

WHITE CLIFFS OPAL FIELD

THE FIRST AND FRIENDLIEST



HOW TO FIND WHITE CLIFFS OPAL FIELD

Turn off the Barrier Highway at Wilcannia, midway between Broken Hill and Cobar. Travel on a fully sealed road one hour north to White Cliffs. Travel back in time and discover the secrets and history of this unique town. Fossick for the elusive opal, inspect the solar power station, sleep above or underground, visit the showrooms and galleries, be inspired by the sunsets and night sky. Experience the old fashioned hospitality and friendliness of outback Australia.

www.whitecliffssopalfield.com



PJ's Underground Bed & Breakfast

An Underground Experience you'll never forget – sleeping where a century ago the old timers gouged for opal! Now renovated with taste, 6 cool B&B rooms in an award-winning home that's yours for the night.

Ask about our ensuite room – and book your Prospector's Parcel meal if you'd like to eat in for the night after your complimentary mine tour.

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www.outbackbeds.com.au ★★★ AAAT



White Cliffs Opal Pioneer Tourist Park

Caravan & camping area-powered sites. Amenities with coin-operated hot showers. Facilities for disabled Laundry (coin-operated). FREE electric BBQ's. Children's Playground. Pets allowed under control.

FEE CHARGED FOR USE OF AREA.

ph/fax 08 8091 6688 ★★ AAAT



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To book ph 08 8091 6677
info@undergroundmotel.com.au



Whilst visiting White Cliffs ponder for a moment realise, that millions of years ago, the ground on which you are standing now was under the sea! Swimm around here back in the Cretaceous period with Plesiosaurs and Ichthyosaurs.

The Plesiosaurs were 3 to 12 metres tall with long necks and small heads. The Ichthyosaurs were similar in shape but were more fish like. These opalised fossil reptiles have been found here at White Cliffs.

Other fossils that can be found here include Crinoids also called Sea Lilies, that are related to the Starfish and Sea Urchin; Belemnites, that are very similar to the modern Squid; various Brachiopods, Bivalves and Gastropods, the snail like animal with its coiled shell, are also to be found here opalised as well as various Plants and Cycads... and not to forget THE DINOSAURS!



From March 1890-1893 White Cliffs was patrolled by Wilcannia police. In December 1893 the first constable set up a Police tent on Kerara Road. Building plans were approved in 1896 and the Station opened early in 1898. Police were present in White Cliffs from 1898-1947 when a dwindling population caused the Town to return to Wilcannia jurisdiction. The restored building is now privately owned.



White Cliffs has the distinction of being Australia's first commercial opal field and its story is no less distinctive. It is known that opal was found in the region from as early as 1884 but there was little interest in the gem at that time.

In 1889 while culling kangaroos on the vast Momba Station four kangaroo shooters picked up samples of opal. Specimens were sent to Adelaide to an ex surveyor colleague of one of the shooters. He quickly confirmed the find to be quality opal and made his way to White Cliffs to investigate the discovery.

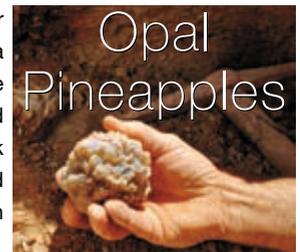
Within the year White Cliffs Opal was available on markets in Britain, the Continent and the USA.

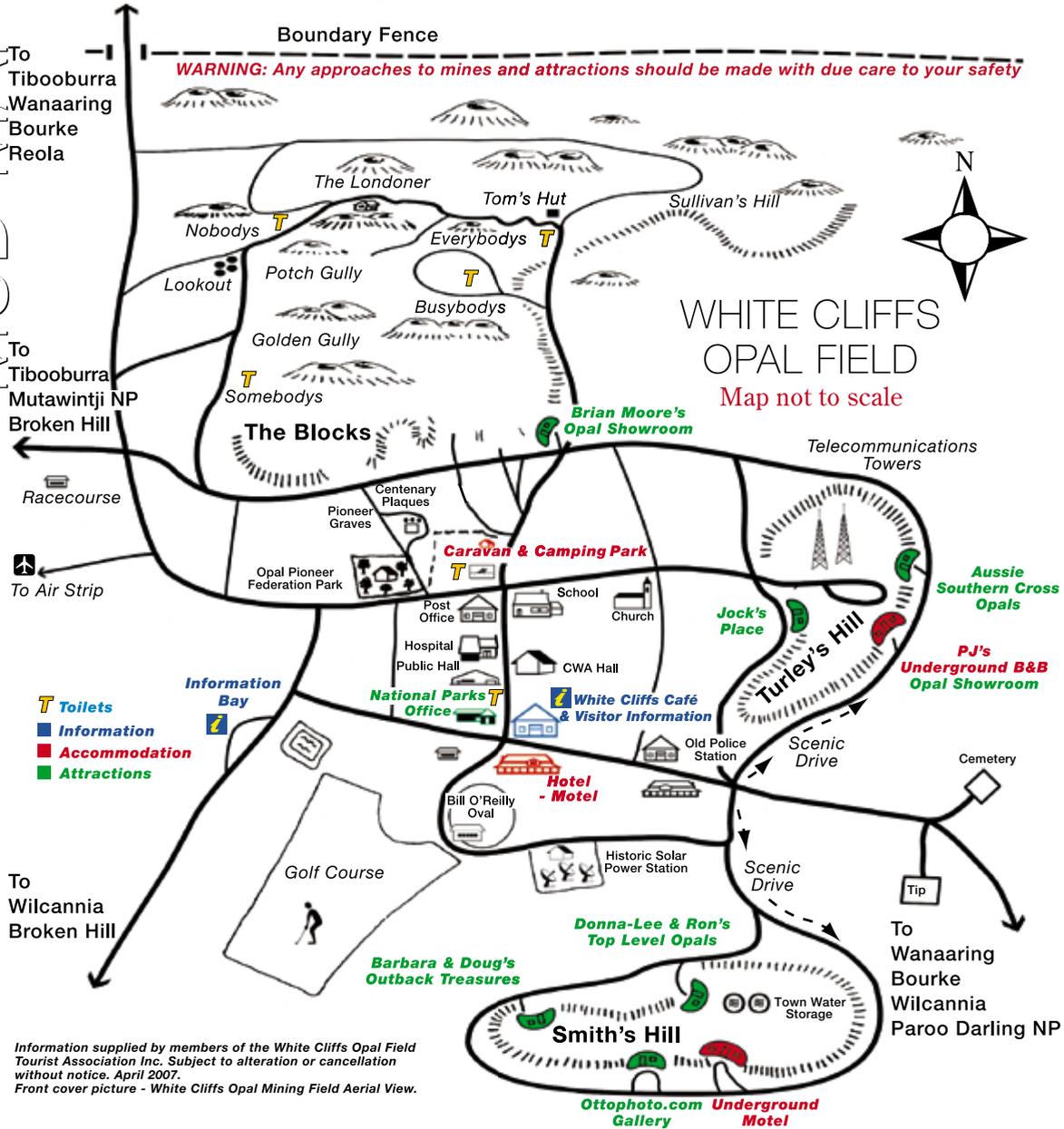
By 1890 the 'boom' was on as overseas manufacturers were quick to see the quality of the White Cliffs gem. The first Opal mining lease was taken out in March 1890 and as news of rich finds was advertised the rush was on and within a few months the population rose rapidly from around 30 to 500.

