

THE TOWN OF 1770

Paradise Found

By Janey Harper

The entrance to Round Hill Head Creek



Town of 1770 - The Birthplace of Queensland...

From Round Hill Head watch the sun rise over the ocean and set over Bustard Bay – a stunning and rare sight – one of the few places in Queensland where the sun sets over water.

Located on Queensland's Discovery Coast between Bundaberg and Gladstone and only six hours drive North of Brisbane the Town of 1770 is an unspoiled coastal settlement surrounded on three sides by the Coral Sea and Bustard Bay. Historic as the second landing site of Lieutenant James Cook and the crew of the Endeavour in May 1770, the area is rich in wildlife and natural beauty including secluded beaches and untouched National Parks.

With easy access to the Great Barrier Reef, 1770 has developed into a quiet tourist destination with a growing population. The town comprises of a couple of trendy cafes, a bar, two camping grounds, a host of accommodation houses and a marina - the departure point for day cruises to the beautiful coral cay, Lady Musgrave Island and the untouched lagoon on Fitzroy Reef. And for those who haven't driven to 1770 for a while, good news – the road is now completely sealed and tarred and offers a comfortable drive with the boat in tow.

The 1770 weather is nearly perfect all year round where you'll enjoy warm, dry and sunny winters and the summer temperatures rarely exceed 30 degrees celsius. Over 300 days of sunshine are experienced annually and the winds are predominantly (an easy 10-15 knots) from the Southeast, well so the local fishermen tell me, making this an attractive playground for all types of fishing and are ideal conditions for safe family swimming.

Round Hill Head Creek offers a delightful stopover for cruisers either North or Southbound particularly when southerly winds prevail. It allows the opportunity to stock up on



some basic provisions available from the marina or close by at Agnes Water. However access into the River can be difficult due to tidal influences and markers. Phone the Round Hill Head Volunteer Marine Rescue 07 4974 9250 for navigation advice before proceeding.

History

The Town of 1770 takes its name from the date that Lieutenant James Cook first set foot ashore near Round Hill Head - Wednesday 24 May 1770 - his first landing in Queensland and his second landing in Australia.

Cook, accompanied by botanist Joseph Banks, Dr Solander and the rest of the crew, landed within the south point of the bay where they found a channel leading into a large lagoon. "In this place there is room for a few ships to lie in great security, and a small stream of fresh water." Cook wrote.

They came ashore for two main reasons: to replenish their fresh water supplies and to investigate the soil, flora and fauna. They found the soil poor, dry and sandy and sighted many large birds, namely pelicans. One of the crew shot a bird known as a bustard or plains turkey. Weighing seventeen and a half pounds, it was noted as one of the best eating birds they had tasted since leaving England and in honour of the meal they called the inlet Bustard Bay.

Cook's landing on 24th May 1770 is celebrated with the Annual 1770 Commemorative Festival, a full day of festivities including entertainment, dancers, kids rides, markets, street displays including the re-enactment of the first landing of Cook and his crew.

Visit the Historical Museum in Agnes Water for a more detailed historical account or visit Captain Cook's monument and retrace his footsteps when he first set foot on Queensland soil more than 200 years ago.

Accommodation

Apart from a myriad of superb holiday beach shacks, houses, bungalows, bed & breakfasts and lodges (ranging from budget to five-star), 1770 offers two camping grounds both with adequate space for boat and trailer. The council owned Seventeen Seventy Camping Grounds is perfectly located in the lee of 1770's magnificent headland on the shores of The Inlet, a tranquil, safe water anchorage. Features include beach front sites, powered and un-powered sites, two modern amenities blocks, one with parents room, separate stainless steel fish cleaning facility with running water, laundry, public phones, gas barbecue facilities and a fully equipped camp kitchen containing community fridge, two sinks with running water and two four burner gas barbecues. The Kiosk is open from 7.30am to 6.30pm selling gas, ice, groceries, bait and tackle and the on site

managers can arrange boat hire. Endeavour Park is close by and offers clean and tidy gas barbecue facilities, undercover tables and seats and play areas and swings for the children. For details contact 07 4974 9286.

