



**SUPPLEMENT**  
TO THE  
**NEW SOUTH WALES**  
**GOVERNMENT GAZETTE.**

*Published by Authority.*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1836.

*Colonial Secretary's Office,  
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**H**IS Excellency the GOVERNOR has been pleased to direct that the following communication, dated the 24th ultimo, from Major Mitchell, Surveyor-General of the Colony, reporting the result of his exploring expedition into the interior of the country, be published for general information.

*By His Excellency's Command,  
ALEXANDER McLEAY.*

*Camp on the River Murrumbidgee,  
in Lat. 35° 7' 11" S., Long 147° 27' 40" E.  
24th October, 1836.*

SIR,

Having proceeded into the interior for the purpose of exploring the further course of the River Darling to its supposed junction with the River Murray, and the course of the Murray upwards, according to the instructions I received in March last; I have now the honor to report the result of the expedition for the information of His Excellency the Governor, having this day reached this River with a portion of my party after a successful and highly interesting tour.

When I arrived at Buree (the point whence the last expedition also left the settled districts) the channels of streams in which we had then found water, in a season of unusual drought, were quite dry, and I was informed that below a certain point there were no ponds, even in the bed of the River Lachlan. My intended route was the same as that which I wished to have followed last year, namely:—to pursue the River as far as Mount Granard and then to travel westward, as the nature of the country permitted, towards the River Darling.

When I reached Mount Granard I found less of a mountain range extending westward than I had expected, and although we procured abundance of water on its summit (where I passed a night), and that numerous hills as promising as it was, in this respect, appeared to the westward, the season

was so extremely dry, that I considered it safer, with such a party in charge, to rely on the ponds in the Lachlan, at least some way further; especially as I had observed from the hills, a branch of that River, as it seemed, leading in a very favorable direction over the lower country.

After we had descended along the bank of the Lachlan about sixty miles further, water became very scarce; the Natives having a name for each hole or "quawvy." I was then induced to quit its banks, on the assurance of an old Native, that he could find me water in the direction in which I wished to proceed to the Darling.

At the end of the first day's journey, on quitting the Lachlan, we reached the Northern Channel, but found it dry; and although the old man procured a few quarts, some miles beyond, we passed the night without finding any for the cattle; and next morning the Chiefs of a Tribe, then among the hills beyond, came forward to assure me that all there was dried up. My guide, however persisted, and was desirous we should go on; but although I was satisfied that in common seasons I might have found water there, I thought it might be in too parched a state then after two seasons of drought.

In so precarious an enterprise, as our further progress thus appeared to be, merely on account of water, I adopted what I considered the alternative by which we should incur least risk, namely:—that of pursuing the course of the Lachlan to the Murrumbidgee, and that of this River to the Murray, and thence to survey the Darling upwards with a light party.

I must here mention that before I determined on this plan, I had ascertained from the Natives the identity of the River explored by me last year, with that which joins the Murray from the northward. I was consequently desirous to get through the survey of that barren and unpromising country as soon as possible, in hopes that in proceeding up the Murray, we might make discoveries more equal to the expectations raised by such an expedition.

On descending the Lachlan, we frequently

travelled along its banks all day without seeing any water in its bed, passing the night without any; and, near the place where Mr. Oxley buried a bottle, I travelled three days, and passed two nights, without finding any, during a ride of one hundred and twenty miles with a party on horseback. There the Lachlan spreads into several branches, but these unite a short way below, where we found the channel as deep and well defined as it was above; and near the junction of this River with the Murrumbidgee, the ponds in its bed were deep and numerous.

Relying on Arrowsmith's map (to which I am referred by the instructions), I passed the junction of the Murrumbidgee with the Murray without being aware of it. But a branch of the former River presented so favorable a position for a depôt camp, in which I wished to leave Mr. Stapylton with the heavy part of our equipment, that I immediately took it up, leaving there the drays, boats, and most of the cattle and provisions in that officer's charge, with eight men, while I proceeded forward with a lighter party in order to complete the survey of the Darling.

By this arrangement, my party was in better trim to deal with the savage Natives whom we were likely to meet; while the cattle left at the depôt, and which were already exhausted by a long journey, were refreshed for continuing it into the Southern Country on my return from the Darling.

During my first day's journey from the depôt, I made the banks of the Murray, below the junction of the branch of the Murrumbidgee, and we subsequently encamped, where the breadth of this River was 165 yards. On the following day we were compelled to make a detour by an ana-branch of this River, and thus came upon a fine full Lake sixteen miles in circumference.

I found the River Darling of considerable width, at, and for above six miles above its junction with the Murray, from which the back-water extended fifteen miles up. But, above that point, the channel seemed scarcely so wide as it was where I had explored it above. It contained so little water, that at my last camp I stepped across its bed dry shod; a little water only dropping over the smooth bottom, seemed the effect of the rain fallen just before. This River exactly resembled the Lachlan in its woods, course, and in the character of its banks—the latter being peculiar to these two Rivers only. The sole difference is, that the Darling is on a rather larger scale. The Country, on both banks was of the same barren description as that I had seen above, or, if possible, worse, for the arid red sands and thick scrubs approached the banks of the River, leaving little room for grass. As soon, therefore, as I recognised the points of a range previously intersected, and thus ascertained the identity of the Upper and Lower Darling, I hastened to rejoin Mr. Stapylton at the depôt. From the Natives we learnt that other Lakes similar to Lake Benanee existed in the Country northward from the Murray, especially a large one named "Coniowra";—and that the Darling tribe came across the Country from that River to the Benanee Lake, without passing along the Bank of the Darling.

