

PALMER GOLDFIELDS RESERVE



QUEENSLAND
NATIONAL PARKS
AND WILDLIFE
SERVICE




DEPARTMENT
OF RESOURCE
INDUSTRIES
QUEENSLAND


Palmer Goldfields Reserve is jointly managed by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Resource Industries to preserve historic mining relics within an area of current mining activity.

The road network shown permits public access to a range of these relics.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Where the symbol  follows the text, additional information can be found under "See Histories" overleaf.

1 OLD MAYTOWN — LAURA COACH ROAD

Highlighted sections of the road illustrate hand stone packing, stone drains, use of hand tool methods, and selection of viable routes through the unforgiving conglomerate and sandstone escarpments. 

2 R.L. JACK MEMORIAL CAIRN

The Robert Logan Jack memorial cairn is a tribute to the famous pioneer who became Government Geologist in 1879. Jack's geological endeavours were prolific, taking him all over Queensland. Nowhere were his observations more remarkably accurate and detailed than in Cape York Peninsula which he traversed in 1879-80. The cairn was constructed by the Palmer River Historic Preservation Society in 1987.


3 FOLDER'S HOTEL SITE

Folder's Hotel was a stop for Cobb and Co coaches. There is a large flagstone floor indicating the site of the hotel.

4 GERMAN BAR TOWNSITE

This is at the rocky crossing of the North Palmer River. There was a small alluvial mining settlement here from the late 1870's. Flagstone floors and an oven are evident.


5 CHINESE CEMETERY

Twenty five Chinese grave sites are revealed by the small mounds and the stones placed at the head and foot of each grave. 


6 CHINESE ALLUVIAL WORKINGS

Extensive low mounds of stones lining small gullies reveal an area of water collection where the Chinese miners sluiced and processed gold bearing gravels. 


7 LOUISA MINE AND ENTERPRISE MILL

East of the road is the Louisa mineshaft and a Tangye portable boiler, winding and pumping gear. There are many open shafts in the vicinity and associated mullock heaps. A tunnel under the road was to divert the creek from the mine workings. Across the road are the impressive ten head of stamps and a mobile boiler of the Enterprise Mill. The site of the manager's original residence is nearby. 

8 COMET (CANTON) MINE AND MILL

A large handstoned-encased boiler with associated engine and gearing, mullock heap, and mine shaft remain. The mill shed was re-erected and the flywheel moved back in place by the Palmer River Historic Preservation Society in 1987. Excellent examples of handstoned dams and water races are nearby on the opposite side of Butchers Creek. 

KING OF THE RANGES MINE

Situated only a few hundred metres from the Comet mine. The only standing windlass on the field is at the western adit of the mine. 


9 MABEL LOUISE AND PERSEVERANCE MILLS

Remains of the fifteen head Mabel Louise Mill dating from 1877 lie on the bank of Butchers Creek east of the track, and include a Robey mobile engine and dismantled parts of the stamps. Five head of the stamps were re-erected as the Perseverance Mill just west of the track in 1937, but only the frame and stamps remain after other items were relocated to the Enterprise Mill in the Louisa Mine in 1941. Shady ancient mango trees on the flat nearby provide an attractive rest stop.


10 IDA MINE, MILL SITE AND TOWNSITE

Ida was one of the best producing mines on the Palmer Goldfield, yielding 400kg of gold (13 000 ounces) in fifteen years to 1890. Much of the equipment was removed at various times, and the site is now a confused collection of machinery, none in its original position. There is a Gallows boiler, huge boiler and flywheel, one stamp, engine foundations and pumping equipment. The township was on the flat to the north-west where the water tank lies.

11 QUEEN OF THE NORTH MINE AND MILL

The site has three impressive boilers, a stationary steam engine, a 3.5 metre diameter flywheel and mullock heaps but only fragments of the mill remain. Several shafts are adjacent. 

12 ALEXANDRA MINE AND MILL

The mill remains comprise a six metre Cornish boiler, bedded in a brick base and with an impressive steel smoke stack. A single-cylinder horizontal stationary steam engine stands beside it and was connected to the stamps by a huge 2.4 metre flywheel. The cam shaft and the ten head of stamps and two mortar boxes stand nearby. The foundations of the manager's house are nearby. 

13 MAYTOWN RESERVE

Pioneer Monument

In Leslie Street at the corner of High and Edward Streets, the Monument was erected by the Palmer River Historic Preservation Society in memory of the pioneers who founded Maytown and the Palmer Goldfield. It was unveiled on 23 July 1983.

