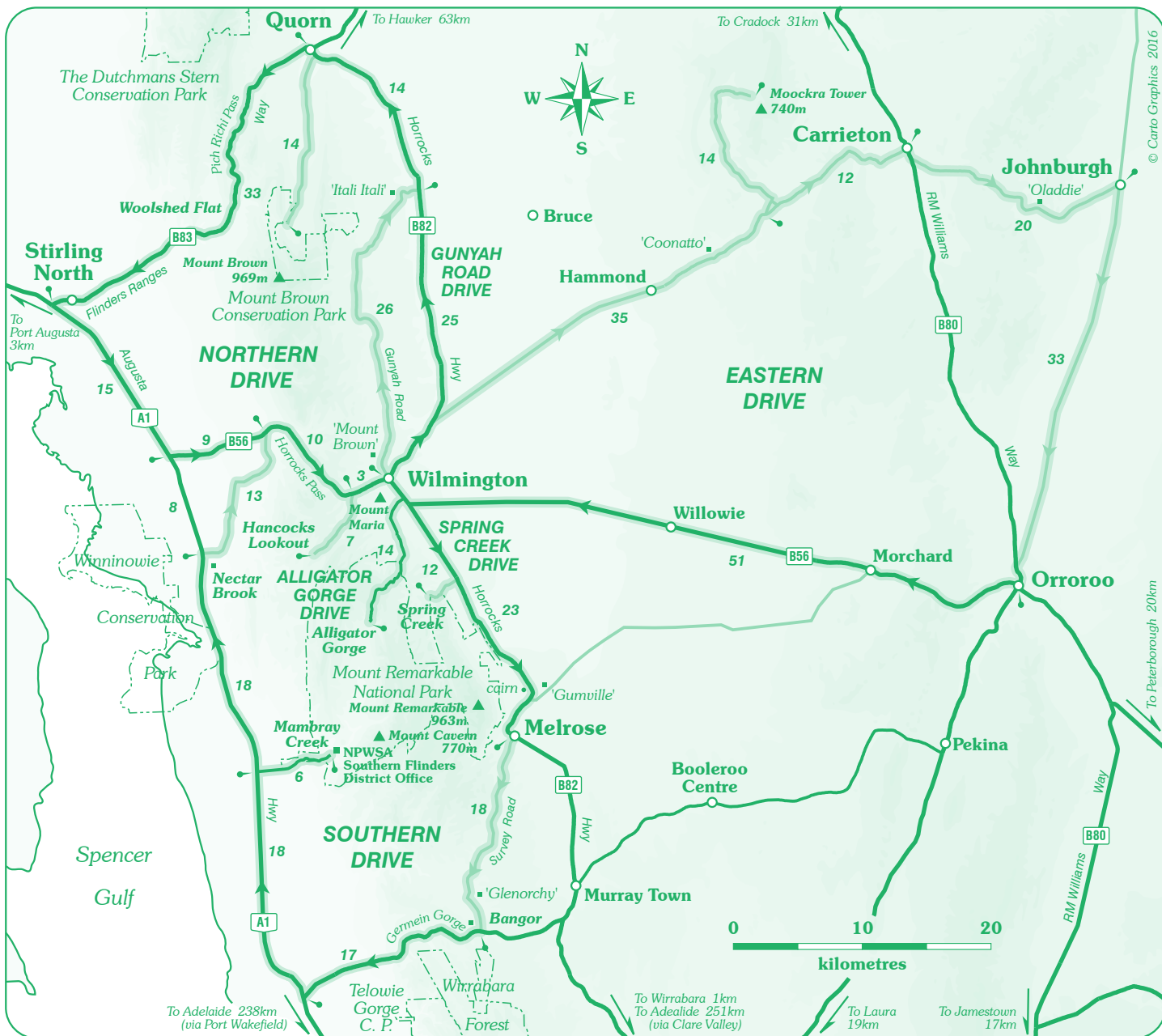
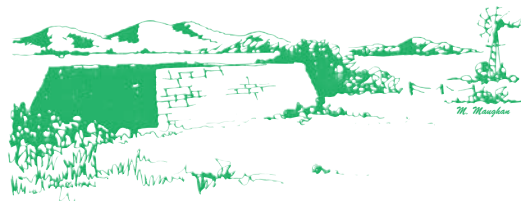


Large stone tanks, wells, wind pumps and troughing were built by the government along travelling stock routes. These facilities provided water for stock camps and drovers before the advent of rail and road transport.



# Drives Around Wilmington

## Southern Flinders Ranges South Australia



Moockra Tower and old harvester

Northern Drive	109km
Eastern Drive	151km
Southern Drive	124km
Gunyah Road Loop Drive	51km
Hancocks Lookout Drive	20km return
Alligator Gorge Drive	28km return
Spring Creek Drive	24km return



### NORTHERN DRIVE (109km)

#### Wilmington to Quorn (39km)

The sealed highway runs between the forested main ridge of the southern Flinders Ranges and the broad expanse of the **Willochra Plain**. This is a great north-south trending basin partially filled with material eroded off the ranges. There are park-like stands of river red gum near all the creeks. Mount Brown is a dominant hill on the skyline.

