



ON THE ROAD

with Clyde & Charmaine



How can we contribute to the website?

This is the question that many members have been asking us lately. We have been overwhelmed by the interest and community spirit of members asking if they can send information about places that they have visited.

We would like to say a sincere "Thank you" to all who are contributing and providing photos and information.

The website has grown considerably, after having been launched just 10 months ago. We now have over 3,000 members and are receiving 15,000 visits per month and growing.

But keeping all of the pages current is more than what a pair of old camels can do on their own. Recognising this, we incorporated into the design of the website a method of collecting up-to-the-minute information provided by members for the benefit of all.

Each place on the website has a page of its own and at the bottom of the page is a button which you can click to contribute information and photos. The button is labelled "Contribute Content" and is only visible if you are logged in.

Our software team is currently working on a feature to allow members to add new places to the website. This will be launched in the next few weeks.

I would like to take the opportunity to highlight some differences between this website and others which are popular with nomads. First, we do not have any plans to offer a forum. There are several excellent online forums already, which you may be familiar with.

The information on our pages is not intended to be a series of comments of personal experience in nature. We like to keep the information of a non-personal nature so that it is presented more as fact rather than opinion. Comments such as "We have been there before and thoroughly enjoyed it" will not make it onto the page. We use a different writing style to forum material.

So how can you help? Many of the pages on this website are crying out for additional information and photos. If you are travelling through a particular area or visiting a campsite or rest area, why not have a look to see what is on the website page for that place and you might discover that there is a great opportunity to provide additional information and add a few photos. Your fellow travellers will thank you for your effort.

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Editorial

A word from Clyde & Charmaine Camel

Running a website can have its challenges. After some rather ordinary performance from our web hosting company we decided that a change was required. We wanted speed and reliability. We wanted to be able to send you newsletters via email and provide help to those who needed it. We wanted to grow with more information and services.

We simply wanted to deliver a great website.

You'd think that finding a reliable host would be simple, given the number of hosting companies that are scattered throughout cyber space.

Moving more than a gigabyte of data from one host to another with minimal downtime was quite an operation. After several hours off line, we finally had it up and running with a significant speed increase.

But then the dramas started. Our new private hosting arrangement resulted in us having some difficulties with equipment and software. However we seem to have the matter in hand (I hope) and while there may be some more interruptions over the next week or two, once these problems have been sorted out it should be a great improvement.

So we would like to apologise if you have been unable to access the website at times or if it has been slow to respond. It was down a number of times for more than an hour recently, with several other shorter breaks. I am expecting these interruptions to end soon. If not, it is back to the drawing board to find another host.

Thank you for your enduring patience.

In this issue of **ON THE ROAD**

My Recipe: Hungry? Get into a plate full of Hammer Chicken. Our Bush Cooking recipe by Ian Simpson: Page 2.

Park Profile: There is one park in North Qld that everyone is talking about. Find out why on Page 3.

My Story: Rail Wise. Arnie Zwart is this issue's winner of My Story is on page 4. about camping near train lines. **David Macdonald's** exquisite photo: **Pelicans at Jundah** is also on Page 4.

On The Road is the official newsletter of the website: www.caravancaravan.com.au

For nomads in Australia, regardless of hair colour.

Bush Cooking

This amusing recipe was sent to use by Ian Simpson. It is his version of Beggar's Chicken. Sounds delicious!

Send your bush recipes to myrecipe@caravancaravan.com.au with some photos of how the dish looks or shots of your preparation and cooking.

Hammer Chicken!

Method:

Place flour and salt into a mixing bowl, mix well. Stir in water. Mix into a firm dough. Roll out to about 1 cm thick. Don't worry about the quantity of salt – you don't eat the dough.

Cover the dough with two layers of alfoil, making sure that the alfoil is big enough to completely wrap and seal the chicken. Place the chicken on the foil.

Rub well with soy sauce. This is to give the skin a brown colour; otherwise the chicken will be pale and not look as attractive.