At its height around 1898-1900, White Cliffs was home to an estimated 5000 people and in today's terms sold millions of dollars worth of opal.

Then drought, dwindling markets, epidemics caused by bad water all took their toll and the downward slide began. By 1914 the European markets had closed, men left to enlist for World War 1 and it has been estimated that White Cliffs was left with about 30 people the same population as at its beginnings.

This unique area is famous for the White Cliffs PINEAPPLES, a pseudomorph of Glauberite or Ikaite crystal clusters that are replaced with Precious Opal. By some quirk of Mother Nature these opalised PINEAPPLES have only ever been found here in White Cliffs





Information supplied by members of the White Cliffs Opal Field Tourist Association Inc. Subject to alteration or cancellation without notice. April 2007.
 Front cover picture - White Cliffs Opal Mining Field Aerial View.



White Cliffs General Store
 Gas bottle refills & fuel - EFTPC
 For all your Takeaway food,
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Information Centre
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 Open 7 Days ph/fax 08 8091 6611





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ph JOCK 08 8091 6753

Opal mine tour & Opal Showroom at PJ's Underground

If you can't stay at PJ's Underground B&B for the night, visit our opal showroom, and enjoy a tour of the mine straight out of our back door. Showroom FREE, mine tour \$5 person. Open most days.



Paroo Darling National Park Visitor Centre

The visitor display will help you discover the artesian mound springs, tree lined creeks, spectacular landscapes and ephemeral lakes. Display open most days. Camp under the unblemished night sky at the Coach and Horses camp ground at Wilga on the Darling River. You'll need to bring drinking water & y food. We supply gas BBQs, pit toilets & the night shelter. ph 08 8083 7900 www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

Paroo Darling National Park Discovery Tours

Come, meet and interact with Paakantyi traditional owners. Learn about their history and living culture. Explore Wilcannia, life on the Darling River and in Paroo. Enjoy a cup of tea, Johnny Cakes and a game of chat. Leaving Wilcannia 10.30am & 2.30pm weekdays. \$12 family, \$7 adults, \$2 children, \$4 concession. Enjoy our National Parks with a Discovery guide.

To book, ph 08 8083 8910 or meet at The Old Athenaeum Building.



Donna-Lee at Top Level Opals

Our beautiful underground showroom is a must see! Ron has been mining since 1971, he cuts, polishes and sets our locally found opal into quality 'Rhonan' jewellery. Original design T Shirts by Donna-Lee, Rob Wellington paintings, Kids Corner, souvenirs, cards, pottery, opal insects, books, gum leaf art & gemstones. Friendly & informative talk.

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Message for your SAFETY

Provided by the White Cliffs Miners Association

TOURISTS, VISITORS and FOSSICKERS

The WCMA acknowledges the right to fossick anywhere on the Reserve under the auspices of the mining act of 1992, and no licence is required. However permission is required from the holder of a claim to fossick on any registered claim.

A Registered Claim is usually square in shape and 50x50 metres in size with a wooden or steel post at each corner. On the NE post is a datum board, which contains the details of the claim holder.

There is a vast amount of unregistered ground on the Historic Mining Reserve; but please remember SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT and is the responsibility of the visitor. Children are especially vulnerable and need to be carefully supervised at all times as there are many hidden hazards.

GOOD LUCK and ENJOY YOUR STAY

Emergency Phone Numbers

HOSPITAL	08 8091 6605
POLICE (Wilcannia)	08 8083 8099
Royal Flying Doctor	08 8088 1188
FIRE	000
SES	08 8091 6655

LOCAL ROAD CONDITION INFORMATION

ph 08 8091 5155



NSW Government

**NSW WE MEAN
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Department of State and Regional Development

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