Darwin | 1983 | Active |
| Mrs Camille | Fogarty | Timber Creek | 1998 | Active |
| Mrs Ann | Freeman | Darwin | 1982 | not known |
| Mrs Val | Hammond | McDouall Stuart (Alice Springs) | 1986 | Active |
| Allen | Hammond | McDouall Stuart (Alice Springs) | 1986 | Active |
| Anna | Harris | Darwin | 2010 | Active |
| Mike | Hester | Tenannt Creek | 1993 | Deceased |
| Dr Jan | Hills | Darwin | 2017 | Active |
| Dr Kate | Holmes | Darwin | 1991 | Active |
| Trevor | Horman OAM | Darwin | 2018 | Deceased |
| Lindsay | Johannsen | McDouall Stuart (Alice Springs) | 2000 | Active |
| Janet | Leather | Gulf (Borrooloola) | 2011 | Active |
| Dr Bill | Low | McDouall Stuart (Alice Springs) | 2009 | Active |
| Dr Julie | Mastin | Darwin | 2022 | Active |
| Mrs Dorthy | McKey | Gulf Branch | 1995 | Active |
| Lesley | Mearns | Interstate | 2001 | Active |
| Peggy Jean | Muir | Katherine | 2014 | Active |
| Mary | Neck | McDouall Stuart (Alice Springs) | 1989 | Active |
| Pam | Perry | Tenannt Creek | 1993 | Active |
| Jose | Petrick OAM | McDouall Stuart (Alice Springs) | 1999 | Active |
| Judy | Richardson | Darwin | 2018 | Deceased |
| Eddie | Webber | Gulf (Borrooloola) | 2011 | Active |
| Adrian | Welke | Darwin | 1992 | Active |

The Ragged Thirteen, a matter of Opinion.

By Eddie Webber

Western Australia's first gold rush started in July 1885 when Charles Hall, a seasoned prospector from the Queensland and New South Wales goldfields, and a party of six found eight ounces of gold in the narrow bed of a dry water channel in the Kimberley Ranges, 500km inland from the tiny port of Derby on Australia's remote Northwest coast. By April 1886, the initial trickle of gold seekers had become a flood. Almost as soon as the story of the great gold discovery at Halls Creek appeared in newspapers around Australia, diggers began heading there from Queensland and the Northern Territory. A number of newspapers also published a map of the Kimberley showing the 560km track to Halls Creek and what was officially known as the Kimberley Gold fields. The rush at Halls Creek was short lived and by 1887 the goldfields were in decline. Many of the diggers returned to the eastern states, while others went to Roebourne where gold had been discovered in 1888. The final nail in the coffin was the discovery of Gold at the fabulous rich Coolgardie Goldfields in 1892 by Arthur Bayley and William Ford.

Included in the gold seekers were a number of men from and travelling through the Northern Territory and who banded together to become known as the *Ragged Thirteen*.

Seven travelled north from Alice Springs while six travelled from Queensland and the Barkly Tableland, meeting and joining forces at Newcastle Waters. Travelling from the south were (Sandy Myrtle) Alexander MacDonald, Jim Woodford, Jack Daly, Wonka Jack (John) Brown, George Brown, Hugh Campbell and Tommy the Rag (name unknown).

The six from the Northeast were Tom (Holmes) Nugent, Jack Woods, Jim Carmody, Jim Fitzpatrick, Bob Anderson and Larrikin Bill Smith. It should also be noted that Tom Nugent and Alexander MacDonald had previously worked together at Carandotta Station on the Qld. NT. Border in 1885.

Over the years a number of people professed to be members of the Ragged Thirteen for any number of reasons from a moment of notoriety to cadging drinks at the local bar. While it is recognised that there were possibly other riders who joined the group from time to time, the main group is as listed and it would appear that the party split soon after their arrival on the goldfields.

For years writers have romanticised over the exploits of the group, while others have been more frank in their appraisals.

