

Goodbye Charters Towers area ...

*Fletcher's Creek Camp*



....and on to St George QLD

Gday...

Recent happenings have provided me with a wide variety of experiences and emotions. There have been a series of annoying occurrences that have reinforced the wisdom of having no firm plans, and as well, there have been a range of sights and emotions that have enthralled and tested me.

I packed up my kit and caboodle to head back to camp on Fletchers Creek at the Dalrymple National Park. The weather was excellent, the road free of traffic and I trundled along enjoying the thought of a week's camping beside the creek before heading off to Ravenswood.

When I arrived at Fletchers Creek, I had somehow gained a large crack in the windscreen. So the next day I went back into Charters Towers to get it booked in for replacement. However, the O'Brien's Glass place did not have the 'special tool' to do the Landy screen, so I had to make a booking for replacement in Townsville. The earliest available time was the following Friday.

Thankfully, with no actual plans, I am able to be flexible, so I decided to head to Ravenswood, which is on the way to Townsville, and spend the week enjoying the Heritage Classified town while I waited for O'Brien's in Townsville to be ready for me.

The Ravenswood gold rush began when a stockman stooped to fill his pannikin from the Elphinstone Creek and discovered a large nugget. By 1868 Ravenswood was a thriving town with schools, hospitals, an ambulance centre and business houses.

# Ravenswood QLD



*Above is a view of the town looking back from the viewing platform situated at the open cut gold mine (below). The mine was operated by the Carpentaria Ravenswood Gold Mining Co but gold is not currently being taken from the mine.*

*The average grade of the gold taken from this mine was 0.9gram per tonne. One level teaspoon is one ounce or 31grams so a lot of digging was required. Mine activity waned by the early 1900s but gained a resurgence in 1995 when work began to once again extract gold from the mine. However, the activity did not last very long. In the following pages, I have tried to capture the old town contrasted with current photos for your interest. I found Ravenswood an excellent place to spend my week.*

