

# On Track



THE  
GHAN

## Gold Kangaroo Service News

Good afternoon, and welcome aboard to those guests that boarded The Ghan in Alice Springs.

The Ghan travels on the newly constructed AustralAsia Railway as we make our way out of Alice Springs today. This 1420km of track was completed in early 2004, enabling this legendary train to finally make its historic, long awaited transcontinental journey to Darwin on 1 February 2004. As we travel out of Alice Springs on our way to Katherine, you will notice the scenery change from the harsh desert landscapes of the Red Centre to the tropical splendour of the Top End.

Later this afternoon you will be invited to attend a Gold Kangaroo Reception. This offers a great opportunity to learn a little more about The Legendary Ghan and to meet some of your fellow Gold Kangaroo Service guests.

Regards,

*Ivana*

Hospitality Attendant

Today's Activities	Time*	
Depart Alice Springs Terminal	4.10pm	
Journey Commentary: Alice Springs to Katherine (private cabin sound system)	4.15pm	
Bar Opens	4.40pm	
Gold Kangaroo Reception (for guests who joined in Alice Springs)	5.00pm	
Sunset Dinner – maroon card	6.00pm	
Moonlight Dinner – navy card	8.00pm	
After Dinner Music in the Lounge Car (CD Selection)	8.30pm	
Tomorrow Morning Activities	Time*	
Wake up call	6.30am	CST
Breakfast Packs delivered to cabin	7.00am	
Replay Journey Commentary (played over private cabin sound system)	7.00am	
Arrive Katherine (Optional Off-Train Tour – small extra cost)	8.00am	

### AustralAsia Railway

When The Ghan first departed Adelaide for Alice Springs on 4 August 1929, it was always intended that it would one day travel through to Darwin. The track on which we are now travelling was completed in January 2004, after more than a century of deliberation. Construction of the track commenced in April 2001 with the 1420 kilometre track between Alice Springs and Darwin being constructed at a total cost of \$1.3 billion: \$740 million provided by private enterprise with the remaining \$560 million contributed by Commonwealth, Northern Territory and South Australian Governments. In its entirety, construction of the line involved 15 million cubic metres of earthworks, 146,000 tonnes of steel rail, 2.8 million tonnes of ballast, 90 bridges, 2 million concrete sleepers, 8 million rail clips, 3,500 tonnes of structural steel and 100,000 cubic metres of pre-stressed concrete.

### Breakfast Packs

Due to off-train touring requirements and the early morning arrival of The Ghan into Katherine tomorrow morning, breakfast packs will be delivered to your cabin before arriving at Katherine Terminal.

### Tennant Creek

With a population of around 4000, Tennant Creek presents a fascinating history and was the home of Australia's last gold rush in the 1930's. In its time, Tennant Creek was the third largest gold producer in Australia and still ranks as one of the most productive fields, with over 200 mines currently operating in the region.

## **Devils Marbles**

Located in the Tennant Creek region is the Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve, an 1828 hectare reserve featuring the Marbles, which are roughly egg-shaped rock formations considered by the local Aborigines to have been eggs laid by the Rainbow Serpent during the Dreamtime. The Marbles are a collection of giant spherical, red granite boulders which resulted from a series of granite intrusions that occurred 1700 million years ago. Molten lava from the earth's crust was squeezed into huge domes of coarse grained granite just below the surface. Over time, weathering and erosion has worn away the surface to expose these Devil's Marbles and erosion processes in this harsh desert climate are still at work today.

## **John McDouall Stuart**

John McDouall Stuart was one of Australia's greatest and most successful explorers. His career includes the distinction that throughout the five expeditions he led, he did not lose one human life. Stuart was born on 7 September 1815 at Dysart in Fifeshire, Scotland. He sailed from Dundee to Australia on the barque *Indus* in September 1838, aged 23 years, arriving in South Australia on 17 January 1839. The following significant events resulted from Stuart's expeditions:

- The western border of South Australia was moved from the 132 degree east longitude to 129 degree east longitude.
- Control of the Northern Territory was transferred to South Australia.
- The Overland Telegraph Line, linking Adelaide to Europe via Darwin, was constructed along his route.
- The Old Ghan Railway from Adelaide to Alice Springs followed a similar route.
- South Australia established settlement on the north coast at Darwin and vast areas of the north were opened up for pastoral and mineral development.

## **The Overland Telegraph Line**

John McDouall Stuart's epic foray through the heart of the continent from Adelaide to Darwin pioneered a path for the Overland Telegraph Line. Connecting Adelaide and the rest of Australia, through Darwin, with England by means of a single wire in 1872, was one of the greatest engineering achievements of the nineteenth century. Completed by South Australians, under the direction of Charles Todd, in less than two years, this turned out to be a top business deal and a political triumph. The cable to Java was completed on 22nd October in 1872 and the first telegram between Australia and Britain became a reality. The line linked Australia to London and the rest of the world. On completion, messages took only hours rather than months to reach Australia.

## **Did You Know?**

We enter the tropical region of Australia, crossing the Tropic of Capricorn at 23 ½ degrees latitude, shortly after departing from Alice Springs.

Some properties in the Northern Territory are as big as entire European countries or American states.

The Northern Territory contains one-sixth of the entire landmass of Australia but only one percent of the national population.

Located approximately 100km south of Katherine is the Mataranka Thermal Pools. The water in these pools has its origins thousands of kilometres away in Papua New Guinea and bubbles to the surface at Mataranka at 30.5 million litres per day, at a temperate 34 degrees Celsius.

With a regional population of around 10,000 Katherine is the largest town The Ghan encounters between Alice Springs and Darwin.

There are a total of 13 gorges in the Katherine Gorge/ Nitmiluk National Park gorge system, which have been carved out of the sandstone rock by torrential river waters over millions of years.