

CARNARVON SITE SURVEY,
AUGUST, 1962.



With the Compliments of
THE STATION DIRECTOR,
CARNARVON TRACKING STATION.

C A R N A R V O N S U R V E Y .

16th-19th August, 1962.

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16th - 19th August, 1962.

In July, 1962, Mr. Edmond C. Buckley, Associate



Director Tracking & Data
Aquisition, made a preliminary
survey of the north west of
Australia. This survey included
Carnarvon, Port Hedland, Talgarno
which had been developed as the
northwest end of the Woomera
Rocket Range, and Wittenoom.

Shortly after this survey, in the evening of the
16th August, a NASA/WRE party took off from Perth airport in
a DC-3 aircraft on charter from MMA (MacRobertson Miller Airlines).
The destination, Carnarvon, was three hours away, allowing
comfortable time for the serving of dinner, followed by liquers
and "Old Grandad" bourbon whisky. The enchantment of the
flight was perfected by MMA hostess Miss Robin Berry. The
party,

Ozro M. Covington

Leader of the party,
Assistant Director for Manned
Flight Support.
Goddard Space Flight Centre.

Basil Monckton

Principal Officer,
American Projects Facilities,
Weapons Research Establishment,
Salisbury, South Australia.

Don Anderson

Goddard Space Flight Centre
Representative in Australia.
Now with Manned Flight
Operations Division.

Larry E. Brown

Field Construction Branch
Network Engineering &
Operations Division,
Goddard Space Flight Centre.

Jack Dowling

Station Director,
Merritt Island USB Station,
Florida.

Fred. Mentha

Principal Officer,
American Projects Planning,
Weapons Research Establishment,
Salisbury, South Australia.
(Died at his home in Adelaide,
1966).

Dale Call

Head Manned Flight Engineering
Branch,
Goddard Space Flight Centre.

Rodney Briskman

Goddard Space Flight Centre.

Noel Rossiter

Project Assessment Group,
Weapons Research Establishment,
Salisbury, South Australia.
Now Director, Patents Office
Canberra.

Lewis Wainwright

Station Director,
Carnarvon Tracking Station,
Formerly M&O Supervisor, Muchea
Tracking Station.

Miss Robin Berry

Hostess, MacRobertson Miller
Airlines since early 1957. Now
Mrs McKilloys.



AT EDINBURGH RAAF AIRFIELD, SALISBURY, S.A.

Capt. Don Anderson, Noel Rossiter, Ozro Covington,
Don Anderson, Robin Berry, Jack Dowling, First Officer
Dick Evans, Capt. Nelson Hill, Fred Mentha.

Nor' West Tip On Apollo Station

From Isobel Coffey

CARNARVON, Thurs: Carnarvon people believe that Brown Range, 3½ miles out of Carnarvon is officially seen as a possible NASA Apollo tracking site.

Brown Range goes from "the turn-off" (the junction of the Perth road and the Gascoyne Junction road) four miles south along the Perth road.

It is a series of rolling sandhills 100 feet high not unlike Muchea.

It is the only place (safe from flooding by the Gascoyne River) that commands a panoramic view of a flat sea horizon and a flat land horizon to the west and east, respectively.

During the February, 1961 Gascoyne floods when Carnarvon was evacuated, between 50 and 70 coloured people retreated to Brown Range as the only substantial high land in the vicinity of Carnarvon.

SECLUDED

The range is quietly secluded. Such a project so close to Carnarvon excites the imagination of the townsfolk.

They are thrilled to think that we could be chosen to fit into such a vital and challenging programme as the space race.

Carnarvon is very space-conscious.

The Carnarvon airfield was illuminated for John Glenn's orbits and we illuminated the whole town all night for Scott Carpenter.

At this time of the year the Range is a blaze of wildflowers. Accommodation is at a premium in Carnarvon.

It would seem that an influx of long-term resident tracking station personnel, some possibly from America with their families, would call for an increase in housing.

There are 12 more houses planned for Carnarvon but more than this would be required.

Water should be available at Brown Range by drilling the same way as they get it at Muchea.

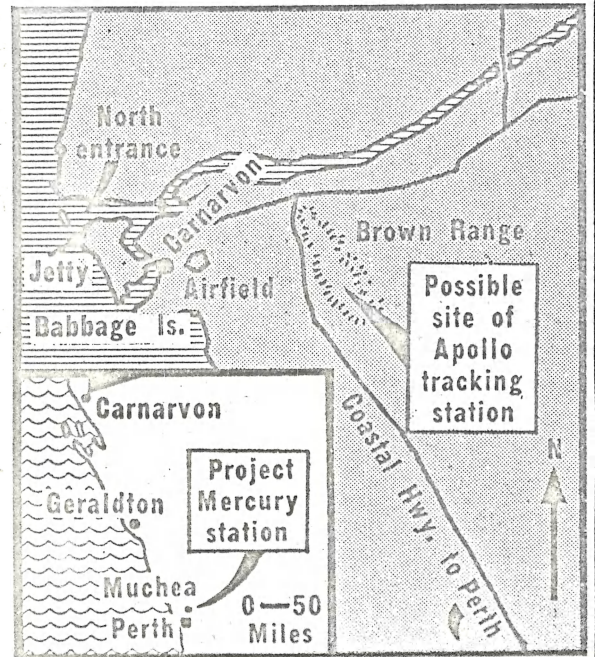
The town electricity supply is now being extended to the Gascoyne bridge and will pass reasonably close to the Brown Range.