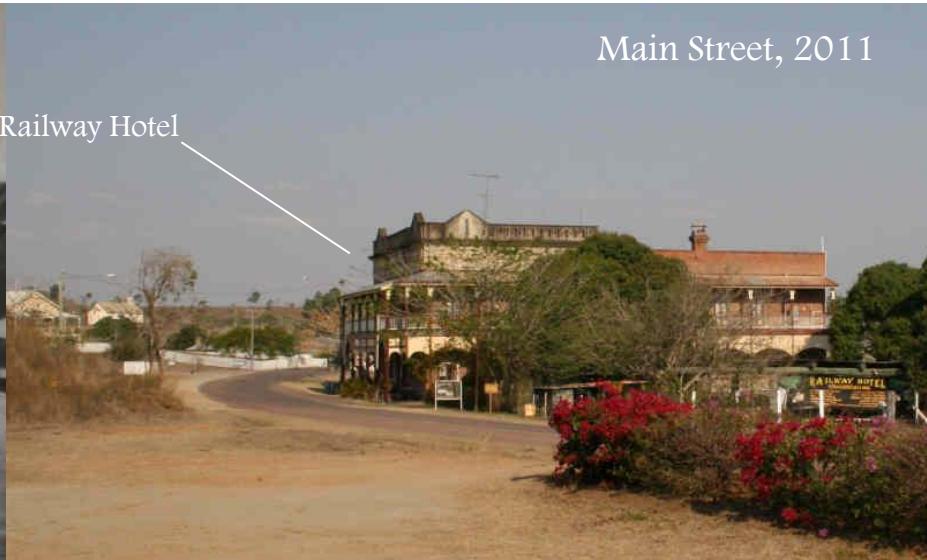


# Ravenswood QLD

Main Street, 1901

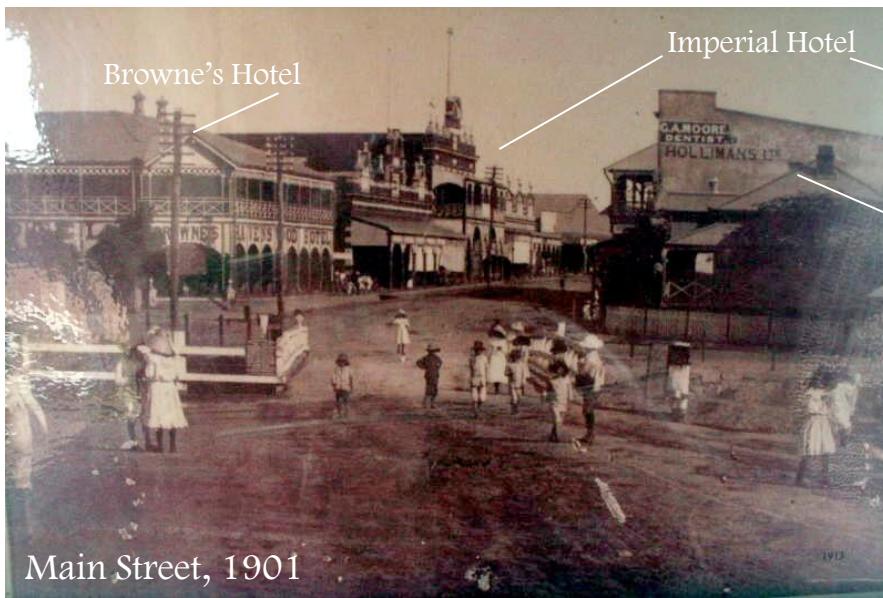


Main Street, 2011



Browne's Hotel

Imperial Hotel

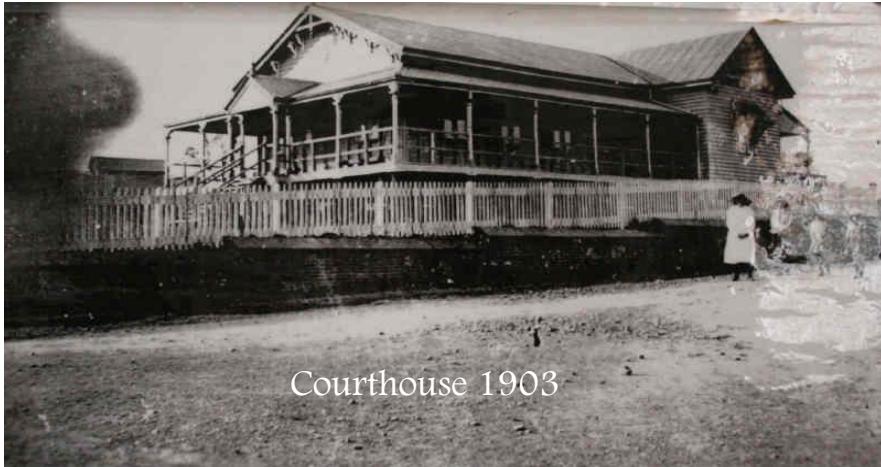


Thorp Building

Main Street, 2011



# Ravenswood QLD



Courthouse 1903



Courthouse, 2011



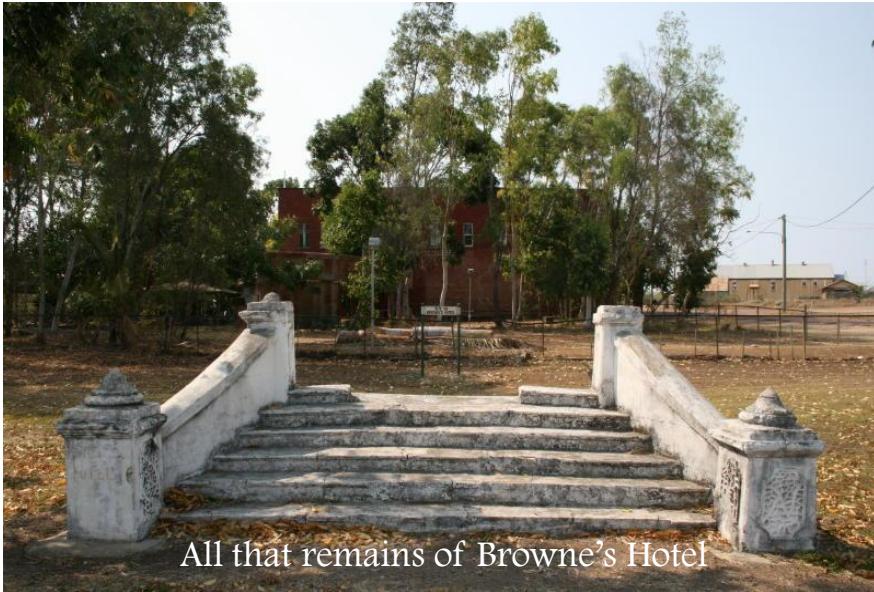
Railway Hotel



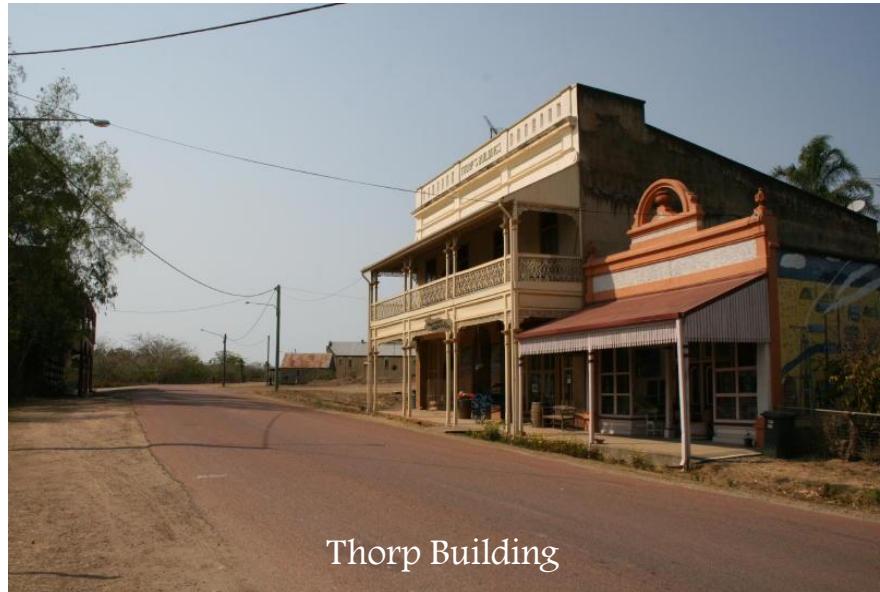
Imperial Hotel

Both these hotels have been restored and are maintained exactly as they were in their prime.

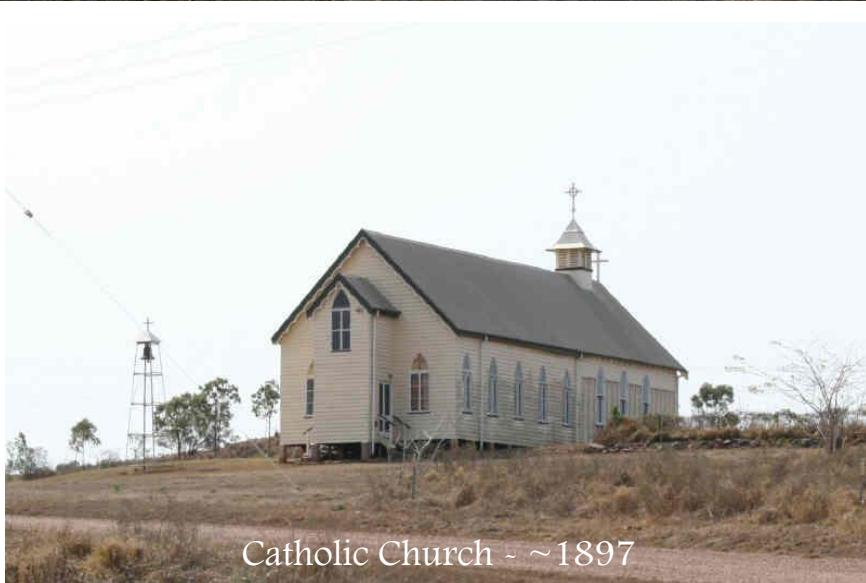
# Ravenswood QLD



All that remains of Browne's Hotel



Thorp Building



Catholic Church ~ 1897



Community Hall

*I decided to leave the van in Ravenswood to drive into Townsville for the windscreen replacement. The drive from Ravenswood to Townsville was very scenic. After spending so much time in the outback, I found it intriguing to be driving through actual mountains with thick, coastal bushland – with very big trees, all green and huge – and not a spinifex-covered plain stretching away to the horizon anywhere to be seen.*

*The windscreen was fixed and I returned to Ravenswood only to find when I got back that the ‘rain-sensor’ aspect of the Landy’s windscreen was not operating correctly. A quick phone call and they figured out that the ‘rain-sensor’ needed to be fixed by the local Land Rover dealer – yep, you guessed it, a trip back to Townsville. I made an appointment for the coming Monday and headed into Charters Towers on the weekend to replenish my pantry, and caught up on all my other domestic chores.*

