



June, 2015

The Senior - WA, Perth

Section: General News • Article type : News Item • Audience : 57,970 • Page: 23  
Printed Size: 215.00cm<sup>2</sup> • Market: WA • Country: Australia • ASR: AUD 6,104  
Words: 298 • Item ID: 411193566

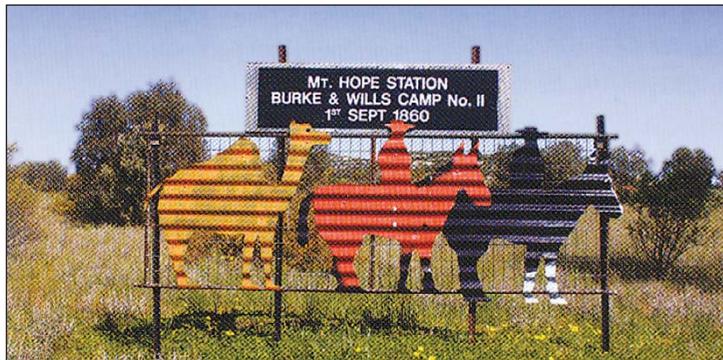
isentia.mediaportal

Copyright Agency licensed copy (www.copyright.com.au)



Page 1 of 1

# In the path of Burke and Wills – minus the ending



CAMEL STOP – A sign on the Leitchville-Pyramid road in northern Victoria marks one of the places where the doomed expedition camped.

THE ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition of 1860-61 is often ridiculed as a disaster wrought by incompetence.

But according to the touring guide *Following Burke and Wills Across Australia*, which takes you on a road trip following in the footsteps of the doomed explorers, it was one of history's great trans-continental journeys even if it ended in death on the return leg.

Drawing on the extensive journals, diaries, reports, despatches, letters and telegrams of the Victorian Exploring Expedition, Dave Phoenix follows as closely as possible the 3500km route from Melbourne to the Darling River, Menindee, Coopers Creek, Sturt Stony Desert and the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Phoenix knows his history inside out and the book is full of fascinating detail about what the expeditioners experienced.

He tells of the group's encounters with settlers and Indigenous Australians; their observations on plants, animals, the weather and even the stars; their struggles with the rugged terrain; the decisions they made for good or ill;

and the privations they suffered.

Never straying too far from the present, Phoenix also introduces us to the many monuments erected along the way to commemorate the expedition. The number of them is perhaps surprising but bears witness to the almost mythic status of the event in Australian history.

This is no dry-as-dust guidebook. Written with a light hand, it is filled with wonderfully detailed maps and well-chosen photos and paintings.

Even if you want to follow only part of the track, or never past the front gate of home, it is an invitation to engage in a first-class adventure.

■ *Following Burke and Wills Across Australia: A Touring Guide* (CSIRO Publishing), Dave Phoenix, RRP \$49.95.

