

In the Footsteps of Ludwig Leichhardt Trek



Background

2018 will mark 174 years since Ludwig Leichhardt and his party of explorers passed through North Queensland, having departed Jimbour Station, on the Darling Downs in SE Queensland, on 1st October 1844. His journey to Port Victoria settlement on the Coburg Peninsular, North of modern Darwin, took 15 months of hardship and privation. Leichhardt's party were the first Europeans to travel overland in North Queensland.

This trek provides an opportunity to authentically retrace part of his route of exploration. The trek may be completed as one or more sections as described below:

Trek Overview

This trek is to retrace the route taken by Ludwig and his party from the headwaters of the mighty Burdekin River across the Great Dividing Range and down the rugged gorges of The Lynd River. He named both rivers for sponsors and benefactors of his expedition. Although some of the Lynd River has been worked for tin, much of the route will be similar to conditions in 1845. We will use many of his campsites, and where possible traverse his actual route. We plan to travel at a similar rate as the original party. Dates are a compromise of his original dates of exploration, as he spent a considerable number of days drying meat and conducting reconnaissance.

The trek has been organised into three sections each of which correspond to a chapter in Leichhardt's journal. Each section is discrete but may be combined with other sections to make a more comprehensive retrace of Leichhardt's journey.

We will carry a copy of his journal and his field notes from which we can compare his and our observations of the country.

Dates. Complete expedition (all three sections, 28 days):

- 2018: 7 May-11 June,
- 2019: 12 May - 10 June, and
- 2020: 10 May-8 June.



Section One: "The Land of The Lotus Eaters"

Named for his description of Aborigines encountered in the vicinity of The Valley of Lagoons.

Summary. This section is 8 days duration that includes transfers from/to Ravenshoe and Cairns.

The Route is from Reedy Brook (Bobtail's Last Camp) to Wyoming Station (Camp in the Ranges). We use a stock route that essentially follows Leichhardt's route along the Burdekin River. We rediscover Big Anthill Creek, part of which is not shown on modern maps! We follow Leichhardt Creek through extensive basalt plains to the site of a marked "L" tree, shown on a 1942 Ordnance Survey maps, but since burnt down. Then we continue around the bend to Wyoming Station and the site of "Camp in the Ranges".

The Trek will pause here to reorganise and resupply before continuing on Section Two.

A memorial plaque was unveiled on Wyoming Station during the trek in 2004, to mark the site of a LL engraved tree, believed to be the site of Leichhardt's camp but the tree burnt down many years ago.

See a trace of the route on AllTrails: [AllTrails Trace of Route- Footsteps of Leichhardt Section One and Two](#)

Dates:

- 2018: 06 - 13 May
- 2019:
- 2020:



Section Two: "Search over the Range"

Named for the chapter in Leichhardt's Journal that records his explorations and observations for this area.

Summary. This section is of 7 days duration, including transfers to/from Cairns and Ravenshoe.

This section will retrace Leichhardt's route from "*Camp in the Ranges*", Wyoming Station to "*Separation Camp*", on what Leichhardt named Separation Creek, but is now called Rudd Creek. Leichhardt's camp was in the vicinity of Rudds Pinnacles, which presumably he used as a navigation landmark. We then cross the watershed of the Great Dividing Range into the headwaters of The Lynd River to camp on a spring which was the site of Leichhardt's *Queens Birthday Camp*.

The original party saved their remaining sugar to celebrate Queen Victoria's Birthday with a "fat cake" in this camp. The route cuts through a well known freehold grazing property "Minnemolka" with extensive swamps and bird life.

Dates:

- 2018: 13-20 May
- 2019:
- 2020:



Section Three: "Descent of the Lynd River"

The name of this section is taken from the chapter of Leichhardt's Journal that describes this part of his journey.

Summary. This section is of 14 days duration. The route follows Leichhardt's descent of the Lynd River through rugged gorges and past paperbark tree ringed waterholes. These dates include two days for transfers to the start and

return to Cairns. This section starts at *Queens Birthday Camp* and finishes at *Pinnacle* or *Arrowroot Camp* near Torwood Station.

We will descend the Lynd River through several gorges and pass large water holes. It is planned to meet the Savannahlander train at Lyndbrook (railway) Station, near Lion's Last Camp. How Leichhardt would have marvelled about train travel! Lion was the unfortunate bullock tasked to carry the unyielding load of ammunition and was killed and made into dried meat at this camp.

This section includes one night of cabin accommodation in Chillagoe, and an opportunity to visit some Chillagoe attractions as side trips as we stage back to civilisation via Chillagoe.

