

John Cogill

1. PORT HEDLAND TO PERTH

At Port Hedland I stayed with Geoff Schafer, PO Box 216,1, Wedge Street, Port Hedland, WA 6721 (0417 911 323).

In Mount Magnet, Geoff Schafer's house is 3 Quibble Street, phone 9963 4807 Joe O'Brien children Energen and Kathy. Leave key in switch box ; side window opens. Turn power on/off on front verandah.

Bicycle shops: Smirkey's Sports Byass Street, South Hedland, Tel: 9172 2145 Fax: 9172 3202.

Kate Smith 6/89 Millpoint Road Perth 9367 3739 Work 9026 5296(office) 9037 0038(home)

Roy Appleton Cyclorama (08) 9458 8302 1234 Albany Highway, Perth

Ron Kennealy, Solicitor, 158 High Street, Freemantle 6160 Tel: 9430 5863

Police at Nannup name Peter (?) know of the accident. Accident occurred Friday 27th October 2000, between 3 and 3.30 p.m. 15-20 km south-east of Nannup on road from Pemberton to Nannup. After Donnelly Mill, just past Bibbulman Track sign at crest of hill, heading towards Nannup.

Gordonsons Cycles Murray Street, Perth 9321 6412

Wheely's Shopping Centre, Newman Tel 9175 1129 Fax 9177 8272

Main Roads Department Pilbara Regional Office, Brand Street, South Hedland, Tel: 9172 1777 Fax: 9140 1076

Wittenoom Convent PO Box 39, Wittenoom. Phil 9189 7060

Perth Bushwalkers Mike Wilson 9390 9371 Mervyn Linten 9443 2483 Robyn Waldie (bicycles) 9344 7886

Perth Airport Shuttle 9479 4131 Fax: 9479 4130

Meekatharra Meteorological Office 9981 1191 before 2.30 p.m.

Place	Distance(km)	Remarks
Port Hedland		
Turnoff I95	42	
Indee turnoff	67	
Pinga Creek	114	standing water in creek
Scout Camp turnoff	186	
Bea Bea Creek North Branch	190	flowing water
Bea Bea Creek Middle Branch	204	lake, standing water
Bea Bea Creek South Branch	211	flowing, clear water
Bea Bea Creek rest area	217	flowing stream
Auski Roadhouse	261	services

Table of distances, in kilometres from Port Hedland

I left Port Hedland at about 3 a.m., after moonrise on Thursday 21/09/00. Thanks to a largely tailwind I left the traffic soon after South Hedland. Yule River, at approximately 136km, showed stagnant water and was a possible water source. It is not easily accessible. But I was told that you need to dig only about half a metre in order to find fresh water under the sand. All the river crossings appear to be the most easily accessible from the north-east embankment.

I dry camped at a sign to a Scout Camp at 186 km. That turned out to be four kilometres short of flowing water at Bea Bea Creek North Branch at 190km.

On Friday 22/09/00 I knelt in clear water west of the bridge over Bea Bea Creek South at 211km; that night (Friday 22/09/00) I camped at Bea Bea Creek rest area at 217km near a flowing stream. On Saturday 23/09/00 I started pre-dawn and reached Auski Road House at 8 a.m.. There I met Dave Doust(Manager and Tour Operator of Dave's Gorge Tours tel: 9189 7026) who charges \$10 for bicycle and passenger from Auski to Wittenoom. He has backpack accommodation in Wittenoom for \$8 per night. I stayed at the ex-convent at Wittenoom(Phil, Paul Fitzgerald tel: 9189 7060) for \$10 a night. I went with Dave Doust on a Hamersley Gorge tour (\$25) and experienced the magnificence of a few of the gorges in this area.

On Saturday 30/09/00 I took Phil, Chris and Dave Doust to Auski Roadhouse for dinner. At 9 p.m. Chris said "Are you riding a bit to-night?" It was starlight only. After I'd left the lights of the roadhouse, the white lines were fully clear. I climbed Munjina Gorge for about 20km from Auski to the top of the gorge. I bivouacked at N/160¹ on a bridge abutment. It had a mopoke and tinkling water, flowing southwards. I slept there from 11 p.m. on Saturday 30/09/00 to 3 a.m. Sunday 01/10/00. At 3 a.m. on Sunday 01/10/00 I restarted, and travelled more or less continuously. At approximately N/135 there is a windmill behind the railway line which runs parallel with the road at this point; only the top of the windmill is visible from the road. At N/126 there is a turning to the right to Pack Saddlers. At about N/125 there is a windmill 100 metres south of the road, on Juna Downs station. At N/93 there was standing water 10m north of the road, and at N/89 a creek was just flowing north to south. Creeks then progressively dried up until Cathedral Gorge at N/10 which was dry.

Des Lawry, Howard Porter Pty Ltd (tel (08) 9337 3533 email: wasales@howardporter.com.au) had left me a water drop at N/100. A family left me a water drop at N/40. Note that the marker N/50 doesn't exist.

