

DESERT EXPLORATION & COMMUNICATION

ADDITIONAL AND EXTENSIONS IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES

WEBSITE RESOURCES

Cameleers

http://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol_2_no2/exhibition_reviews/australias_muslim_cameleers/

www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/page/default.asp?site=1&id=1610&fragPage=1

www.southaustralianhistory.com.au/cameleers.htm

www.southaustralianhistory.com.au/afghans.htm

www.uncommonlives.naa.gov.au/contents.asp?sID=29

www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_13624.asp

www.abc.net.au/gnt/history/Transcripts/s1231969.htm

www.abc.net.au/rn/history/earshot/stories/s70630.htm

www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/08/03/2644744.htm

www.nla.gov.au/pressrel/Stories-of-forgotten-pioneers-at-the-National-Library.html

The Overland Telegraph Line

www.southaustralianhistory.com.au/overland.htm

www.acmi.net.au/AIC/TELSTRA_CONNECT.html

www.connectingthecontinent.com/ctcwebsite/stories/story1.htm

www.connectingthecontinent.com/ctcwebsite/ctkids/TACindex.asp

Blue Mountains explorers

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/NationalParks/parkHistory.aspx?id=N0004

OUR INTREPID EXPLORERS

Charles Sturt

In 1827 Charles Sturt sailed for New South Wales to escort a shipment of convicts to Sydney. He remained there for several years. Sturt showed a keen interest in exploring the as-yet unmapped country and its rivers. In 1828 he discovered the Darling River and in January 1830 the Murray River. With the assistance of local Aboriginal people, Sturt and his party were able to reach the Murray mouth in South Australia. Sturt had seen much good land and it was his report of this journey that later influenced the decision in England to establish the Colony of South Australia.

Ludwig Leichhardt

Friedrich Wilhelm Ludwig Leichhardt was a Prussian explorer and naturalist. Leichhardt voyaged to Sydney in 1842. He led three major expeditions to explore parts of northern and central Australia. The first expedition was from the Darling Downs, 4800 km to Port Essington. The second was supposed to be from the Darling Downs to the west coast of Australia, to the Swan River and Perth. After covering only 800 km the expedition team was forced to return in June 1847 due to heavy rain, malarial fever and famine. In March 1848 he again set out from the Condamine River to reach the Swan River. He was last seen on 3 April 1848 at McPherson's Station, Coogoon on the Darling Downs. His disappearance is still a mystery.

John Stuart

John McDouall Stuart was one of the most important people associated with South Australian exploration. In 1844 he joined Charles Sturt's expedition. Stuart became second in command when James Poole died, drawing most of the maps as Sturt was almost blind. Later Stuart made several other expeditions before penetrating the desert areas beyond the salt lakes north of Port Augusta.

In May 1858 Stuart set out, with one assistant and an Aboriginal guide, on one of the most remarkable journeys in the whole of Australian exploration. They travelled four months, covered more than 2000 km, discovered huge tracks of good grazing land and had survived on rations which were supposed to have lasted for only six weeks before arriving at Streaky Bay. Stuart's greatest achievement was the south-north crossing of the continent and back in 1861–62. As a result of this journey, the opening up of the Northern Territory was made possible, and a route discovered for an Overland Telegraph Line linking South Australia with England and the rest of the world in 1872.



John McDouall Stuart esq, the South Australian explorer.
Courtesy of the State Library of South Australia.

Burke and Wills

In 1860 to 1861 Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills led an expedition of 18 men with the intention of crossing Australia from Melbourne to the Gulf of Carpentaria. At that time most of inland Australia had not been explored by non-Indigenous people. The first part of the journey was a success but both the expedition's leaders died on the return journey. All together, seven men lost their lives, and only one man, John King, travelled the entire expedition and returned to Melbourne alive.

John Eyre and Wylie

Edward John Eyre and his Aboriginal friend Wylie were the first men to cross southern Australia from east to west, travelling across the Nullarbor Plain from Adelaide to Albany. Eyre conducted many small expeditions in New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia, combining droving sheep and cattle with exploring. He was hoping to discover good sheep country. He opened up much of South Australia for settlement. Eyre wanted to open up a route to the centre of Australia.