Judy Robinson wrote 2002; *"The Ragged Thirteen were Australia's equivalent of Robin Hood. In harmony with the Jolly Swagman of our unofficial national anthem they defied the wealth and property of rich squatters. The Swagman stole a jolly jumbuck and they helped themselves to cleanskin beef. Now, one hundred years later, they are still celebrated for their horseman ship, their chivalrous support of the poor and their cheeky defiance of the law"*.

G.F.Young in 1953 wrote of his personal experiences with four of the Ragged Thirteen while on the gold fields near Marble Bar in the Kimberley's; *" Much has been said, and a lot written*

about the trail left by the Ragged Thirteen of cattle-stealing , murdering blacks, quarrelling among themselves and riotous behaviour. Probably they were a rough mob, careless of life and in no way particular about whose bullocks they shot down for food in their long, extremely rough and dangerous journey. They were all real bushmen, with years of practical experience, only expert bushmen could have made that sort of journey.” He went on to observe “These men were not criminals or bushrangers or bad men made so familiar in cheap adventure stories about Australia, particularly in the north. They were ordinary drovers, cattle men or station hands, and under normal conditions and with decent food they would have been passable companions.”



Grave of Tom Nugent (Holmes) at Tennant Creek Telegraph Station.

Ernestine Hill in 1951 described the group as; “laughing cavaliers who rode a couple of thousand miles together, highwaymen of the spinifex, their wild oats the campfire legend of half a continent. The Ragged Thirteen were not supermen or bushrangers. They were just light-hearted scamps riding together, gentle grafters of the Great Unknown, soldiers of outback fortune and in a hungry country out for all they could get.”

Bobbie Buchanan writing of the life of legendary drover Nat Buchanan 1997 wrote.

“In those heady days when the Kimberley gold rush was at its height the inland tracks were alive with travellers from other colonies. When returning to Frew’s Ponds, Nat and Goldie

encountered a party camped at Milner's Lagoon. They were gold seekers from Queensland and South Australia, heading for the Kimberley. Being of like mind and destination, they banded together at Powell Creek to become travelling companions on a long road ahead via Katherine. They were a pretty rough looking crew, poorly dressed in a strange variety of worn clothes, but were high spirited and had good horses. Nat noticed they numbered thirteen – what he called the Devil's number and commented on their ragged attire. From then on this band was known as the Ragged Thirteen. In the Territory and across to Halls Creek the Ragged Thirteen earned a reputation for pranks and lawlessness.

In 1882 the Traine Brothers Thomas and Alex overlanded two thousand head of cattle from Queensland to stock Eva Downs on the Barkly Tableland. Thomas recollections published in 2005 on the Ragged Thirteen provide a quite different perspective. Three of the group had been employed at Eva Downs prior to setting off to the Hall's Creek goldfields. These being teamsters Tom Holmes, Jack Parker and Barney O'Neil a well sinker. They were joined by a fourth man from Queensland, Bill Smith just North of Eva Downs. Tom Holmes returned some months later and related the joke about the Ragged Thirteen and how it originated. Thomas Traine in his memoirs relates the story as told by Holmes. *"We travelled up the overland telegraph line until we came to a waterhole known as Abrahams Billabong. We decided to camp there and give our horses a spell. There were others camped there also, and we used to congregate around one campfire and tell yarns. The conversation got on to men that we had known who were lucky in goldmining, and someone in the camp suggested that we were an unlucky number in that camp –thirteen. Soon afterwards a man named Cashman came to the camp. He had come round the coast road from Queensland. It was mentioned to him that his presence altered the unlucky number. A few mornings later Cashman was packed up to go on. When he mounted his horse and waved goodbye one of them called out goodbye and tell them we are coming. All right I will tell them that the Ragged Thirteen are coming.*

Our party left camp a few days later and the first person we met had seen Cashman. The first question we were asked was where the Ragged Thirteen were. We thought it a good joke and kept it up. From there on we were asked by every person we met and every camp we passed about the Ragged Thirteen and gave the same answer, they are coming. When we got to Hall's Creek, where Cashman had arrived a week earlier, there were hundreds of people all on the lookout for this desperate party, in tattered rags that would stop at nothing, but they never came. Hundreds of people were leaving the Kimberley rush at that time for all parts of Australia, consequently the Ragged Thirteen was well advertised and lost nothing in notoriety.