I reached Newman at 5 p.m. on Sunday 01/10/00. All Seasons Hotel \$30 a night in lodge accommodation. The mine tour leaves from the Visitors' Centre. It includes views of the open-cut mine, still in use. The cut is five kilometres in length and nearly a kilometre in width.

I left Newman about 4 p.m. on Tuesday 03/10/00. I camped in the dust on the west side of the road about 20km south of Capricorn Roadhouse, and reached Kumarina about 3 p.m. on Wednesday 04/10/00. There was standing water on the east side of the road at K/31. I continued from Kumarina at about 5 p.m. on Wednesday 04/10/00, and camped at Gascoigne River Middle Branch at M/194, 194 km to Meekatharra. I restarted at 4 a.m. on Thursday 05/10/00 going south, and carrying eight litres of water. At M/100 my rear tube failed, owing to the rim tab which was off centre.

I then got lifted (rescued) back to Kumarina by Linda Morrison and her sister Joanne(Peter and Linda Morrison, Porangurup, Spring Road near Albany south of Stirling Range, north-east of Mount Barker, north-west of Chester Pass Tel (08) 9853 1182). I got lifted forwards from Kumarina to Cue in a truck. I overnighted 6th, 7th and 8th October 2000 at Nallan Station(Michael, Sandy child Jamie and two older children) turn off 11 km north of Cue, plus 3.5 km on a spur road. Look out for 3-corner jacks as you turn onto the red bulldust track about 200 metres west of the homestead.

¹N/160 denotes 160 km from Newman

1.1. **Nallan Station.** Three windmills and a wind-powered generator. An oil-fueled generator which runs at night and is turned off at about 10 p.m.. There is an airstrip which has been used. The camping site is between the homestead and the “cottage”. The “cottage” has about five bedrooms and is surrounded by a verandah, allowing you to sit in some shade all day. (Fri 6,Sat 7,Sun 8,Mon 9(3 p.m.) October 2000). I watched calves being rounded up in their pens and then fed. An occasional emu drifts close to the homestead, before it is chased away by the dogs.

I was “the” cyclist, the only one to have visited the station. The trip is less hazardous than I anticipated. Water is available, although the distances between water stops exceed 100 km. Road trains are a danger. The drivers are professional, and gave me a wide berth. I stopped and got off the road if I saw or heard them coming.

I overnighted in front of the Post Office at Cue on Monday 9th October. At 3.15 a.m. on Tuesday 10th October I put myself and bike on the Greyhound/Pioneer bus at Cue to Perth. There is also a WestRail bus, which travels from Cue to Perth via Geraldton. It leaves Cue mid-morning on Tuesday and is slower than the Greyhound/Pioneer bus.

I bush-camped on Tuesday 10th October at the start of the Heritage Trail, west of Midland.

1.2. **Conclusion.** The road temperatures were 38° on the road every day. I was reduced to one spare tube at Cue, having started with four spares. That made it risky to continue south from Mount Magnet. I would not anyway have continued south to Wubin, on account of the heat.

1.2.1. *Lesson learned:* Start earlier, even in May or June. Creeks are then flowing more vigorously, and there is more water lying around, left over from the wet season. The road temperatures are lower.

Travelling by night conserves water and energy. The road trains are more easily discernible, as the loom of their lights appears up to five kilometres away. Kangaroos hopping near the road give one an occasional surprise, until you get used to the thump which they make.

Date arriving	Table 1: Schedule Place	Date departing
20 September 5 p.m.	Port Hedland backpackers	20 September 6 a.m.
21 September 5 p.m.	Indee Road House	21 September 6 a.m.
22 September 5 p.m.	Yule River bush camp	22 September 6 a.m.
25 September 5 p.m.	Auski Road House Rest day	24 September 6 a.m.
26 September 5 p.m.	Weeli Walli Creek bush camp	26 September 6 a.m.
29 September 5 p.m.	Newman hotel. Rest days	29 September 6 a.m.
30 September 5 p.m.	Ashburton River bush camp	30 September 6 a.m.
3 October 5 p.m.	Kumerina Road House	3 October 6 a.m.
4 October 5 p.m.	Gascoyne River Middle Branch bush camp	4 October 6 a.m.
5 October 5 p.m.	Doolgunna bush camp	5 October 6 a.m.
9 October 5 p.m.	Meekatharra hotel rest days	9 October 6 a.m.
11 October 5 p.m.	Cue road house	10 October 6 a.m.
12 October 5 p.m.	Mount Magnet	12 October 6 a.m.
15 October 5 p.m.	Paynes Find rest day	15 October 6 a.m.
16 October 5 p.m.	Wubin hotel	16 October 6 a.m.
17 October 5 p.m.	Wongan Hills hotel	17 October 6 a.m.
19 October 5 p.m.	Toodyay Hotel	19 October 6 a.m.
20 October 5 p.m.	Midland Hotel	20 October 6 a.m.
	Perth	