The Captain Cook Holiday Village is set amongst six acres of flora and fauna sanctuary offering styles of accommodation to suit you and your budget from fully self-contained cabins with ensuite facilities, bungalows without ensuites, powered caravan sites or camping sites. All cabins and bungalows have colour TV, full kitchen facilities with refrigerator, radio, ceiling fans and linen supplied only to the fully self-contained cabins. The site contains guest laundry, public phones, barbecue facilities, and a well-stocked general store selling the essentials of bread, milk, groceries, gas, ice, bait, tackle and a post box for sending the obligatory wish you were here postcards. Also on site is the open air bistro and bar The Deck which also provides a good selection of freshly cooked takeaway meals. For further information contact 07 4974 9219.

For holiday lettings contact the local real estate agencies.

Where to eat

There are only a few eating houses in 1770. In fact, at last count there were only two. Set amongst the beautiful green lush grounds of The Captain Cook Holiday



The Ramp at 1770



All smiles at Saltwater - a place to eat in 1770. Pictured Ed Fallon (Owner Chef and lovely Megan)



Village the award winning open air licensed bistro, The Deck delivers the finest in fresh local seafood, especially prawn delicacies.

However, our visit landed us at Saltwater Café 1770 where the Café's new owner Ed Fallon greeted us. Ed is one of many residents of 1770 who has opted for a sea change and was attracted to 1770 by its easy and casual lifestyle, not to mention the warm sunny weather year round. Open 7 days a week for breakfast, lunch and dinner, the menu is modern and understated, much like the ambience. However Ed is passionate about using fresh local seafood as opposed to 'deep fried frozen seafood'. The views are spectacular and overlook the crystal clear waters of Bustard Bay, Eurimbula National Park with Bustard Head in the distance.

The breakfast menu offers the signature hearty full English breakfast 'Saltwater Breakfast' – consisting of crispy bacon, mushrooms, tomato, potato cake and eggs piled high on sourdough toast or maybe opt for the porridge with bananas and brown sugar – simple but hearty tucker. The lunch menu is even more tempting with items on the menu including Chilli Salt Squid served with soy, lime and coriander dip or Linguini of crab, prawn, parsley, chilli and tomato. However, our Friday night mission was to select one of the many mouth-watering meals and after much deliberation I choose the lightly battered Sweet Lip (including perfectly cooked seasoned chips and a large bowl of garden salad) and my colleague opted for a Pizza of prawns, calamari, pesto, Kalamata olives, capers and chilli on a thin crusty base. Both meals were lip-smacking sensations of fresh quality local seafood. This place is abuzz on Friday, Saturday and Sunday so make a booking. Phone 07 4974 9599.

What to Do

The Town of 1770 is the departure point for day reef cruises and fishing charters to the outer Great Barrier Reef and day tours and wilderness camping transfers operate to nearby Lady Musgrave Island. Day tours also operate to Pancake Creek and the historic Bustard Heads lighthouse. The Pancake Creek Reef is home to some of Australia's best estuarine coral and is a popular anchorage for cruisers on their journey along the east coast.

Lady Musgrave is a coral cay set on 3000 acres of living reef with a deepwater coral lagoon unique to the entire Great Barrier Reef region. The Island is a true coral cay and reef walkers will discover jewel-bright starfish, sea urchins, clams and corals exposed at high tide. The uninhabited

Island is a national park and there are no shops or facilities ashore. However, restricted camping is permitted for up to 50 people at a time. Campers must take their own fresh water and food.