At this stage you can add any flavours you like to the inside of the chicken. Some suggestions are – A quartered lemon into the chicken cavity, any herbs or spices, garlic, soy sauce, bay leaf, homemade/shop bought stuffing, quandong, lemon myrtle, other bush tucker. Use your imagination for variety. Rub dry herbs inside and outside.

Wrap up the chicken in the sheets of alfoil separately, making any overlaps or joins on the top of the chicken. The outside layer of foil will tear away when opening the finished chicken. The second layer will allow you to lift the chicken out of the case when serving.

Encase the alfoil wrapped chicken in the dough, sealing any joins with a little water. Mould like play dough. This is a good time to get the kids or those young at heart involved.

Important – The dough must be completely sealed. No holes which would allow steam to escape.

At Home: place on a greased baking tray. Bake in a hot oven 200° for one hour; reduce heat to 160° and cook for an additional three hours.

In the bush: level an area in the coals of your camp fire that you prepared a few hours before.

Place the chicken directly on the coals and cover with extra coals. No flaming wood.

Do not disturb for three to four hours depending on the size of the chicken. Don't be too concerned about burning; the dough case will protect the chicken.

The dough sets like a rock, you will need to break the dough using a hammer. Peel away broken dough (not to be eaten – it doesn't taste good, very salty). Lift the alfoil wrapped chicken onto a serving plate. Be careful the chicken will be so tender it will melt away from the bones.

Breaking off the dough is best done outside, bits fly everywhere.

Unwrap and serve with baked vegies done in the camp oven or rice or couscous with vegies mixed in.



Ingredients:

1 medium chicken
Soy sauce
Herbs & spices
Lemon

Clay Dough:

1kg Cooking salt
4 cups of plain flour
1½ cups water



Park Profile



Black River Stadium

There is one caravan park in North Queensland that everyone is talking about...

And everything that is said about it is positively positive! Here at Camel HQ we have been receiving many messages from members, singing the praises of this place. So we thought we should investigate to find out why it is so popular.

Bill & Joan Condon run the Black River Stadium Caravan Park just west of Townsville where all the guests, it seems, are having far too much fun.

The first things that you learn when you arrive at Black River Stadium are that you can choose your own spot and that your pets are welcome. But let's start at the beginning. First you have to find the place which isn't too difficult and even easier if you have consulted the website.

<http://www.caravancaravan.com.au/entity/black-river-stadium>

Bill & Joan bend over backwards to make your stay memorable. Bill puts it this way:

I always say that it's what you **won't** find at Black River Stadium that attracts most travellers who stay with us. Swimming pools, noisy kids with bikes and balls, skate boards etc., etc. You won't find any of those here.

Economy plays a big part in today's traveller and we are trying to do our best to help out in that regard, we propose keeping our rates down again next year \$25-00 per night for 2 people on a Powered Site and \$150-00 per week which is one night free. We don't have high and low season prices either it is the same all year round and it makes no difference what Club you are a member of.

With wide open grassy sites which are mostly drive through, some travellers like to "Circle Your Wagons" positioning 2 Vans with Annexes facing, with one more on the back and one on the front.

Many groups stay here much longer than first planned because once they get here and find out how quiet it is at night (and you can see all the stars in the sky at night) they stay longer. This year we have had one couple stay 17 weeks. They started a 5pm Happy Hour get together with drinks and nibbles each day. Graham even suggested I install a Bell, so whoever turned up first rang the bell. Crikey, I learned a few things from that group all of whom pledged to return again next year. Barry was another colourful bloke who taught us how to make and cook Burra Burgers. Marlene shared the recipe, which was preparing Mince, grated carrot & onion, flour, eggs, combined with a packet of chicken noodle soup and milk to make a pancake type mix and dollops were dropped onto the BBQ plate and cooked like pancakes and were Yummy.

So I think 2013 will be a new recipe challenge for anyone wanting to impress a bunch of Grey Nomads who all enjoy a quiet place along with a drink or three and sharing their life's many experiences.



