

York & Surrounding Districts

SCENIC SELF-DRIVE TOUR

Tour No. 7



GHOST TOWNS TOUR



Distance: Approx. 160 km
Some on well formed but unsealed roads.

The tour is approx 4 hours depending
on how thoroughly you check out the Ghost towns of the
Shire of York

We recommend the following

- Wildflower brochure (August -October).
- Take your golf clubs for a nine hole Doodenanning experience
- BBQ or picnic lunch extended time

For further information on this and other
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BE PART OF “HISTORY STILL IN THE MAKING”

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Commence in Avon Terrace at the York Town Hall Toilets are available here.

Set odometer to **0 Head** south to crossroads where you **turn left** into Balladong Road. Special Note after turning left on the corner to your right is the site of the district's first church mentioned again shortly. *This is a very interesting and lovely shaded area and well worth a look if time permits. Barllardong was the name of the Aboriginal group that lived here before white men came.* Cross the Avon River then turn right at the T junction onto the Quairading Road, sealed.

At **2.6km** is the first Railway crossing and "Cold Harbour Bridge". The road is now passing through what was originally a large holding called "Cold Harbour". *It was farmed from 1842 by John and Stanley Parker who had come out with their family from England from Northbourne in Kent where their farm was called "Cold Harbour". The name had nothing to do with the sea but was a term used for an area protected from cold weather. These two brothers were among those who initiated the building of the district's first church the site of which we passed on the corner of Avon Terrace and Balladong Road.*

Curve left with the road and on the left at **4km** are the extensive sheds of the Mackie Hay enterprise. *About 80,000 tonnes of hay, plus straw, are prepared annually here, largely for export in containers. The larger trees you will see are York gums (Eucalyptus loxophleba) and the shrub/trees are Jams (Acacia acuminata) so called because when sawn, the wood smells like raspberry jam. The wood is hard and durable and was used extensively for fence posts by the early settlers. Many of these posts are still in use today and could be 100 or more years old.*

At **7km** on left is a farmlet with emus. *Ripening crops you will see from October to January will be Wheat, Barley, Oats, Lupins and Canola.* The white trunked gum trees are Wandoo.

At **8.7 km** is another railway crossing. The tall trees with shiny leaves and umbrella shaped crown are Salmon gums (Eucalyptus salmonophloia) so called because around January to March their new bark is the orange/pinkish colour of salmon. *They grow on good quality land that was much sought after in the early days of settlement.*

At 10.8 km on the left are Station Road and the Mt. Hardy Reserve. *In season from August to October there can be over 40 different wildflowers in this area. The Needling Hills come into view on the left. The highest point – 350m is the next highest landmark in the Shire of York after Mt. Bakewell which is 417m high in York.*
(Any roads saying Needlings Hills are disused)

At 13.6km the road passes through a long grove of she-oaks (*Casuarina obesa*) these trees were used for roof shingles for early buildings in the area.

At 16.3 km pass Mackie Road on the left.

At 17.2 km Allen Road goes off to left, continue ahead.

At 18.1 km cross over the railway crossing then almost **immediately turn left** for **GREENHILLS** keeping the railway on your left.

This name comes from the aboriginal name for the area which sounded like Greenilling. Note Aboriginal place names in this area often end with one of the following “ine”, “in” or “ing” whereas down south the common ending is “up”. These suffixes mean “place of”.

Some stately Salmon gums are visible on your right and at 21.6 km on the right is Club Hotel Road. *You might wonder at such a name for a road leading between farm paddocks! Greenhills was once a thriving town in earlier times, with up to three hotels. One of the early hotels was removed bit by bit and carted by horse and dray to Perenjori where it was re-erected.*
The wheat bin still operates.

At 23 km **Turn left** across the Railway line. The second Greenhills School site 1910 –1945 is marked, and ahead to your left you will see the tiny Bakery. *This has been restored with some historical information and the old Harper fencing re-erected. The old homestead in the paddock behind is said to have spear holes in the walls from an attack by aborigines in the 19th century.*

Return back over the railway line and **go straight ahead** into Penny Drive, sealed, named after an old pioneer family still farming in the district. You are now leaving behind the once bustling and thriving but now ghost town of Greenhills.