*Burdekin River with the highway bridge in the background*



*After Land Rover sorted out the software (yes – software) that drives the rain-sensor I needed a few days camping to restore my wellbeing so I headed to Macrossan Park about 25km east of Charters Towers. I had heard this camp was very good and it certainly was a good spot to be.*

*It was also the perfect spot for the very hot days I encountered. Being so close to the river I just walked down through the trees and was able to enjoy languishing each afternoon in the cool water of the Burdekin River. Yes, life was meant to be this easy.*

*Burdekin River*





Railway bridge over the Burdekin River QLD

*There is plenty of room right on the banks of the Burdekin River with flushing toilets and tap water and showers – albeit cold. However, the weather lent itself perfectly to cold showers.*

*Thankfully, there were only a couple of overnighters who called in while I was there and given the amount of space available we never got in each other's way.*



The weather over the previous three or so weeks had been constantly in the mid- to high-30s and I was feeling like getting some relief. I selected Teresa Creek Dam, 25km southwest of Clermont, to spend the coming week. It was hot and humid as I left Charters Towers. However, it became overcast as I headed southward and before long, I was driving in a steady, but light, rain. I already had some relief from the very hot weather.

I was a little disappointed with Teresa Creek Dam Campground as it had a charge of \$10/night but had mostly unlevel sites and of course no power. There were hot showers and toilets – but other camps I have had in the area attracted no cost and provided almost the same facilities. I did not consider that \$10/night just for a hot shower made it a 'value for money' camp.



Teresa Creek Dam Camping Ground



*That night at Teresa Creek Dam I lost all the battery power to the van after only having one light on for 20minutes – I checked and read everything I could think of but I could not figure out what was wrong. I was further intrigued as the battery seemed to have power again the following morning.*

*A phone call to an auto-electrician in Emerald gained me an appointment for the following morning – there go those plans again.*

*The auto-electrician in Emerald gave the whole electric charging system of the van (and the Landy) a full check-up, tested and checked the batteries in the van and the two in the Landy and could not find a solitary fault or indication of what could have been the problem. I had been with him while he was checking everything so I was confident he had checked everything – so without having gained a resolution I grudgingly paid the bill and thought about the next leg of my journey.*

*I had been thinking for a long time about seeing the Carnarvon Gorge National Park – I have heard so much about how it is a “not to miss” attraction so I thought I should go and have a look. Rolleston was the closest town to Carnarvon Gorge with a van park where I could leave the van while I went into the Gorge ... so – off to Rolleston then.*

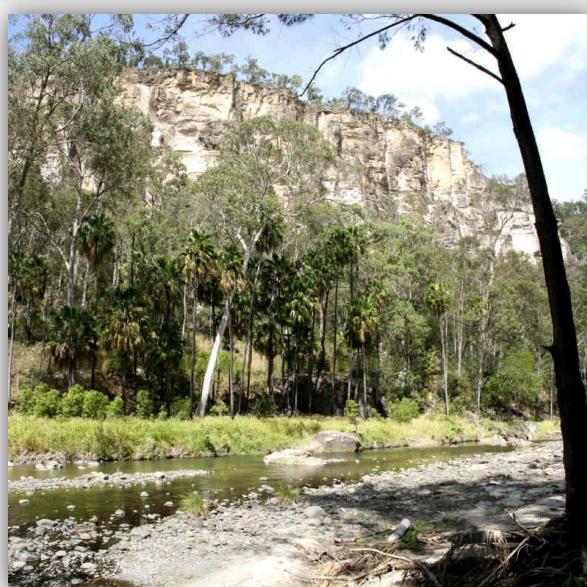
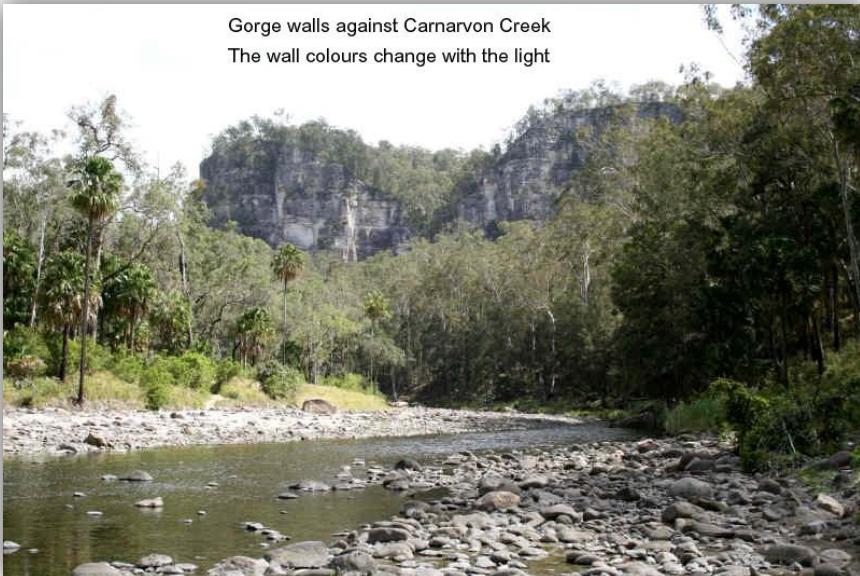
*On the way to Rolleston I overnighted near Springsure at a wayside stop in the shadow of the rock formation called the Virgin Mary Rock – shown on the left in this photo. The other peak is Mt Zamia which is part of the Minerva Hills National Park.*