Court House Site

Mining Warden Philip Sellheim moved his office to the Court House when it was constructed early in 1876. It remained until the 1940's but today only the building's low, round timber stumps survive.

Replica Miner's Hut

A fine example of a typical miner's residence. It houses a visitor's book and a "bush museum". One of the last old-time miners on the Palmer Goldfield, Sam Elliott, supervised the construction of the hut in May 1984 by the Palmer River Historic Preservation Society.

Leslie Street

Leslie Street, with hand packed stone kerbing and channelling, was the main street of Maytown. Original Maytown business sites are identified by mounted plaques. A brick oven, situated on the northern side of the street, has been restored.

Charcoal Burners

Three known charcoal burners existed close to Maytown along Butchers Creek. Of these only two remain. They were used to produce charcoal for blacksmiths' tool forges at Maytown.

School Site

Maytown School originally opened on 17 February 1877 but closed at the end of July 1877 after most of the European population rushed south to the Hodgkinson Goldfield. The school reopened on 1 March 1882, in a building on this hill. It remained until the 1940's but today only timber stumps are evident.

Hospital Site

A temporary hospital operated in the late 1870's and a permanent one in the early 1880's. There are no remains of that building today.

Cemetery

The cemetery is one of the most obvious memorials on the Goldfield. The cemetery's surviving headstones tell some of the history of the field.

Warden's Residence

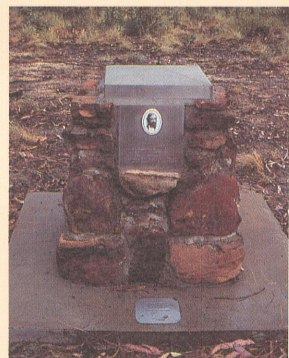
Only a series of terraces and garden beds and a handstoned floor remain. There were two residences, a temporary one built in 1875 and a more permanent one in the 1880's which lasted well into this century.

Boatshed Site

Once housed the boat used to ferry people and supplies across the flooded Palmer River. The boat is now on display in the James Cook Historical Museum, Cooktown.

SAFETY

Take care in the vicinity of old shafts and mining equipment.