Much of the land was cropped for wheat from the late 1870's until the 1930's but today, except in favoured localities, cropping land diminishes north, towards Quorn. Road verges give an idea of the former cover of salt bush, blue bush and scattered scrub.

About 25km north of Wilmington is the **Itali Itali** historic township site. A plaque recalls the pioneers of Richman's Creek Methodist Church, 1870–1954. Land here, including Richman Valley over the range to the west, was first held by pastoralist Henry John Richman who took it up in 1849. He had pastoral interests on northern Eyre Peninsula and used to take his Mt. Brown sheep to his Carriewerloo woolshed for shearing. When Itali Itali was resumed for farming in the 1870's, he transferred all his interests to Eyre Peninsula.

**Quorn** was established in 1878 mainly to service pastoral and farming properties in the Flinders Ranges. It soon became an important railway junction, a function which ceased in 1937 with the opening of a new railway direct to Port Augusta.

**Walks** – There are two bushwalks accessible from Quorn – one to the top of Mount Brown (15km return) and one to the top of the Dutchmans Stern (8km return).

#### Alternative route to Quorn via Gunyah Road (40km) (road subject to flooding)

This road runs close to Mount Brown (969m). Just north of Wilmington on the left (west) side of the road are the stone buildings of old Mt Brown station first established for pastoralism in the 1840's by Abraham Scott. Some distance further north where the road crosses Richman Creek, also on the west side of the road, is the site of Richman's Itali Itali station, now a farm. He used to take his sheep through the low range to the west into the valley of Capowie Creek (Richman Valley) and thence down Waukarie Creek to Pichi Richi Pass and Port Augusta.

#### Pichi Richi Pass (33km)

Pichi Richi Pass was an important access route to the north from the 1850's. It still carries the old narrow gauge railway between Port Augusta and Quorn which was built in 1879. It now operates for tourists between Quorn and Stirling North. The magnificent dry stone wall embankments and bridge abutments are a credit to the original builders and the Pichi Richi Railway Society which now maintains them.

**The Dutchmans Stern** Range lies to the west, fringed on the skyline with big sugar gums; to the east is Richman Valley, with Mount Brown.

**Pichi Richi** settlement ruins lie about 10km south of Quorn, and 1km beyond, there is a restaurant – on the site of one of two old breweries in the Pass. A bold outcrop of quartzite forms the distinctive **Devils Peak**.

About 14km from Quorn are dry stone walls of the railway, and in the wall of the cutting are some fossilised drying cracks. When the sediments of this rock were laid down on a muddy shore, they dried out and cracked into polygonal shapes. Later storms and floods filled the cracks with different material, which became fossilised and tipped into this vertical position when the ranges were folded.

**Woolshed Flat** is a station on the Pichi Richi railway, which currently runs between Quorn and Stirling North.

**Saltia** ('Saltire'); a spot where the teamsters wives lived while their husbands travelled between Port Augusta and Blinman. A hotel was built in 1859 and a private township surveyed in 1862.

The rolling country along the road is clad with low, rounded shrubs of pearl bluebush (pale blue) and black bluebush (dark green).

**Stirling North**; the National Highway #1 junction beyond.

#### National Highway #1 (15km)

This 15km stretch of the highway provides views across **Spencer Gulf** (named by explorer Matthew Flinders after a First Lord of the Admiralty). Near here on 10 March 1802, the expedition naturalist, **Robert Brown**, with a few men landed from *Investigator* (anchored in the gulf) to walk to the top of Mount Brown. In the clear light they mistook the distance thinking it was only 5 miles. Instead it was 15 miles and a thirsty night was spent on the hillside. Flinders named the hill Mount Brown after the naturalist.

**Northern Power Station**, near the gulf, is fuelled from the brown coal deposits at Leigh Creek, 220km north. It provides 20% of South Australia's power supply.

#### Horrocks Pass (22km)

Horrocks Pass was discovered by **John Ainsworth Horrocks** on 10 August 1846. It is a less tortuous route than Germein Gorge because it follows a NW–SE faultline which has allowed the rocks on either side to erode and form a more or less straight depression. As this route became the Main North Road it carried most of the traffic to Port Augusta from the south through Wilmington for many years.

Once off the highway, stop to take in the view of distant peaks; starting from the south, **Mt Brown**, **Devils Peak** and **The Dutchmans Stern**. Towards the gulf is the 200m stack of the power station.

**A memorial above the road** (about 14km from National Highway #1) tells of the fate of the explorer John Horrocks. It lies on a watershed – tributaries of Horrocks Creek drain to the west and Beautiful Valley Creek drains to the east.

**Hancocks Lookout** turn-off provides an optional detour (14km return)

Large sugar gums and drooping she-oaks give an indication of the former woodland here.

There is an open parking and picnic area with sweeping western views of Spencer Gulf and :

- hydrocarbon storage tanks (white) at Port Bonython (210°)
- BHP Long Products Division at Whyalla (220°) with Mt Laura nearby
- the Middleback Ranges (source of the iron ore for Whyalla steel works) beyond
- the Dutchmans Stern Range to the north

**Moockra Tower** in the Horseshoe Range is visible to the north-east from the road above Wilmington.

**Mount Maria** is on the right as you re-enter Wilmington. There is an easy **walk** (5km return) to the top.

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