John W. Durack is quoted by his niece Mary in *Kings in Grass Castles, The Ragged Thirteen, to listen to them, you would have thought them the greatest band of desperadoes unhung, but they were very amateur bushrangers, and never succeeded in terrorising the countryside as they dreamed of doing.*

A correspondent at Halls Creek goldfields writing for the *West Australian*, 27 January 1887 reported the presence of the Ragged Thirteen. According to the correspondent they certainly looked it, could handle the cards a bit, and a drover with a mob of horses one night found he hadn't a hoof to call his own the night following.

Mick Windley grandson of Tom Nugent was born in 1929 at the Junction Hotel Newcastle Waters. At interview by Peter and Sheila Forrest in 2007, Mick gave this frank assessment of the Ragged Thirteen. *"Nugent gathered a gang of 12 other bushmen around him to make up the Devil's number and together they rode across the Territory towards Hall's Creek, stealing horses, bouncing cheques and helping themselves to anything that wasn't nailed down"*.

Mick Windley's pragmatic assessment is probably not too far off the mark and a number of documented accounts would support this. It is probably true that the group assisted others along the way but some of their so-called pranks and antics had dire consequences for those at the receiving end. However, given Thomas Traine's recollections they were not a group as such and any number of indiscretions committed by individuals may well have been attributed to the group as a whole.

There was a fledgling store, which also illicitly sold grog at Abrahams Billabong just north of Bitter Springs near the present town of Mataranka. The two men who owned the store had just killed a bullock late in the evening with the intention of hanging it overnight to let the beef set. Members of the Thirteen on arrival at the store, were annoyed at the refusal of the storeowners to cut up the beef there and then rode up to the stockyards and took half of the carcass back to their camp at Bitter Springs. Next morning one of the owners of the store Mat Kirwin rode down to their camp and while sitting on his horse told them off.

He offered to fight their best man if given a fair go. The fight was called off when Mat Kirwin's arm was broken during the ensuing fight. The store closed down not long after.

Leaving the Katherine and on arrival at the newly formed Victoria River Downs Station, they discovered that the manager Lindsay Crawford was out doing the rounds of the property and would not be returning for several days. Crawford managed VRD from 1883 to 1890. While the manager was away the storekeeper Lochard was in charge of the homestead. The group by this time had assembled a large number of horses and were short on horseshoes. A number of horses were tender footed from the surrounding basalt country and could not be ridden without shoes. The mob camped about a mile from the homestead. Tom Nugent rode to the station and introduced himself to the storekeeper as a Queensland pastoralist looking for country. After supper Tom and the storekeeper played crib. While the storekeeper was distracted, the rest of the group prized the slabs loose from the storeroom and took about 4cwt (200kg) of horseshoes flour, sugar, tea, tobacco, saddles, ammunition, clothing whatever else took their fancy. From this point on they hurried to cross the Western Australian border to escape the NT Police jurisdiction travelling via Depot Creek named by A Gregory in 1856, then onto the Sterling and Negri Rivers. On the Ord River they stopped on a salt pan to kill and dry the meat of several bullocks. They left a number of worthless cheques with the Wyndham storekeeper August Lucanus who had previously been a Mounted Constable at Yam Creek and publican in the Top End. On arrival at Halls Creek the group split and went their own ways.

It is difficult to piece together where all of the thirteen eventually wound up, unless they returned to the Territory and made contact with other bushmen who would later record their

stories, and or became figures of note in their respective communities. It is also evident that a number were living under assumed names which could be easily discarded for convenience.



Tennant Creek Telegraph Station 2020.

