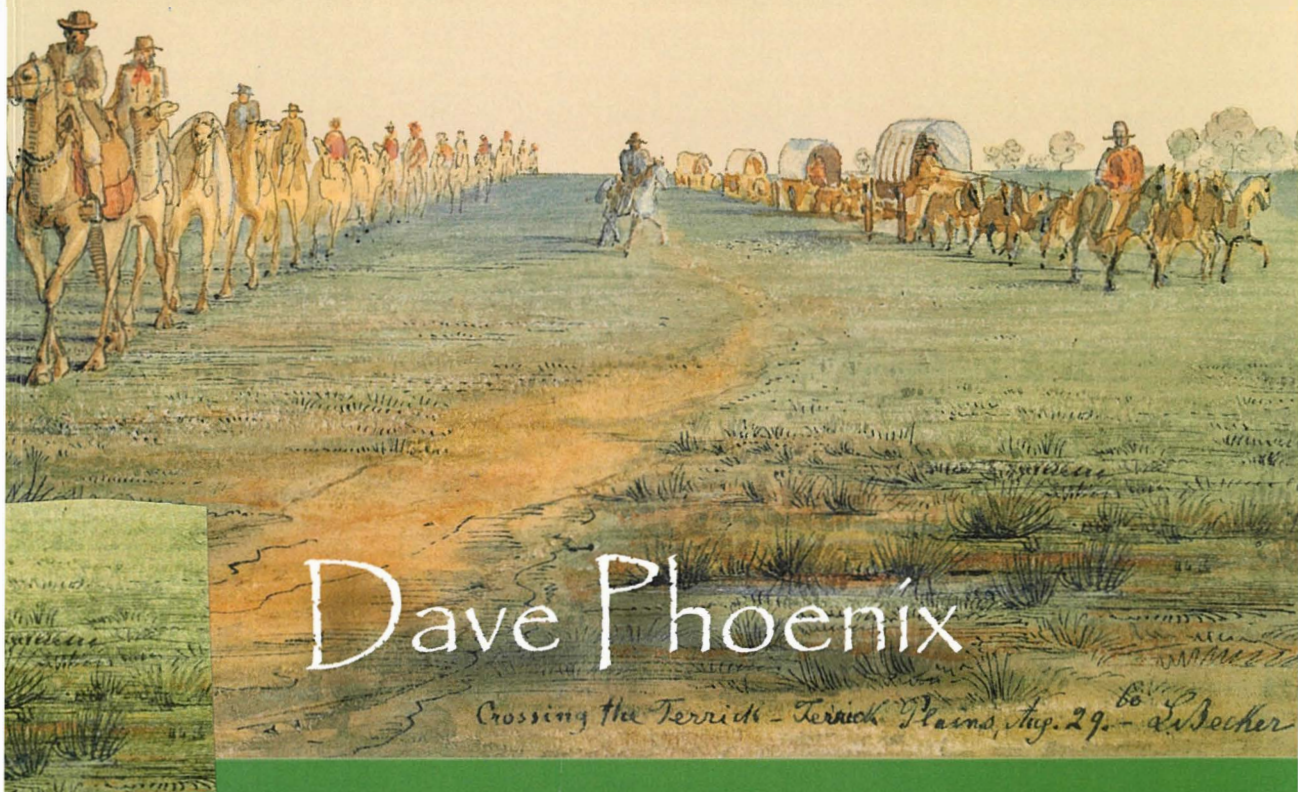


FOLLOWING BURKE & WILLS ACROSS VICTORIA



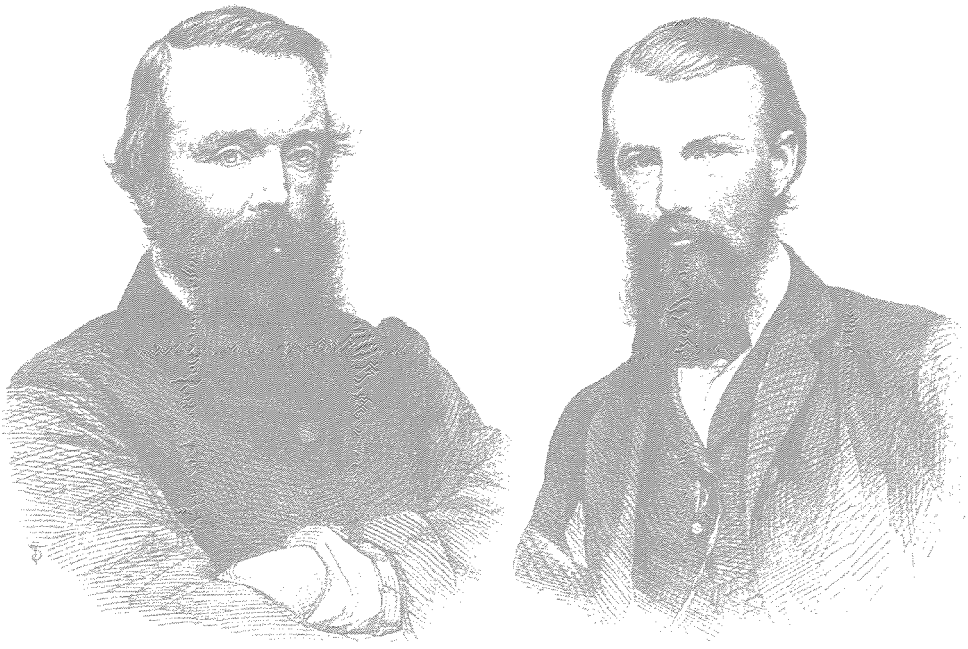
A TOURING GUIDE

Following Burke and Wills across Victoria

A touring guide

"He who might wish to know this country must first walk over it"