In summer the range is dry, brown, dusty and hot. The hot winds bowl along balls of tumbleweed about two feet thick. Small willy-willies are born and die on the surrounding flat claypan area.

The range is named after Aubrey Brown, a pioneer of the Gascoyne district.

Brown Range is on the Brickhouse Station leasehold.

Project Apollo is the NASA name for the next stage of space exploration after Project Mercury. It can involve the mating in space of an Agena-B rocket, 300 miles above the earth, and orbiting at 18,000 m.p.h. and a Gemini two-man spacecraft orbiting at 150 miles. The Gemini will be boosted to approach the Agena and the mated ensemble will first off on circumlunar flight. The moon is 240,000 miles away and tracking will be more complex than that undertaken at Muchea. A NASA team in Perth was due to leave for Carnarvon tonight.



Isobel Coffey's prediction published in Perth on 16th August, 1962, before the Survey Party left for Carnarvon.

The party was welcomed at the Port Hotel in Carnarvon by Mrs Jenny Tuckey and later, in the hotel lounge, provided with light entertainment by Jack Dowling at the piano. An unofficial survey, carried out by Miss Isobel Coffey, and reported and printed in the Perth afternoon paper of that day, was among the topics of discussion.

Plans were made, and the party retired, growing accustomed to the gentle aroma which drifted over the town from the whaling station on Babbage Island.

The morning was cool, but the sky was clear and Carnarvon's sun was warm before the party had finished breakfast. True to plans, they divided, some going to Brown's Range and some remaining in the town. The town party looked at such things as facilities for unloading trucks and handling heavy goods, and talked with the townsfolk about housing and accommodation. The clerk of the Shire Council, (the Shire of Gascoyne-Minilya) Mr. Gray Watkins, arranged for the Council Board Room to be made available to the party. In that long narrow room, dusty and hung with aging photographs of past Shire Presidents, a space-age development began to take shape.

Prominent in the examination of the several possible areas, was the Main Roads' Department Engineer, Mr. Tom Pedderson. With his guidance, the Field Party looked, not only at Brown's Range, but also south of the range and north of the Gascoyne River. Then, as nearly always, the river was a dry sandy bed of tremendous width. North of the river were large flat areas offering attractively low site development costs.

But stories of flooding and the might of the Gascoyne, pouring one million gallons a second into the Indian Ocean, and spilling some on the way, turned the party south again, across the bridge, and back to Brown's Range.

The range, picked through insight by Isobel Coffey a reporter for the Perth paper "Daily News", became an area of intense interest. While Isobel Coffey watched and reported, a rough survey was made and sites proposed for equipment, such as the FPQ-6, Range & Range Rate and for the T&C Building and Power Station. Torn pieces of a sheet, purchased from Anne's Frock Shop by Larry Brown, were left fluttering on the bushes of the range, and the survey drawing discussed and perfected in the Shire Council's Board Room. Today the Station lay-out bears a remarkable likeness to that first drawing.

When the DC-3, Fortesque, left Carnarvon on Sunday August, 19th 1962, heading north, the brief-cases of the survey party carried the first data and documents, to leave Carnarvon, for the Goddard Space Flight Centre. Seventeen months later, during the night of January 30th, 1964, the first data collected from a satellite, by the Tracking Station, left Carnarvon by a speedier route, the NASCOM teletype system. Old friends of the Manned Space Network, staff of the Australian Post Master General's Department and the Overseas Telecommunication Commission, watched over this data at critical points such as the Adelaide Communications Centre.

This brochure is intended to mark the 5th anniversary of the Site Survey, and to recall the efforts of the many people who have helped to establish the Carnarvon Tracking Station. Particularly, it is desired to remember Fred Mentha, whose staunch support for Carnarvon during its first 5 years, proved to be one of the final tasks of his career.

Thanks are due to a number of people who have assisted, providing photographs and information, and in preparation.

Rocket Men Look At Range

From Isobel Coffey

CARNARVON, Fri: The American party seeking a Project Apollo space tracking station in the vicinity of Carnarvon went direct from their hotel to Brown Range at 9 a.m. today.

Brown Range is three and a half miles east of Carnarvon and begins where the road from Perth meets the road to Gascoyne Junction running along the south side of the Gascoyne River.

The Americans are members of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. They are assisted by members of the Weapons Research Establishment who have come from Woomera.

There are nine in the party that arrived at Carnarvon from Perth at 9 o'clock last night. They are expected to remain at Carnarvon until Sunday.

NASA leader Ozro M. Covington told me in Carnarvon today before setting out for Brown Range that Carnarvon was only one site they were looking at.

The party expected to visit every place in the north where there was a likely site for a tracking station.

Many factors had to be taken into consideration, particularly firm foundations for the radar installations.

It was unlikely any work would begin immediately. It would take some time to sift through the data gathered and reach a decision.

(From the "Daily News",
Friday 17th August, 1962).



ROBIN BERRY AT HALL'S CREEK.



ON BROWN'S RANGE.

Nigel Tomlinson, Fred Mentha, Lewis Wainwright,
Jack Dowling, Dale Call, Don Anderson,
Basil Monckton (Kneeling).



DARWIN AIRPORT.

Jack Dowling, Rodney Briskman, Don Anderson, Noel Rossiter,
Ian Homewood, Ozro Covington, Fred Mentha, Basil Monckton,
Dale Call, Larry Brown.