John Forrest

John Forrest was an Australian explorer and the first Premier of Western Australia. As a young man, John Forrest won fame as an explorer by leading three expeditions into the interior of Western Australia. Between 1869 and 1874, Forrest led three expeditions into the uncharted land surrounding the colony of Western Australia. In 1869, he led an unsuccessful search for the explorer Ludwig Leichhardt. In 1870 he surveyed Eyre's land route from Perth to Adelaide. In 1874, he led a party to the watershed of the Murchison River and then east through the unknown desert centre of Western Australia.

Discussion questions and activities

1. Where was Sturt born?
2. What are some places or things named after Charles Sturt? Write about each and draw pictures to go with each.
3. Encourage the students to write a story about what they think happened to Leichhardt.
4. Provide the students with a map of Australia. Invite the students to mark the track of the Burke and Wills expedition. Use Google Earth to look at the path they travelled.
5. Encourage the students to investigate the expedition further. Ask them to write down facts about where they went, what went wrong and interesting points about what happened along the way.
6. Provide the students with materials to make an old-fashioned map marking Eyre's exhibitions and labeling his landmarks.
7. Invite the students to make a timeline showing Eyre's explorations and stops.
8. Invite the students to read more about Forrest's expedition to find Leichhardt. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to present their research as a short play or a song.
9. Encourage the students to find out more about the Overland Telegraph Line. Ask them to use books and the internet to find information about it and to present their findings to the class.

THE GHAN

The Ghan is a passenger train that operates between Adelaide, Alice Springs and Darwin on the Adelaide-Darwin railway in Australia. The train's current name honours Afghan camel drivers who arrived in Australia in the late 19th century to help find a way to reach the country's unexplored interior. Its previous nickname was the *Afghan Express*.

Construction of what is now known as the Ghan began in 1878 when the South Australian premier, Sir William Jervois, broke ground at Port Augusta. The line reached Hawker in June 1880, Beltana in July 1881, Marree in January 1884 and Oodnadatta on 7 January 1891. Development to Alice Springs did not begin until 1926, and that section was completed in 1929. Prior to completion, the final leg of the train journey was still completed by camel.



The Ghan. Image courtesy of Great Southern Rail

Activities

The Ghan's route

Invite the students to research the route of the *Ghan*. Have them prepare a fun questionnaire to help tourists locate famous places, icons, historic sites and landmarks as they travel on the Ghan.

Research questions

Have the students answer the following questions:

1. Calculate how long it takes to travel from Adelaide to Darwin on the Ghan.
2. How long did it take by camel in the 1800s?
3. How long does it take by plane now?

THE CANNING STOCK ROUTE

Map the Canning Stock Route

Provide the students with a map of Australia and ask them to mark the Canning Stock Route.

Discussion

As a class, discuss Canning's treatment of the Aboriginal people. Invite the students to write their response to Canning's forcing them to lead his party to natural wells.

Research and design

As a class find out which artists are exhibiting their works in the Canning Stock Route Project. Ask the students to choose their favourite style and research the artist, the themes and the materials used. Encourage the students to use their research to create, design and make their own piece of artwork.

PAPUNYA TULA — DESERT ART MOVEMENT

Art as an expression of culture has always been an important part of Aboriginal life, connecting past with present, the people with the land, and the supernatural with reality. One of the first, and perhaps the most famous, groups of Indigenous painters was the Australian Western Desert artists of Papunya Tula. This desert art movement was seen as one of the most significant art movements of the twentieth century. The paintings tell the stories of the creation of the desert features, such as waterholes, as well as natural occurrences such as lightning and fire, desert creatures such as snakes, bush turkeys, desert foods including bush yams and activities such as travelling, journeys and dancing.

The aim of the Papunya Tula Company is to promote individual artists, to provide economic development for the desert communities to which they belong, and to assist in the maintenance of a rich cultural heritage.



Art Centres of the APY Lands. Image courtesy of Ernabella Arts.



Emerging curators on the Canning Stock Route Project. Ross Swanborough photographics. Courtesy of FORM.

Activities

Design a poster

Encourage the students to design a poster advertising the Papunya Tula Company.

The story behind the painting

Encourage the students to find out about the story behind a particular Papunya Tula painting.



Michael Nelson Tjakamarra painting the BMW Art Car in Sydney, May 1989. Photo: courtesy BMW