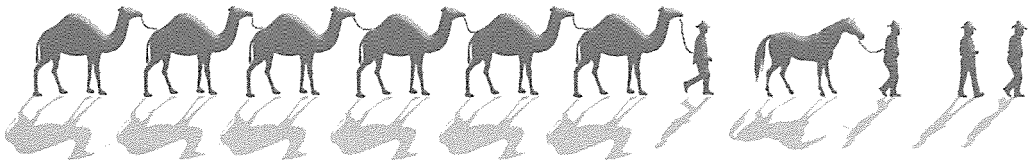
Abel Tasman



Following Burke and Wills across Victoria

A touring guide

Dave Phoenix



Following Burke & Wills across Victoria: A touring guide

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The author, Dave Phoenix, walking across Victoria in winter following the faded footsteps of Burke and Wills

Foreword

Dr Barry Jones AO

In the 150 years since the Victorian Exploring Expedition ended in tragedy at Cooper Creek, the story of Burke and Wills has become an Australian legend. It is a significant part of our culture, having inspired dozens of books, several films, assorted music and a host of paintings, the best known by William Strutt and Sidney Nolan. Events from the story are used by political cartoonists. There is even a competitive computer game based on their epic journey.

In earlier times, Burke and Wills were held up as examples of enterprise and bravery. Monuments to their memory were erected in major towns in both Victoria and in their home towns in Ireland and the United Kingdom. Today it has become more fashionable to see them as failures. If current politicians liken each another as Burke and Wills it would be as an insult, not a compliment.

But the Expedition largely achieved its objective. Burke and Wills were the first to cross Australia from south to north. Three out of the four survived the extraordinarily arduous return journey from the Gulf of Carpentaria to Cooper Creek. If their luck had held, Burke and Wills would have returned to a heroes' welcome, rather than dying slow deaths beside the Cooper.

Those who have travelled through the same country as Burke and Wills do not see them as failures. They appreciate and admire the extraordinary achievement of these four men who walked across the continent during the heat of summer and the wet season, with their pack animals dying one by one and with inadequate food and water. Even the earliest part of the Expedition's journey, crossing Victoria during the winter, had extreme difficulty and privation.

For those who would like to follow in the steps of Burke and Wills, and judge for yourselves whether these men deserve our respect, I recommend this Touring Guide. As you follow the route laid out in the Guide, you can see for yourself the terrain they crossed, and at the same time see it through their eyes as you read the first-hand accounts from diaries. The many signs and memorials you will observe along the way show how significant Burke and Wills remain, 150 years later, in the Australian consciousness.

Dr Barry Jones AO

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Image credits are on page 115.

Spatial data;

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All maps in this book are © Phoenix 2011.

GPS data is GDA94 (although WGS84 will work just as well).

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Introduction

The inspiration for *Following Burke and Wills*

In 2008 Dave Phoenix, President of the Burke and Wills Historical Society and recognised expert on the history of the Burke and Wills Expedition, walked from Melbourne to the Gulf of Carpentaria following the track of the Expedition as closely as possible. The walk was part of Dave's research for his PhD thesis, which he is writing at James Cook University, and before commencing his journey, he did extensive research to determine the actual track and to understand what the various parties saw and how they were affected by their experiences. He produced a detailed collection of information that he took with him as a guide on his 3,750 kilometre, 115-day journey (he took almost as long as the Expedition did to cross Australia and travelled at the same time of year).

In 2010, the 150th anniversary of the commencement of the Expedition, members of the Royal Society of Victoria and the Burke and Wills Historical Society decided that a highly desirable project was to produce a Touring Guide which could be used to follow the Expedition's track in a vehicle (walking the whole track isn't everyone's idea of a good time). Dave's material was the obvious starting point for the production of such a guide.

Plans for future publications

The Touring Guide *Following Burke and Wills* ... is to be published in three parts:

- Across Victoria: Melbourne to Swan Hill
- From the Murray to Cooper Creek: Swan Hill to Innamincka
- Dash to the Gulf: Innamincka to Karumba

Australia is a big country and the Expedition experienced vastly different environments and climate as they travelled. Dividing the Touring Guide into three parts allows the Guides to be tailored to suit the different road conditions and terrain.

The Victorian journey is one that you can do in a 2WD vehicle. There are plenty of facilities along the way and choices of overnight stopping points with a variety of accommodation available at each one.

In contrast the second and third parts of the guide cover much more remote and isolated terrain, where a 4WD vehicle is recommended and travellers are advised to be well prepared for outback conditions.

This *Across Victoria* Touring Guide is the first book in the series. Our vision is to package the complete set of guides with maps, a DVD and audio CD giving further insight into the historic background of the Expedition. If you enjoy using this book, keep watching for its successors and for the maps, DVD and CD.