Tom Brian Nugent (Holmes) was born in West Maitland, N.S.W. around 1848. He worked as a stockman in North Queensland and by the early 1880,s was manager of Lake Nash station on the N.T. and Qld. border. The property was purchased by John Costello in 1882 and John Farrar was appointed manager. By 1885 Nugent was working at Eva Downs when reports of a gold find in the Kimberleys started a rush to the Halls Creek goldfield. Nugent travelled to the diggings in company of twelve other men of varying fortunes and dispositions, drawn from the north. Nugent eventually returned to the Northern Territory and worked for a time on the Overland Telegraph Line (O.T.L). While working on the O.T.L he was privy to the pastoral maps and proposals and took an interest in Radford Springs. Some of the earlier blocks taken along the O.T.L. included J. Wilson 1878 and Renner Springs Station by Walter Douglas and Hemphill. In 1895 Nugent acquired Radford Springs North of Tennant Creek. The Aboriginal people of the area referred to that part of the country as Parnkurr- Parnkurr and the newly formed station assumed an anglicised version Banka Banka. Nugent held the station for sixteen years until his death. In July 1911 Nugent arrived at the Tennant Creek Telegraph feeling ill and died there on the 7th of August from dropsy. He was buried at the Tennant Creek Telegraph Station by Station Master Dixon. Banka Banka was managed within the estate by family members, the Ambrose Brothers until 1941 when the lease was taken over by Phil and Mary Ward.

Robert George Anderson. George Anderson's early years are somewhat clouded however his death certificate has his birthplace as Abernathy Scotland, age sixty-five years and date of death 24th June 1923 from heart failure. His length of residence in the Commonwealth is stated as forty-seven years, leading to the conclusion that his year of birth was around 1858 and he immigrated to Australia at the age of eighteen. He would have been in his early twenty's when he joined the thirteen. On his return from the Halls Creek he resided in Camooweal for a number of years as the local butcher. He moved to Urandangi as a storekeeper and in 1910 took up three forfeited old pastoral leases to form Tobermorey Station. In October 1915 Gorge married Cloncurry woman Emma Carrington. Gorge and Emma raised a family of five sons and nine daughters to form a dynasty which endures until present times. The name of Tobermorey is reminiscent of a town on the Isle of Mull off the coast of Scotland.

Jack Woods. Jack was a native of New England. After Halls Creek he spent some time on the Coolgardie goldfields and by 1900 was employed by the Goldfields butcher droving sheep possibly to supply meat to prospectors in the isolated mining towns.

Jim Carmody. Jim was brother-in-law to Black Jack Reid a native of New Zealand and owner/skipper of the schooner "*Good Intent*". Reid had been apprehended by customs officer Alfred Searcy at the McArthur River landing (Borroloola), for non-payment of customs on his cargo. His cargo consisted of flour sugar, tea, grog and clothes all items in high demand by the men travelling the coast road with stock for Northern Australia. Customs Officer Searcy impounded the schooner and sailed it back to Palmerston (Darwin) along with Maori Reid. Reid then purchased the Schooner "*Smuggler*" and sailed down the northwest coast of Western Australia. Jim Carmody returned to Emungalen (Katherine) and drowned in the Katherine River 23rd January 1889 while fishing. On hearing the news Jack Reid took a headstone to Katherine for the grave.

Larrikin Bill Smith and Jim Fitzpatrick. Little is known of these two apart from the fact they were at one time members of the Ragged Thirteen. As a considerable number of travellers of that time, it is also likely that Jim Fitzpatrick and Bill Smith were only names of convenience to escape whatever misdemeanants lay in their past.

Sandy "Myrtle" Alexander MacDonald (McDonald) born at Myponga 1857 died in hospital in Adelaide 1919, was manager of *Cootanoorina Station* at Myrtle Springs out from Farina South Australia and this coupled with his long sandy coloured beard earned him the title of Sandy Myrtle. Following his return from Halls Creek he returned to Central Australia and in January 1897 he left Oodnadatta in charge of a camel team carrying two tons of stores for Arltunga Battery and Cyanide Works. In 1903 he was listed on the electoral role as a horse dealer at Oodnadatta and store keeper at Winnecke mine fields from 1904 until 1909. In 1910 he lodged plans for the Glencoe Hotel and Billiards at the Arltunga cross-roads, which on approval was erected in three months. This suited him as it still afforded him the companionship he had obviously enjoyed during his trek to the goldfields. He enjoyed jaunts to *The Alice* for race meetings and visits to nearby cattle stations where he entertained his friends with tales of his adventures with the "*Ragged Thirteen*." He enjoyed friend and enemies alike *as enemies gave him an excuse to be a bastard*. He has been described as an

