

Through the DOGGERS' COUNTRY in SEARCH OF HEALTH

Into the Musgraves in the far north-west corner of the State, where doggers eke out a living by hunting wild dogs, Det.-Sgt. Trestrail went recently in search of health. In that area the bough shanties of far-flung squatters are the only signs of white habitation. The detective went also to Mintabee opal fields and Granite Downs, where the bronzed men of the north-west gather for the monthly mail that keeps them in touch with civilisation hundreds of miles south. At Henbury in the Territory he saw the huge craters that were churned up by meteorites which fell in ancient times.

For six weeks he trekked over these little-known parts and returned early this month. His was the first touring car that had ever travelled to the Musgraves, where Mount Woodroffe, the highest peak in the State, rears from a wooded region that the detective declares is the most beautiful in Australia.

His story will touch a responsive chord in those who love the open spaces of Australia's interior—and will appeal to those who have never stirred from the civilisation of the cities, and who regard these regions as desert, with only a handful of dangerous natives to call it home.

As Told by Det.-Sgt. Trestrail



AFTER leaving Adelaide on June 8, I made Lambinna Station, 100 miles west of Oodnadatta, my headquarters. From there I made three journeys, one to the

Musgrave Ranges in the north-western corner of the State, the second to the Mintabee opal field, and the third to Henbury in the Northern Territory.

On the 200-mile western track to the Musgraves we passed through Granite Downs, which had at one time been a police outpost. Mr. Walsh, who was afterwards the licensee of the Selborne Hotel in Adelaide, was stationed there for a time.

Further out at Wantapilla Well we came across H.R.H. Prince Teddy. Not the Prince of Wales, but the son of King Dick, who used to rule a

part of the Arunta tribe in this region. Prince Teddy and his black princess, Lily, have come down in life.

They are employed now drawing water from the well and pouring it through a wooden trough into a huge tank. The water is drawn up in two 20-gallon buckets by camels which pad up and down with Princess Lily at their heads.

The Prince empties the buckets into the trough as they are drawn up. While we were there a son was born with the blood of the Arunta Royal House in his veins.

Farther out into the north-west we pushed over the claypans, crab-holes, and gibber flats past Mount Chandler and Merrilyn. Merrilyn's stands the last real house on the westward track—deserted now and surrounded by granite outcrops. The station homestead was occupied until recently by Stan Ferguson, who has now pushed on to Earnabella. There is feed aplenty at Merrilyn, but

is feed aplenty at Merrilynia, but the trouble is water. Ferguson struck water, but it was almost useless for stock or man.

ONLY bough shanties dot the track after Merrilynia, shanties that act as homesteads on stations of many square miles; shanties that shelter doggers who trap and shoot wild dogs, and search through the lonely north for good water holes.

The doggers hold land under water searchers' permits. If they discover a well that will supply 5,000 gallons of water in 24 hours, they are paid £200 by the Government, and for a peppercorn rental can lease 'and round the well.

In the meantime they hunt the pest of the north, the wild dog. At this time of the year, they track the dogs to their lairs to catch puppies as well as full-grown animals. They also





Above—Two parties meet at Upson Downs, on the fringe of the Musgraves. From Left to Right—Det. Sgt. Trestrail, Paddy Connelly, who lives nearby, N. B. Tindale, the Museum ethnologist, Hancock, Victor Dumas (Connelly's partner), and Dr. C. Hackett. Mr. Tindale and Dr. Hackett will return to Adelaide on Thursday after spending three months in the interior on scientific work. Right—A deep waterhole on the Finke.

encourage the natives to kill the wild dogs and they give the natives food as payment for the dogs that they bring in.

These wild dogs are very thick in this sparsely populated region. They will attack young calves or cows that have been weakened through being bogged in mud during the wet season.

The road to Ernabella winds through beautiful country where water washes over the edges of water holes that have been dug by the natives. In the valleys gums grow, and there is much bull saltbush—an outsize in saltbush that flourishes on the plains. Cattle eat and thrive on it.

As we approached Ernabella we asked a native in a camp near a well whether we were on the right road for Ernabella, and how far away it was. He said that it was the right road. Then he pulled a thoughtful face and said, "Twelve miles, Boss."

On we drove, but after we had covered 18 miles, and with dusk settling over the lonely country, we became anxious. We thought that perhaps we had driven down the wrong gully, and would have to camp out throughout the cold night. But when the speedometer was showing 22 miles we reached the station.

I said to Stan Ferguson, who welcomed us "A native back at the well was a bad judge of distance. He said that the station was 12 miles away and actually it was 22."

So Stan told us the solution of it all. "The native would have said

the same had you asked him how far it was to Oodnadatta. If they tell you a distance in miles, they use only one figure. Another one might have told you that it was six miles. I always ask them whether the place I want to know about is as far away as some other place that we both know," he said.

THE cook at Ernabella was Bob Hughes, who used to be a driver with Hill & Co. in the old coaching days. We were the first men with news of the outer world that the station people had seen for a long while. We sat up until 3 o'clock in the morning talking.

From Ernabella, in the heart of the Musgraves, we went in our touring car to Upson Downs, a station owned by Paddy Connelly and Victor Dumas. Michael Terry, Colson, and Lennon had taken specially built trucks over the track, and Paddy Connelly has often covered it in a motor car, without an engine, which is drawn by two camels. But we were the first to cover the track in an ordinary tourer. Paddy keeps a



AT HENBURY, a homestead near the Finke, the water is drawn from a soak by two camels.

big log of wood tied to the car by a long rope in the back of his car. When he is going down an incline he throws this out and uses it as a brake.