*The range presents quite a feature from the highway and I just had to stop and take a photo or two.*



# Carnarvon Gorge National Park

*I could fill pages and pages with photos – but I have chosen what I think are the best I got on the day.  
Unfortunately, it was a predominantly overcast day. (Photographer excuse?)*



# Carnarvon Gorge National Park



*The Amphitheatre.*

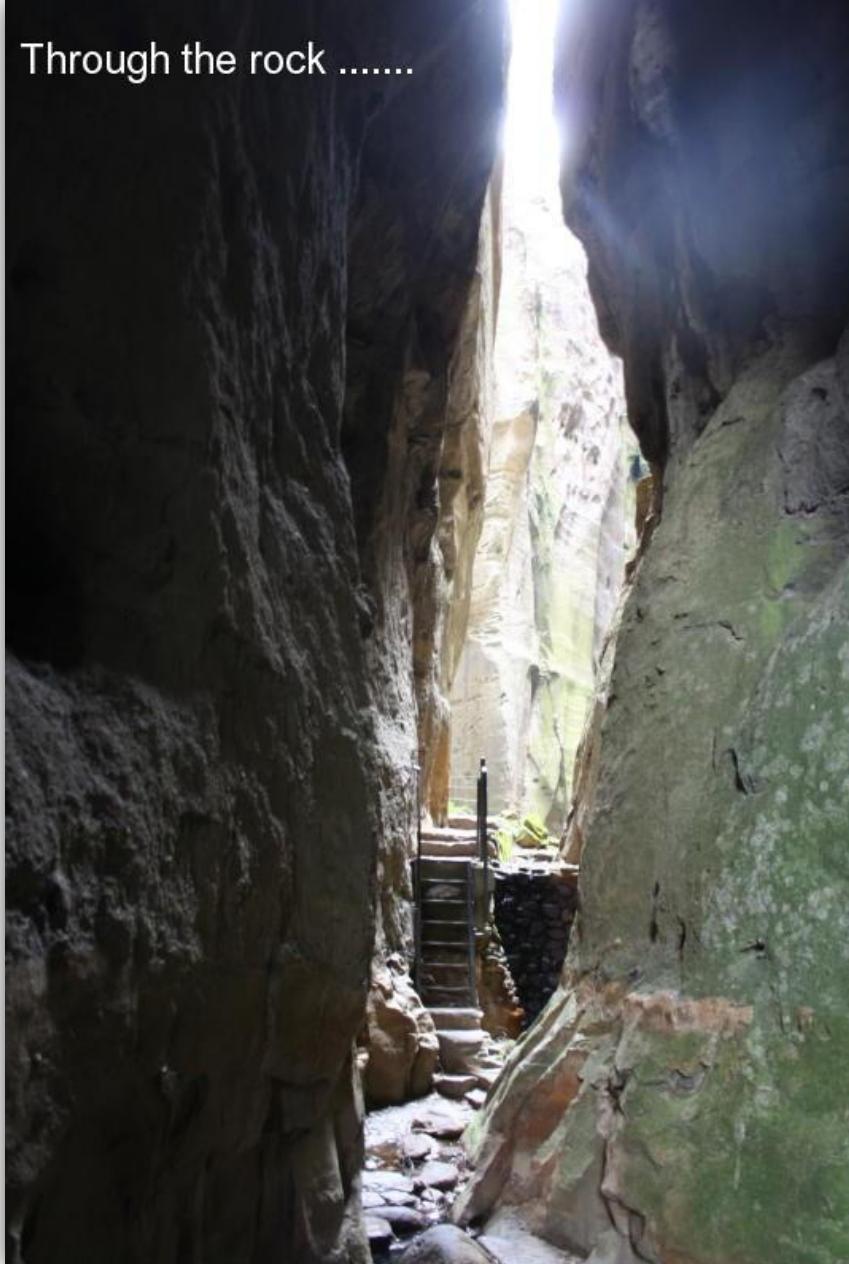
*To enter, one needs to climb the “naturally-occurring” steel staircase.*