Fitzroy Reef Lagoon is 2000 acres of the most pristine coral reef on the Southern Great Barrier Reef, only 80 minutes from 1770. Wonderful action packed eco experienced day trips are available and include supervised snorkelling trails, exploration of the coral reefs within the unspoilt lagoon, fish feeding, reef fishing or for the experienced surfer-surfing the outer reef.

For the camping enthusiast, four National Parks including Deepwater, Eurimbula, Mount Colosseum and Round Hill offer wilderness camping and hiking - all best accessed with a Four Wheel Drive vehicle or guided tour.

Apart from the usual water sports of snorkelling, diving, canoe and catamaran hire and swimming in the calm warm waters, there are a number of beach walking trails for the more adventurous. If you prefer board-riding, the last northern surfing beach on the east coast of Australia, Agnes Water is a mecca for excellent surfing. Here too there is a patrolled beach (during peak seasons) at the Surf Life Saving Club and is sea wasp and stinger free all year. Held annually in March, the Sunrise at 1770 Longboard Classic at Agnes Water is contested amongst the best pro-surfers in the world. To be part of the surf action go to www.longboard-surfing.com

Hot Tip

1770 Environmental Tours operates Lighter Amphibious Resupply Cargo (LARC) vessels with a capacity of 32 passengers each. Originally built for military use, mainly for transporting troops and equipment in and around coastal areas, the award winning LARCs are now used to transport visitors across sea and land to Queensland's first lighthouse - the historic Bustard Head Lighthouse and the heritage listed Bustard Bay Light-station. This is a *must-see-and-do* fun and educational experience that will be thoroughly enjoyed by all members of the family. Little wonder they have won the Central Queensland and the Southern Reef Gold Award for Heritage and Cultural Tourism for three consecutive years. Phone 07 4974 9422.

Fishing

The area is renowned for good estuary, reef and rock fishing and surf fishing at Agnes Water offers good catches of mackerel or tuna and whiting, flathead or dart closer to shore.



The Marina at 1770 - Diesel, Unleaded, Water and Gas is available



One of the two 1960s built LARCs at the Town of 1770



The Camping Grounds at 1770

The Reefjet at Fitzroy



The Great Barrier Reef is of such pristine condition that it was listed by the World Heritage Trust as a protected site and is therefore managed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to ensure that its beauty is maintained for many generations to come.

To prevent unwanted fines check the new fishing regulations and zoning of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park's Authority. Go to www.gbrmpa.gov.au or call 1800 990 177.

Eurimbula Creek is closed to all commercial fishing activity and crabbing. Privately you can fish with a rod or a handline only but if you catch a mud crab by these means, it must be returned to the water.

Services

The 1770 Marina offers the bare essentials for cruisers and campers alike. Contained within the complex is a small shop offering boating essentials like good quality marine shoes, sandals, hats, sunscreen, repellent, torches etc, dive and snorkel gear. There is also a small chandlery/bait and tackle shop that is open every day from 7am to 5pm and serves diesel, unleaded and premium unleaded fuels, oils, gas, ice, limited garbage disposal, dinghy hire and a boat repair workshop. For over 18 years the Mergard family have been operating the marina (plus boat maintenance shed) and have decided to place the business for sale. If you're searching for a *sea change*, here is an ideal opportunity.

The two-lane ramp is located next to the marina and offers an abundant amount of vehicle/trailer parking and rigging area. The ramp itself has an easy gradient for both launching and retrieval of boats and is adjoined either side with sandy beach – making boating for one a possible event. Facing northwest, the ramp is well protected throughout the year with the wind prevailing from the Southeast. Wear appropriate footwear because Stone Fish inhabit the area and cleaning fish is prohibited in the area.

Just minutes away from 1770 is Agnes Water, so named after a schooner that disappeared in 1873. Although a seemingly small village, Agnes Water has two supermarkets, bakeries and other speciality shops to assist the catering requirements. It also offers excellent accommodation and amenities.

For information on your northern bound journey and stay at 1770 or for booking chartered trips and outer reef tours contact 1770