imposing figure weighing around twenty-three stone stacked into a five foot nine inch frame. He invariably clothed in a battered felt hat, an unbuttoned sleeveless dark grey flannel shirt, an enormous pair of self-made pink and white striped pyjama trousers and a pair of unlaced shoes without socks. He was also registered as part owner on pastoral lease No 2169A in Central Australia.

Jim Woodford (*Woodroffe, Woolford*) Jim returned to Alice Springs and continued to fossick around the surrounding country. He began searching for and selling meteorites to collectors. He visited and spent several months reminiscing with Tom Nugent at Banka Banka. It was reported that he disappeared while travelling across country returning to New England. However, Jimmy Woodruffe one of the early diggers at Arltunga is reported as having returned to Arltunga to live out his last years. He was found dead sitting in his chaff bag armchair in 1921 with his death certificate listing his cause of death as a heart failure. His occupation is listed as a storekeeper aged 65 years.

Jack Dally. Jack was a young farmer originally from Terowie in South Australia. After leaving Halls Creek goldfields with a passing east bound contract drover, he settled at Cloncurry, married, and raised a family. With his sons he operated a droving plant in northwest Queensland, moving cattle around the country as required. He enlisted in the army during World War 1 returned home and lived well into his seventies.

(Wonoka Jack) John Brown & George Brown. John and his brother George were experienced miners from Moonta. They were also somewhat experienced in stone- work and building. They quickly learned that there was more money in building and were commissioned to build the Police Station and general store and Post Office at Halls Creek. As the town grew so did their desire to move on to less populated areas. After leaving Halls Creek they travelled back to Emungalen (Katherine) and were employed cutting timber by pit saw for Barney Murphy who was building a hotel on the Katherine River at Maude Creek gold fields twelve miles northeast of Emungalen. John became ill, travelled south for treatment but died soon after the diagnosis of hydatids.

Hugh Campbell (Muir). Hugh was a seaman who deserted ship at Port Augusta. After failing to make his fortune on the goldfields, he took up a job cooking on the nearby station of Flora Valley owned by Gordon Buchanan and Hugh and Wattie Gordon. In 1908 he became ill and could not perspire. He travelled to England for treatment and died there.

Tommy the Rag (name unknown) the goldfields at Halls Creek petered out and many moved on to the Coolgardie goldfields. On his arrival in the Top End, Tommy admitted to having served time and with no Christian name was christened Tommy the Lag. He threw his fortunes in with the *Ragged Thirteen* and as the goldfields at Halls Creek petered out he and three other companions set out for Coolgardie. This time he was well provisioned, and the country had just experienced rain. However, two hundred miles into the trip tragedy struck. Although their horses were hobbled, they lost two overnight and wasted two days searching. With the loss of horses they were forced to leave rations and some of their water behind. They had ridden past the last known waterholes and the group quarrelled over the lost horses. Tommy and Alec Smith split from the others struggling on surviving by boiling water from a polluted

rock hole. Alec Smith's horse collapsed into a hidden gully and rolled killing him. Tommy had to shoot the horse to put him out of his misery and buried the horse and rider in a common grave. The shot that killed the horse also frightened Tommy's horse which galloped away. Tommy trudged on finally limping into an outlying miners camp almost perishing, out of strength and possessions but surviving to become part of the Coolgardie hessian city.

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Amazing Archaeological Find!

Tom Sawyer, local intrepid reporter

Recently reported in the Council for *British Archaeology's* award-winning bi-monthly magazine, was an in-depth report on what British scientists believed to be traces of copper wire dating back 200 years. The find located at 10 feet, has the scientific community concluding that their ancestors in Britain already had a telephone network more than 150 years ago.