*(See photo on left)*

*Then walk through a narrow, damp crevice between two of the walls of the Amphitheatre.*

*The next page shows the inside of the Amphitheatre.*

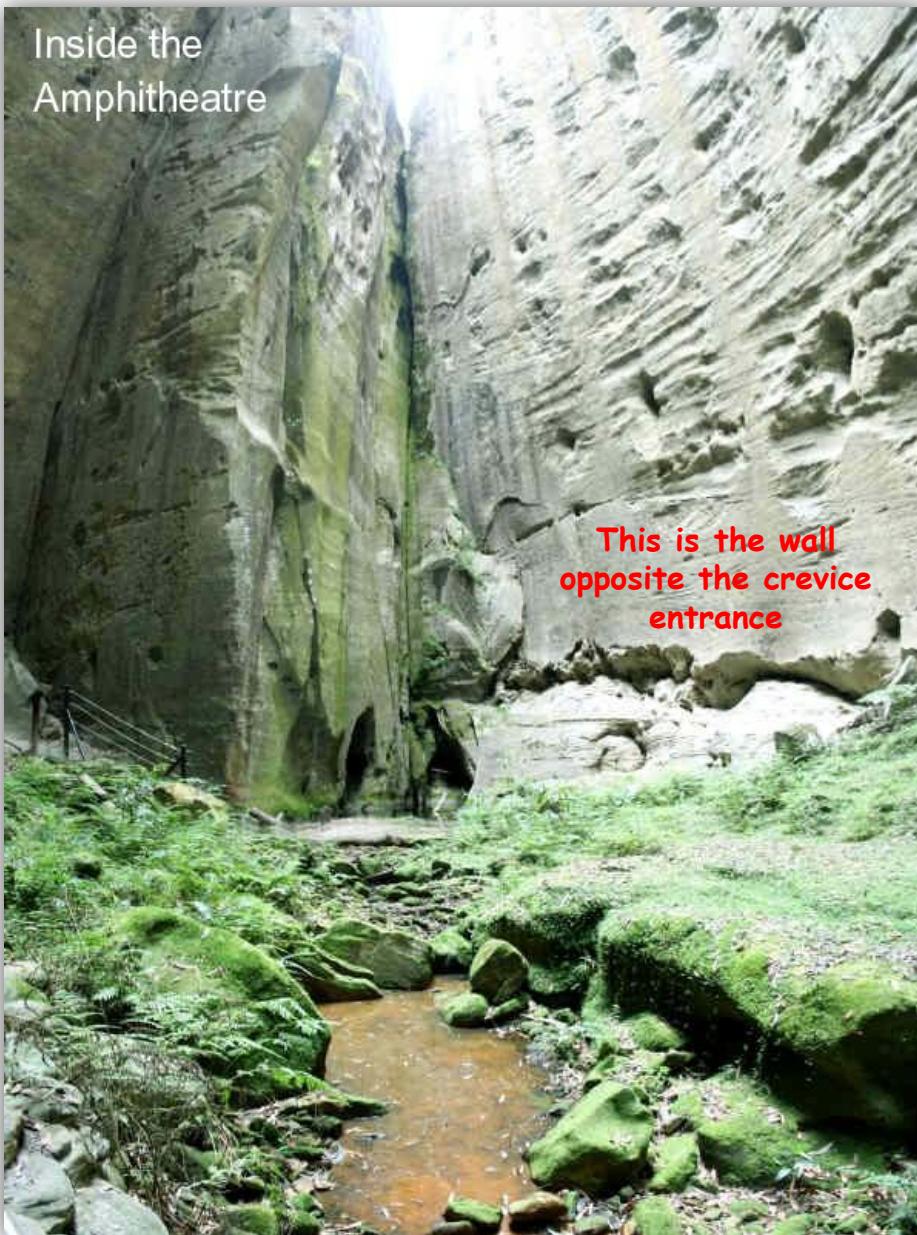
*I could not adequately capture the dimension of this feature with a still camera. I took a video, panning from the bottom to the top, but I can't include it in this.*