At 26.6 km Penny Drive intersects the Quairading Road, sealed. Look right to see the jarrah oiled-weatherboard Anglican Church of St. Andrews 1912, with its old cemetery. *In*



this cemetery the first church with a thatched roof was built, this is 1km further back towards York. Also in this patch of bush is the old school site 1896–1910.

As you turn left into Quairading Road, in the corner of the paddock to your right is a pile of stone and brick rubble which is all that remains of the first Agricultural Hall to be built in Western Australia in approx 1895. *Imagine the vital decisions made beneath this rubble by the ghosts of the past.*



At 27.3 km on left is the old KORRAWILLA homestead 1865 (Heritage listed) with stables and farm sheds and further into the property a modern brick house. *This was one of the first farms to be taken up east of York. Two generations of the Penny family still farm here. The first post office in the district was run from the homestead 1867. This is of course private property.* On the right, all lonely in the paddock, stands the ruin of a stone kitchen – *all that remains of a house built by Henry Penny in 1890 for his son when he married.*

Yet another crossing of the railway line at 28.7km then you arrive at “THE-TOWN-THAT-NEVER-WAS” KAURING (Cowering – Place of Parrots). *The town site was marked out in little blocks in an early survey but it never happened! That is until several years ago when someone discovered a map with little blocks shown, and bought the lot and proceeded to sell it off.*



At 30.9 km the Delictable Gourmet café Kauring offers a wonderful variety of cheeses and goodies and superb takeaway picnic meals – this is the last place for food, drink and toilets on this trip. Then past Cubbine Road on left named after a notable sheep stud farm.

At 38.2km you will again cross the railway line into the Shire of Beverley.

At approx 41.7 km **turn left** into Balkuling North Rd to the ghost town of BALKULING, sealed road. This was once a thriving wheat belt town with dwellings and garage etc.

At 42.7 km see the little old school 1947– 1978, still standing there, which was originally transported in from Bellakabella. *With its shelter shed and toilets right out the back, it was the second school at Balkuling, the first being held in the Hall from 1922 to 1947 apart from a couple of short closures due to lack of students. It has been restored and maintained, and is now used by the local farming community for gatherings, including meetings of the Landcare Group. In the early days education was very important to the early settlers. The schools could only be a horse-ride away and the government would provide a teacher if the local community provided a site and building and maintained a set minimum number of pupils regularly attending.*

Balkuling fielded a cricket team from 1922 - 1932 playing against teams from nearby towns. Tennis and golf were also played in the 20's and 30's. Try to imagine the hurrah's and echoes of applause of the activity when you stand among the buildings of the ghost town of Balkuling today.

Return back to Quairading Road **turn left** and at **49.7 km** depending on how much you clocked up exploring the ghost town of Balkuling, enter the Quairading Shire. The town is named after an aboriginal word meaning place of the quarra - the bush kangaroo. Having passed Mawson on the left. *Mawson was named in 1912 after the Antarctic explorer.* The radio mast can be seen in the distance on the left.



At **52km** here is the railway again. You can see glimpses of the railway line. *It was a vital link for farmers in the early days and the area could not have been opened up so successfully without rail transport for their wheat and wool produce.* In this Shire you will see various metal sculptures, originally created for the Quairading Grain Expo 2002, depicting the amusing Wesley Wheat family doing rural things - they are Wesley Wheat, Basil Barley, Ollie Oats and Lucy Lupin.

There are now over 20 of these larger-than-life sculptures on view around the Quairading Shire. Watch out for Wesley Wheat. At 63 km He is fishing for gilgies on the bank of the dam, on your left.