Not to be outdone by the British, in the week that followed, an American archaeological team dug to a depth of 20 feet, and shortly after reported in the New York Times: "American Archaeologists find traces of 250-year-old copper wire and have concluded that their ancestors already had an advanced high-tech communications network in place, 50 years earlier than the British".

One week later, Australia's authoritative Northern Territory News, reported the following:

"After digging to a depth of 30 feet in his backyard in Tennant Creek, Northern Territory local Bazza Smith self-taught archaeologist, reported he'd found absolutely , f.... all ! "

Bazza concluded his detailed report with his finding that "250 years ago, Australia had obviously already gone wireless".

2023 Australian Heritage Festival

In 2023, the festival returns in April and May with the theme ***Shared Stories***, and we invite you to be part of the story.

Territory Location dates for 2023

Alice Springs – McDouall Stuart Branch

22 to 30 April Heritage Week

Borrooloola – Gulf Branch

23 April Open Day – Book Launch

Darwin Branch

1 to 14 May Heritage Festival

Katherine Branch

1 May Heritage Drive and launch of Open House and High teas at O’Keeffe House and Old Katherine Railway Station

Tennant Creek Branch

27 & 28 April Launch of new displays



VENUE HIRE

Some National Trust NT properties can be hired for functions and other activities such as workshops and meetings. If you would like to know more, please contact Suraksha at the Audit House office on 08 8981 2848 or email admin@ntnationaltrust.org.au and we will put you in contact with the appropriate branch.

In Darwin, the location and ambience of Myilly Point Heritage Precinct has drawn many events this year including art and photography exhibitions, talks, seminars, music and theatre events, weddings, birthday parties and Darwin Festival events. Don't be disappointed - book your functions for 2023 now!

The current venue hire brochure for Myilly Point Heritage Precinct is found at: <https://www.nationaltrustntstore.com/venue-hire>

OFFICE CLOSURE DATES FOR 2022 FESTIVE SEASON

Audit House will be closing on 23 December and reopening on 5 January 2023.

Burnett House will be closed from 10 December 2022 to 12 January 2023 (TBC).

All other National Trust NT properties are closed until early February 2023 or as advised due to extreme weather.

HERITAGE LINKS

NT Heritage Register

<http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/heritageregister/f?p=103:300:16760495551689:>

Library & Archives NT

<https://lant.nt.gov.au/>

Darwin City Geotrail

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/525ddf2f92d34edfb8e4792fde889681>

NT Modern

<https://ntmodern.org/>

If you have articles you'd like to contribute to the newsletter, or National Trust events you would like to publicise, please send them to admin@ntnationaltrust.org.au or tours@ntnationaltrust.org.au

Our next Newsletter will be circulated in February 2023

URGENT SAFETY ISSUES

Extreme heat health alert issued across the Northern Territory

Severe and extreme heat health alerts for the Northern Territory have been issued over the past few weeks.

NT Health encourages all residents and visitors to take appropriate action to avoid heat stress (also known as heat stroke) and dehydration.

Current advice from NT Health is that the NT is at a level two 'watch and act' alert, with the potential to reach a level three 'emergency warning' later in the week.

NT Health encourages all residents and visitors to take appropriate action to avoid heat stress (also known as heat stroke) and dehydration.

To avoid heat related illness the community should:

1. Stay cool in air-conditioning where possible or seek out shady areas with a breeze
2. Drink cold or iced water
3. Decrease physical activity
4. Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose clothes and a wide-brimmed hat
5. Get into cold water or apply cold substances to the body
6. Use fans and damp towels if you don't have air-conditioning

Symptoms of heat stress:

1. Tiredness and lethargy
2. Headache
3. Dizziness or fainting
4. Confusion leading to poor decision making
5. Muscle cramps
6. Feeling thirsty
7. Urinating less often

People who feel they may be suffering from heat stress should take immediate action to bring their temperature down. If symptoms persist, seek medical advice. If you are worried, call triple zero (000) immediately.

For more information on extreme heat visit <https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/health-conditions-treatments/heat-stress>

For more information on heatwaves visit the Bureau's heatwave knowledge centre [Heatwave Service for Australia](#)