Notes:

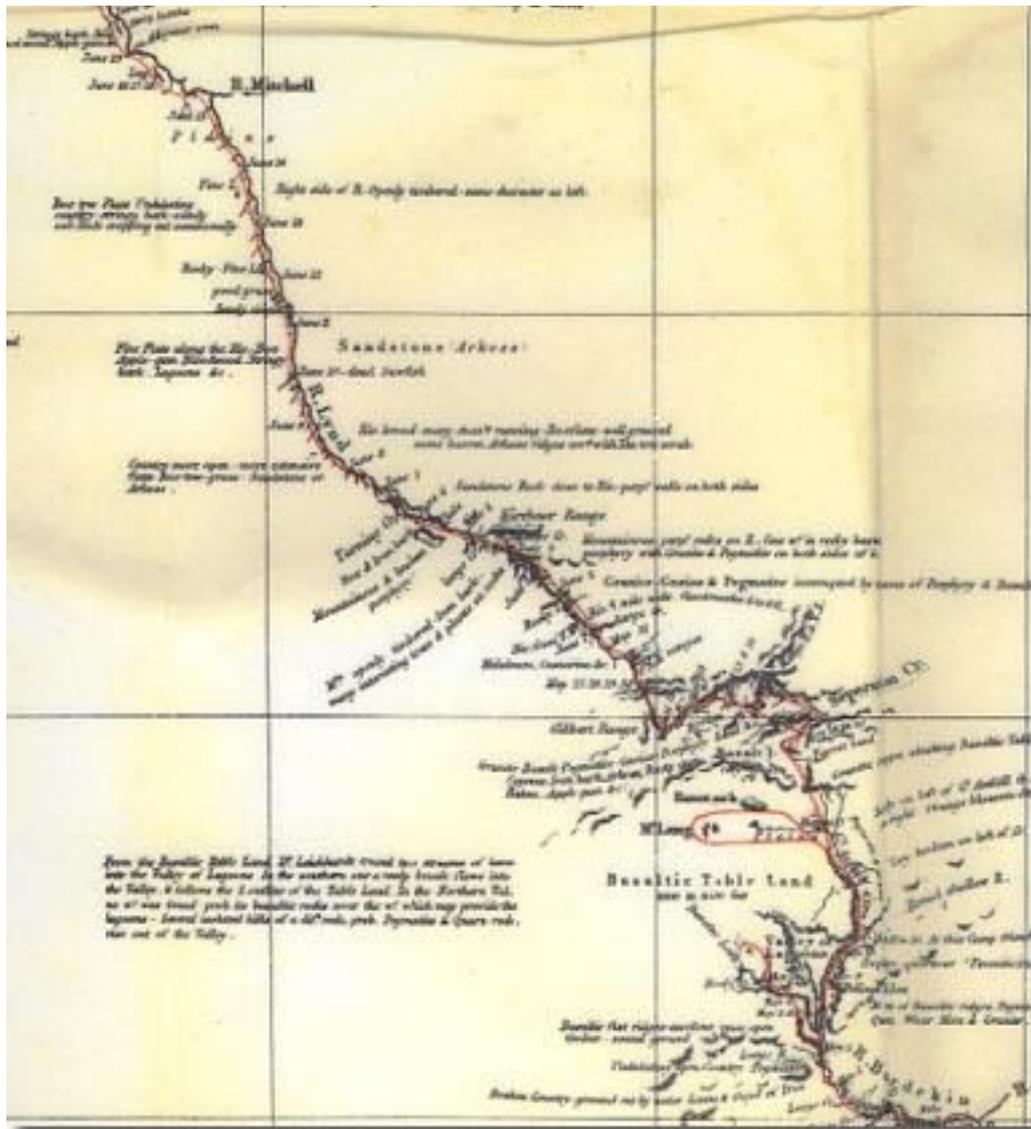
- Investigations are being made to combine part of this section with a trip on the Savannahlander. More to follow.
- This section is rated as "challenging" due to the isolation and nature of the terrain.
- This section may be completed with one of the preceding sections or separately. Transfers can be arranged from Cairns to the start point at Pinnarendi Station as required.

Dates:

- 2018: 20 May - 03 June,
- 2019:
- 2020.

Arrowsmith's Map

Drawn by cartographer and draughtsman John Arrowsmith in 1847. Detailed map of Dr. Ludwig Leichhardt's route in Australia, from Moreton Bay to Port Essington (upwards of 3000 miles performed in the years 1844 & 1845) : Laid down from his original map, adjusted & drawn to the maritime surveys of Captns. Flinders, King, Wickham, Stokes, Blackwood, &c / by John Arrowsmith, 1847



Map by Arrowsmith of Leichhardt's expedition 1844-45 showing the part of his route that is followed by Wilderness Expeditions