At **65km** **turn into Parker Street** at the beginning of **DANGIN** ghost town. Wesley Wheat is seen on the left, pumping petrol. *The name Dangin is aboriginal for the needle bush which grows in the area. Divert left into Dangin which was once a thriving rural town with a Bank, Methodist Church, Temperance Hotel, General Store and more. There are historical markers around the town with photos of the major buildings on the sites where they once stood, some are lived in today and are therefore private property and not available to the public. The District, opened up by the Parker Family of Northbourne has been farmed since the 1850s. Wagons loaded with sandalwood bound for Perth took two weeks for the round trip, returning filled with stores. The Parker families were big farmers of the district and many ghosts must abide here still. One year they hired a whole train and numerous stock carriages to ship their lambs down to the Perth market. The Parkers were staunch Methodists and therefore there was no alcohol in the town. However there came a time when others wanted a Hotel, so one was built 7km away in 1907 at a place that later grew into the town of Quairading. Soon commerce and people shifted to the town with the social centre of a local pub and Dangin gradually became the ghost town you see today. It is great to see some people still living there keeping alive the memory of the town. Take some time to appreciate all of the buildings that once were here. This is a very enjoyable and educational drive-by or stopping place.*

Continue around the Dangin townsite ring road and at **approx 66.5km** arrive back at Parker Rd and **turn left**, and left again back onto Quairading Road. You could make a diversion of 7km to the town of Quairading where there are toilets available.

At **68.5 km** see Wesley Wheat on his tractor and turn left into Hayes Rd – sealed. Brown sign reads to Toapin Weir. In paddocks on the right see Whittington contour banks used to correct salt and waterlogging.



At **72km** at crossroads **turn right** onto unsealed road – brown sign reads Toapin Weir 4km. You will cross a low lying area where a creek washes over the road after very heavy rain so care is needed. **Turn left to the weir.**

Here is a free electric BBQ, a light, tables and small shelter shed no toilets. *The water run-off from this large area of granite rock has been harnessed by resourceful people building a retaining wall. A pumping station is used to pipe the precious liquid to Quairading town site. There is a pedestrian gate to the left of the Pumping station enclosure which you can enter at your own risk and walk up to the rock. It is a low to medium challenge walk to the weir level.*

Leaving the Weir **turn right** back into Toapin Rd, notice the water pipeline on road verge. *Yellow everlastings can be seen here in wildflower season.*

Return along the 4km gravel road back to the intersection with Hayes Road which is sealed – **turn right** heading north at **80.4 km** approx. *In the paddock on the left is an ironstone knoll. It seems that only Wandoo trees and not much under storey will grow on these geological features.*

At **84.5km** pass Dorakin Rd on the right, continue ahead, and note the Water Corporation pipeline on the right serving the wheat belt and goldfields regions. *Farmers here cut oats or wheat for hay.*

At **91.3 km** note the Pine plantation on left. *With the rural downturn, farmers have been forced to diversify and try alternative “crops”.*

92.8 km Turn left onto sealed road at T junction at Cubbine Road. Right is to Tammin 47km and left to York 56 km. A bush land reserve is on your left. On distant left horizon you might glimpse the Mawson radio mast once again. *In season you might see crops of wheat, barley, or canola grown here.*



At **96.9 km** tricky crossroads here – left is Peacock Rd, but **turn right** into **Maynard Rd** which is unsealed. On the left is a stand of tagasaste trees. *These bushes make good fodder, high in nutrients, and it is said to be fire-retardant.* On the right is a pine plantation.

At **98.8km** lots of mallee gum trees on road verges. Road goes through a cutting then over a newly constructed embankment. At **100km** on the right and left are the straggly grey-leaved gum trees Rose of the West (*Eucalyptus macrocarpa*) *These have the biggest flowers of any gum trees in Australia and their natural habitat is sand plain country but they can be grown in gardens also.* Pass Crimp and Thompson Roads on your left and right, in quick succession turning left just past a farm at Billacabella/Doodenanning Road. Note revegetation plantings on left and right along saline creek lines.

At **105.4 km** the road curves to the right with sweeping views from hill top. Roadside flowering shrubs visible here in spring time. At **106km** see Quandong trees in old gravel pits on left. At **108.7 km** there is an avenue of Salmon Gums and York Gums.