Bill & Joan Condon



Here is the score card from one of our members.

Good Points:

- Top facilities with HUGE showers.
- Excellent rates suitable for pensioners.
- Laundry facilities – plenty of machines and lines.
- Disabled facilities.
- Dump Point.
- Pets allowed if properly supervised.
- Huge area with lots of space to walk, cycle, or exercise Fido.
- Happy Hour (including a bell to call the faithful!)
- Free outdoor movies Saturday night (seasonal).
- Safe and secure with locked gate at night.
- Peace and quiet (no traffic, no kids, no rowdy blow-inns.)

Bad Points:

- Once you settle in you don't want to leave.
- You make so many new friends you can't remember their names.
- Happy hour only goes for three hours.

We have had two sensational stays at Black River Stadium with this year being many weeks and we now think of it as **our winter residence**. Just about everyone we stayed with will return because it has everything nomads need. We therefore highly recommend this camp to all readers of **On the Road** and suggest that your next Queensland trip should include Black River Stadium, but beware – the tranquillity is highly addictive.

Thanks to Graham Blackshaw for that summary

My Story

Rail Wise

By Arnie Zwart

After spending six weeks on the Eyre Peninsula, hugging the coast to avoid the inland near zero morning temperatures, we headed off to Adelaide to celebrate our granddaughter's first birthday.

Turning southward from Port Augusta, the late afternoon sun was starting to wane so we kept an eye out for a suitable overnight park. We came across the Mambray Creek Rest Area situated approximately half way between Port August and Port Pirie. The rest area was already hosting a number of campers so the prime positions were already taken. Not perturbed, the wife pointed out a nice flat area that paralleled a railway line. That started me to feel uneasy!

We have free camped at many Railway sidings in the past, especially on a recent trip to Western Australia, but have never parked too close to the rail line before. The sidings over the West have a huge expanse where one can camp without interference from any rail traffic. The wife argued that the line was probably disused so it would be OK. Knowing that the line is the Adelaide to Darwin rail line, I inspected the surface of the tracks and sure enough they were more shinier than grandma's polished kettle. Even that didn't sway her argument. She was persistent whilst trying to mitigate the obvious. With a straight face she countered with unfounded assurance that being a Monday that no trains run on Monday, they only run mid week.

While we having this debate, another couple pulled in next to us. As they were setting up it was not difficult to eaves drop into our conversation. It was not long before they high-tailed to another position away from the line... smart campers.

So anyway, what does a bloke do to keep the missus happy! The rail line is high on a bridge and I parked what should have been a safe distance away from any wake wash or flying debris from passing trains.

Unlike Pete's happy hour in the last newsletter, we had a few quiet drinks (medicinal of course) to ensure a restful sleep. And it worked, I was sleeping like a baby when from 3am I counted no less than 18 trains that passed through. Some travelled at speeds that slightly buffeted the van and some came through blowing their whistle. One train actually stopped in its tracks and after a few worried minutes (I thought something had gone amiss) the train started to motor on. Thinking later that morning I mused that the train had stopped waiting for a switching to occur to another line.

Now while all this was happening, the missus lay asleep snoring through most of the action whilst I lay anxious thinking I should move the van to avoid the buffeting. Finally arousing due to the din on the rail line, the wife bemusedly asked what the racket was all about.

It was certainly an experience and it tells me what I already knew... the wife knows little about trains.

<http://www.caravancaravan.com.au/entity/mambray-creek-rest-area/SA>



Mambray Creek Rest Area – Arnie Zwart



Pelicans at Jundah Qld

by David Macdonald

In July 2011 my wife and I did a trip out west. We love bush camping and taking photos of all things, especially birds. I find sitting on the banks of a river or creek very relaxing.

We were camped on the Thomson River near Jundah Qld which was not long after the floods, the river levels had gone down but the aftermath was still evident. The bird life was very active and I had the camera working overtime.

There were a lot of pelicans overhead and this shot was a bit different... Their wings appear to be touching.