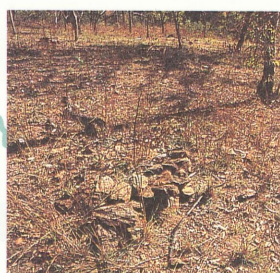
R.L. Jack Memorial Cairn



Maytown, Palmer Goldfield circa 1900



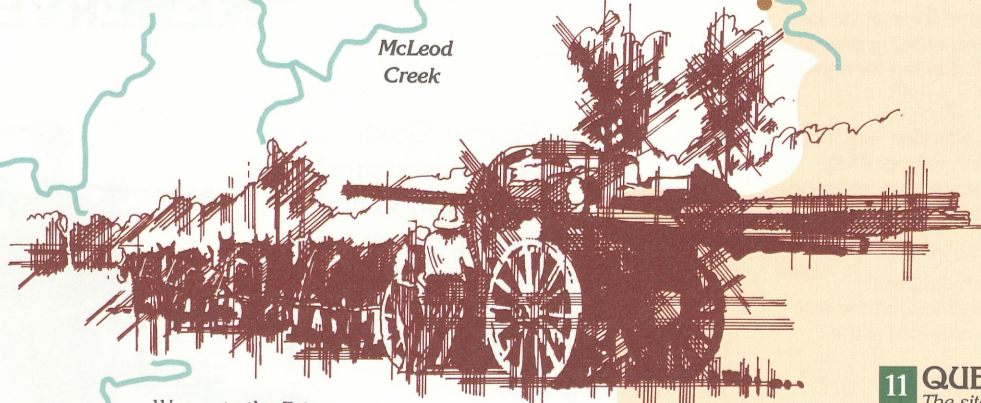
Headstones, Maytown Cemetery



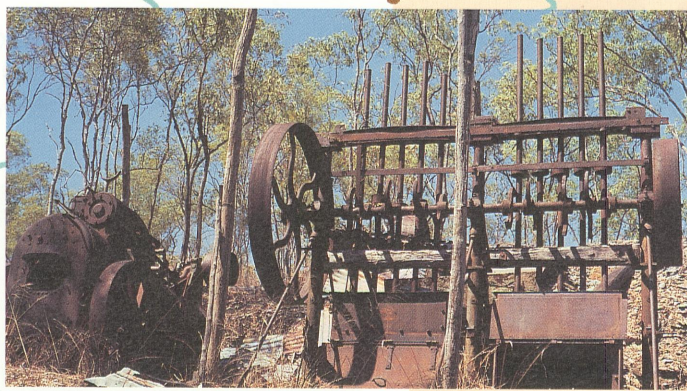
Chinese Grave Marker



Restoration of the Comet Mill



Wagon to the Palmer



Enterprise Mill at Louisa Mine

MAYTOWN

In July 1874 the Gold Warden, Philip Frederic Sellheim, set up his camp at the township of Edwardstown. In early 1875 it became known as Maytown. By 1883 Maytown could boast a Court House, Hospital, School, Post Office, Banks, newspaper, Town Hall, hotels, butchers, bakery, chemist and stores. Maytown, the "Capital of the Peninsula", was the centre for the Palmer Goldfield and its population of up to 20,000 people. Today none of the original buildings remain. The Palmer River Historic Preservation Society has erected a replica "miner's hut" which stands near the building stumps of the Court House. Inside the hut is a "bush museum" of relics found by visitors.

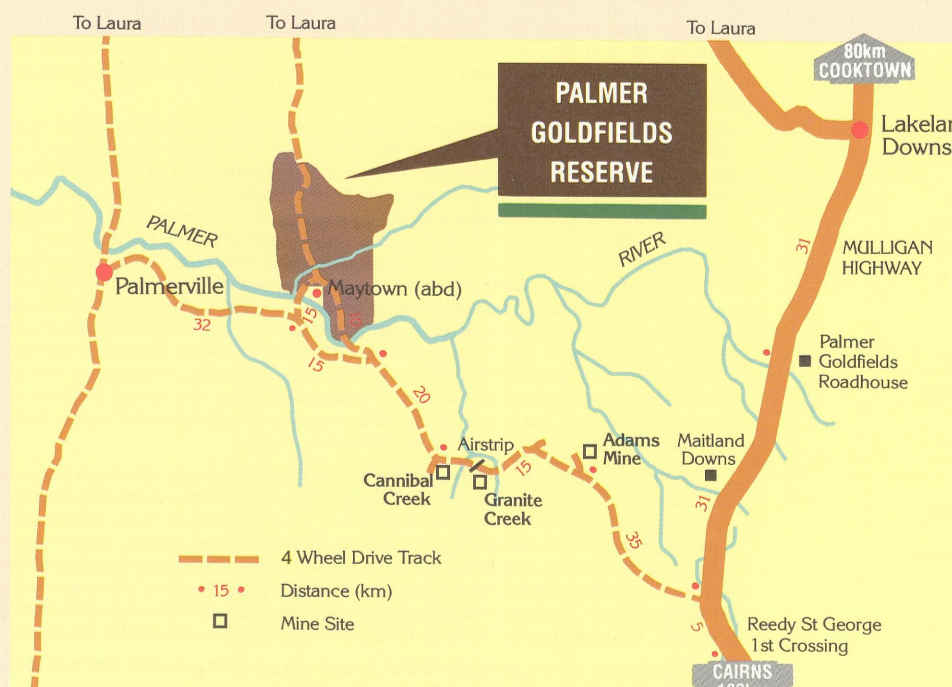
The original hand-stoned kerbing and channelling in Leslie Street has been unearthed, and plaques placed along the shop frontages identifying them. A Maytown Pioneer Monument stands at the top of Leslie Street as a memorial to the early settlers on the Palmer.



Leslie Street, Maytown, circa 1900

ACCESS TO THE RESERVE.....

The Palmer Goldfields Reserve, centred on the deserted Maytown, is a 270km journey by road from Cairns. The preferred route is via the Mulligan Highway and the Dianne Haul Road to Granite and Cannibal Creeks, then north to cross the Palmer River at Dog Leg Creek upstream of Maytown.



An alternative route from the south is via Chillagoe, Mount Mulgrave, and Palmerville, crossing the Palmer downstream of Maytown.

Visitors from the north can approach via Laura and Palmerville, or by a very rough six hour journey direct from Laura. Roads are little more than bush tracks with steep creek crossings, and travelling times are slow. A properly equipped 4WD vehicle is essential.