At **111.1 km** T Junction at sealed road, Balkuling/Doodenanning Rd, **turn right**, travel for 2 km to arrive at the Ghost Town of DOODENANNING, "place of calm water". *In the mid 1860's the notorious bush ranger and prison escapee Moondyne Joe was recaptured in the Doodenanning area and was held briefly in the York Old Gaol without escaping. This historic rural town was founded in 1897 and was the centre for a thriving farming community.*

A 9-hole Golf Course with sand greens, which is still in use today, has been laid out among the marked sites of some of the original buildings e.g. the school 1907 – 1945. See the old hitching rail where the pupils tied up their horses, complete with nosebags of chaff, while they attended school. *It is eerie walking there where so much activity must have gone on long ago. Visitors are*



welcome to play golf for a green fee of \$1.00. The Hall 1918 with 4 tennis courts, two of which can be used at night, has been well kept and maintained, and those still living in the district meet for tennis and BBQ teas in summer and play golf during winter. There is a map on the outside wall of the Hall showing how the original town site was laid out. Feel free to leave your business card as the locals love to know you have visited.

At **approx 113.5km** depending on how many km you drove around the town site and cemetery, turn left out of the Ghost town of Doodenanning and head back to the junction of Maynard Rd – sealed, **turn left** heading north.

At **118.4 km** you will come to the cross roads at the sealed Goldfields Rd. Note the water standpipe. **Turn left for York.**

At **132.6 km** see an extensive grove of grass trees (*Xanthorrhoea preissii*). *These 'trees' were very important to the indigenous people. They used the green fronds for thatching their shelters (mia-mias). The resin was mixed to very durable glue for attaching handles to stone axes, barbs on spears etc. The black resinous outer "flakes" of the trunk were used in fire lighting as they caught alight easily. They chewed the tender base of the green fronds and various other parts had medicinal uses. Finally when the*

grass tree died, an insect burrowed tunnels into the trunk and nutritious succulent baardi grubs lived there. Grass trees were inherited down a family line and jealously guarded and harvested each time the group returned to their area.

At 134 km is the start of WALLABY HILLS NATURE RESERVE.

Drive along to approx **135.3 km** to the reserve sign and a gravel entrance track, park there and walk, and find lots of different flowering plants only a couple of metres either side of the track, please do not pick them.

Please treat this reserve with great respect because it is largely in original pristine condition and is home to over 40 species of wildflowers most flowering Aug– Oct. *Most of the tall Grass Trees have never been burnt and are therefore very vulnerable to fire. These are amongst the tallest grass trees you may ever see with their “skirts” extending right down to the ground.*

At 141 km you will pass the Malebelling school site 1907–1938 on the left and at **141.4 km** the Malebelling Hall on right. *The Hall is still occasionally used by locals for a special festive occasion.* **At 145.3 km** see degraded salt scald on right, uphill of which is revegetated acreage that is containing the salt. In October/November there could be stooks of hay in the paddocks. *Stooking is done in the old fashioned way by being cut with ancient reaper & binder machines. The machine throws out the sheaves which are then gathered up and formed into tent-shaped stooks to dry. Later, machines are set up in the paddock and the hay is cut into tiny pieces for chaff for the export market, largely to the Japanese for pampered race horses. This is a very labour intensive activity.* **At 148.3 km** the road curves gently right, where in horse and cart days there was once a sharp right angled corner. *The farmer, adjacent, has taken over the small triangle and is slowly revegetating it. This is an uphill battle after so much traffic over the years.*

Mt Bakewell can be seen on the right with the Dyott Range spreading out to the right.

At 149.5 km on the left is the Munckton Farm with its tiled roofed homestead.

At 152.3 km Turn left at the T junction with the Northam Road and head back to York (6km) with Mt. Bakewell still on your right.

As our comment on the first page states we are amongst

“History Still in the Making”



Save Our Trees – please recycle this pamphlet

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