We had heard that Mr. N. B. Tindale, of the Museum, and Dr. Hackett had gone out to measure Mount Woodroffe, and we decided to wait for them at Upson Downs. There has been some doubt whether Mount Woodroffe or Mount Mary is the highest peak in the State, but the measurements of these two scientists prove that Mount Woodroffe is.

The scientists did not return that night, but we saw fires high up on the mountain, and guessed that they must have been delayed, and were passing the night there. It was warmer in the bough camp than it was up there, and we did not envy them.

We had a good time with the scientists and their guide Alan Brumby, who is part-owner of Earnabella, before they pushed on into the native reserve on the Western Australian border. We had no permits and could not accompany them.

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AT Upson Downs there were quite 200 natives camped within half a mile of us. All day long they would come backwards and forwards to the well for water—all in their perfectly natural state.

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There were plenty of children, and they looked as normally healthy as the average white child. The possibility of the native dying out within a few years is not great while such children as these are still roaming through their natural haunts as their forefathers did thousands of years ago. The adult natives were of fine physique.

They were particularly friendly. I am one of those who believe that the native will not interfere with the white man unless something has been done to him or his gin. He is more sinned against than sinning.

In fact, after all, the gins in the vicinity had been herded some distance away, the men of the tribe came to the well and presented to me sacred instruments that no female eyes have gazed upon. Respecting their anxiety to keep them from the eyes of the gins, I put them in a pocket and buttoned my coat to hide them.

The country in the Musgrave Ranges is the most beautiful I have ever seen. It surpasses the beauties of the Blue Mountains and other mountain show places of Australia. There are high peaks with beautiful stretches of wide, open gully between them. There is plenty of good water at shallow depth, and the gullies of this Central Australian beauty spot.

this Central Australian beauty spot, which most city people regard as desert, is well shaded by gums, desert oak, mulga, spinifex, bull, and ordinary saltbush.

Dr. Hackett, the member of the scientific party, was also struck by the possibilities of this sunny, dry, aired region. We agreed that it would be an ideal site for a sanatorium, if an air service, the only suitable transport, were available. The 300-mile trip from the railway line by car would be much too bumpy for an invalid.

At this time of the year the weather there is at its best. Weeks on end are just like Adelaide's best spring weather. The nights are cool to cold.

On the hillsides we could still espy the trig—little pyramids of stone that the early surveyors had left. By these the settlers know which is their land, which is that of their neighbors tens of miles away, and which is no man's property.

It is in this country, too, that you find the spearwood trees from which the natives cut the remarkably straight shafts for their spears. From a bush the light but hard shafts grow upwards as straight as a die. I brought some seeds back to see whether they will grow on our plains.

AFTER returning to Lambinna our headquarters, we set out for the Mintabee opal fields, 70 miles south. On the way we stopped at Jack Giles' Wellbourne Hills Station, where mandarin and lemons grow in profusion.

There I met Tommy Cullinan, who was at one time manager of the Anna Creek Station. In 1924 and 1925 he raced Transit in the Oakbank Hurdles.

Near the station lies the lonely grave of Mr. T. Williams, one time owner of Lambinna. He died after a fall from a horse at the Magpie Hole on the Coongra River. Wellbourne Hills was the nearest station, so his body was buried there. Coongra, incidentally, is the native name for "sister," and the river is the sister river of the Alberga, with which the Coongra runs parallel.

On the trek to Mintabee we passed Maria Bore, a bore which was sunk by the Government, and Sailor's Well. Although Maria Bore is 35 miles from

by the Government, and Sailor's Well. Although Maria Bore is 35 miles from the Wellbourne Hills homestead, it is still on the station property. At Sailor's Well we met Mick O'Donoghue, a former owner of Granite Downs, and a typical outback squatter of the old days who had to go farther afield after a succession of bad seasons.

At Mintabee, which derives its name from a white hill there, some fine opal has been found, and a party of men is working there now under Tom Brady, the well-known opal buyer.

ON the return journey we went through Granite Downs, where they had just received the monthly mail from Adelaide. There were little fires everywhere between the camps of the doggers who had come in from the north-west, scores of miles, to collect their mail and goods. Granite Downs is the terminus of Wallis and Fogarty's mail route.

Then on Sunday, June 25, came the man that the men of the interior had forgotten—the census man. His car had broken down so we gave him a lift back to Lambinna, whence he returned to Oodnadatta for parts for his car.

Lambinna to Henbury was our last stage before returning to Adelaide. With us went Overseer Charlie, one of the heads of a tribe on the Finke who had been on a tribal mission to the south.

The first station that we passed after crossing the border into the Territory was that of Kitto and Coulthard. Kitto is the son of the former Deputy Postmaster-General in Adelaide.

We crossed three rivers—the Alberga, Curralulla, and Palmer, all nearly dry—before we got to the Finke, on the banks of which Henbury homestead stands. Last year at this time there was plenty of water in the rivers.

While at Henbury we visited the great meteorite holes eight miles south-west of the homestead. There are 13 distinct holes. Apparently the meteorite, a huge one when it fell aeons ago, broke into pieces when it encountered the atmosphere. Pieces are still to be found on the ground near the holes. Some of the craters are much more than 100 yards wide.

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are much more than 100 yards wide.
When I got back to Adelaide this month I had covered 3,000 miles. The country was particularly dry. But in spite of their hardships the people of the outback are the finest that you could wish to meet. They are always ready to do anything for visitors.

With all too little assistance these people have gone into the heart of the continent to establish industries under adverse circumstances. The white women who accompany their husbands into these isolated parts are heroines.

And here is my last word. It is a trip that no Australian in search of health as I was or a knowledge of Australia should miss.