*Through the rock .....*

# Carnarvon Gorge National Park

Inside the Amphitheatre

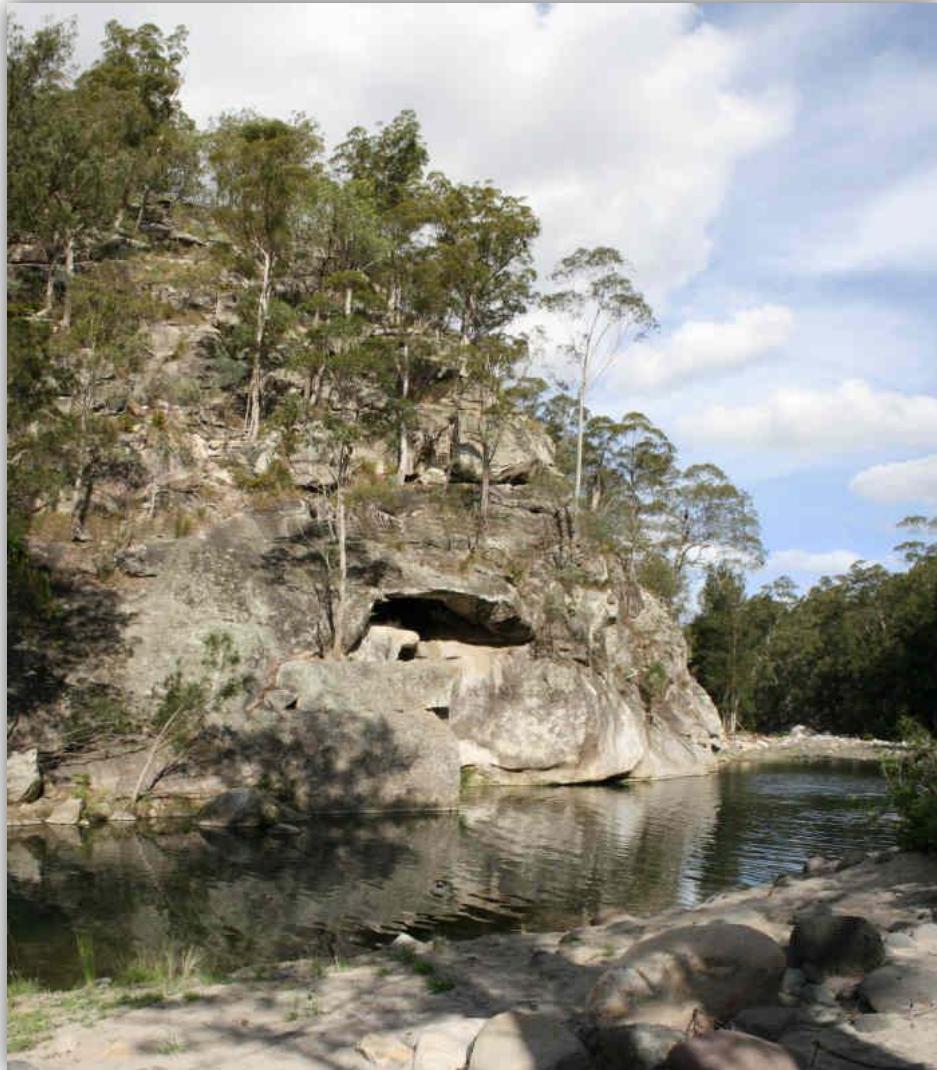


Inside the Amphitheatre



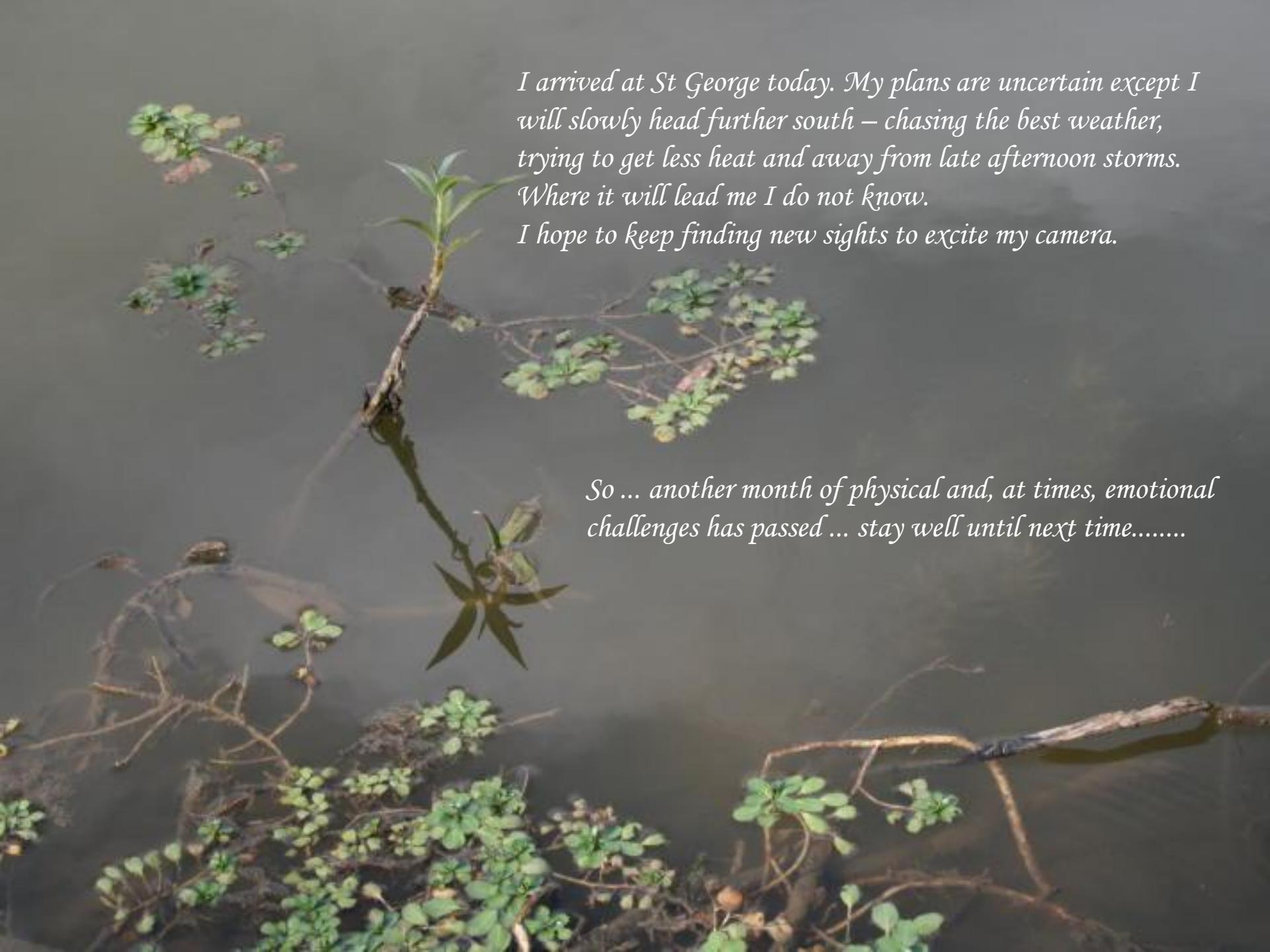
*The floor of the Amphitheatre would be about 30 metres square and the walls are more than 80 metres high*

Carnarvon Gorge National Park certainly is one to include in your list of “places I should see one day”. There are many features and short walks that branch off the main track and it would take a few days to see all there is on offer. I chose only the main features – The Art Gallery (aboriginal art and engravings), Amphitheatre, Moss Garden, Ward’s Canyon and the Rock Pool.



I still needed to find that good bush spot to spend a week to re-charge my personal batteries so I headed west through Roma to Mitchell to camp on the Maranoa River. Thankfully the spot was really beautiful and quiet. I was the only camper there for the week and I shared my spot with a large contingent of Apostle birds (squawkers) that insisted on constantly talking to me and demanding my attention. I left the spot feeling so rejuvenated.



A photograph of a pond with floating water plants and a submerged plant stem. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding environment. Several green, oval-shaped leaves of floating plants are scattered across the surface. A single, thin, brownish-green stem of a submerged plant extends from the bottom left towards the center of the frame, with small, pointed leaves emerging from its nodes.

*I arrived at St George today. My plans are uncertain except I will slowly head further south – chasing the best weather, trying to get less heat and away from late afternoon storms. Where it will lead me I do not know.*

*I hope to keep finding new sights to excite my camera.*

*So ... another month of physical and, at times, emotional challenges has passed ... stay well until next time.....*