As I make the junction of the Rivers Darling and Murray, in longitude  $142^{\circ} 3' 26''$  east, or upwards of a degree more to the eastward, than it appears to be in Arrowsmith's Map published in 1832; my movement from the depôt point will appear less of a detour on my Map, than by that

Map might be supposed. And the longitude of the junction of the Murrumbidgee near my depôt being also more to the eastward than it is in that Map; (being  $143^{\circ} 20' 36''$  east) I had less reason to regret the season of drought, which had compelled me to pursue a route which a previous knowledge of the localities was alone wanting, to have proved the most eligible for the accomplishment of both objects of the expedition.

I found that Mr. Stapylton and party had remained during the whole period of my absence unmolested. The waters of the Murrumbidgee had risen, and the branch on which I had fixed the depôt was full and flowing—so that it was necessary, in order to rejoin that party, to swim our horses across.

From the Depôt Camp to the junction of the Murrumbidgee and Murray, the distance was eight miles, over firm ground; and at two miles below the junction (by the River) I moved the whole party across the Murray, with a view to proceed up that River, according to the second part of my instructions.

We had not proceeded far up this River before the Country on its banks appeared much better than any we had seen lower down. Grassy plains extended some way from the River, but were limited by sand hills, covered with cypress trees and scrub. We crossed various broad Lagoons apparently the beds of ana-branches of the River in seasons of high flood. After several days travelling (nearly southward) reeds appeared in extensive flats along the River; and in longitude  $143^{\circ} 40' E.$ , the course of the River being from the S. E., the reeds extended eastward to the horizon. The mean distance of the bergs of sand hills covered with pine, which limited the reedy flat, was there about eight miles across.

We soon passed the region of reeds, which, gradually disappearing as we ascended, were replaced by grassy plains.

We reached the junction of a River which I took to be that of the Twisden (or Goulburn) of Mr. Hume, in latitude  $35^{\circ} 19' 45''$  south, longitude,  $143^{\circ} 41' 15''$  East. A clear grassy hill which I named Swan Hill, marks this junction, which takes place close under it. The banks of this River were so soft and steep, and wood was so scarce there, that the cattle could not be watered without danger, nor could firewood be procured; on one frosty night in particular when this River unexpectedly brought us to a stop, when we had nearly reached the larger one beyond, whose whole course was distinguished by lines of lofty trees, as on most other Rivers. These, so distinctly different, flowed for many miles very near each other, each River preserving the same character throughout.

In this vicinity, we came upon a very singular formation, consisting of numerous Lakes of salt or brackish water, and which were enclosed by semi-circular ridges on their eastern shores. The largest of these Lakes was named "Boga," and was six miles in circumference. The River floods having reached this by a small channel, the water in it was sweet, and it was peopled by a very savage tribe, who refused to give us any information, throwing their spears at Piper, who shot one of them.

Beyond "Boga" Lake we crossed some very fine plains, but the main channel of the River we were endeavouring to explore, was no longer accessible nor even visible, from the numerous

branches, and still reaches which intersected the alluvial margin which appeared to be very broad.

Following the general course of the River, we next entered on a tract remarkable for extensive forests of box, with occasional intervals of open grassy plain. It was watered by chains of ponds in deep channels, whose meandering course, through a perfectly level country, seemed to pursue no particular direction. From what I afterwards observed on higher plains, I conclude that these waters are derived from the floods of the river, and that these, spreading into branches of minor depth, thus water the level country.

Turning more towards the river, we passed alternately over grassy plains, and through belts of lofty Gum trees—the beds of broad lagoons. Nearer the river deep reaches of still water cut off all access to it, so that we could only trace its general course. The highest point at which we found it accessible before turning south, being in latitude  $35^{\circ} 55' 35''$  south, longitude  $144^{\circ} 35' 38''$  east.

The extreme western point of a range then appearing in the southern horizon, I proceeded towards it anxious to know more of the country back from the River. The view I obtained from that summit induced me to direct our course southward, with the intention of returning across the heads of the Murray further to the eastward, where I hoped the hills might afford me the means of extending the Survey across the adjacent country; I perceived from the height a distant line of lofty trees, which seemed to mark the course of another River; beyond were the summits of very distant hills, verdant plains variegated with clumps, and lines of trees extending westward to the horizon; the whole seeming good pasture land.

At about thirty miles from the hill, and on the  $144^{\text{th}}$  degree of longitude, we reached a deep but narrow stream, flowing between high and grassy banks, to the westward, at the rate of one mile and a half per hour. Its mean depth was nine feet; in one night, however, it suddenly rose fourteen feet higher, carrying away a rough bridge we had just completed. The aboriginal name of this River is the "Yarrayne"; the plains beyond it were five miles in breadth, and of the best description. Forests of Black-butted Gum, and Casuarinæ, then extended back to the mountains and forest hills; in these forests, instead of novelty, we found the Blue Mountain Parrot, and other birds common near Sydney, many of the plants also which grow in Cumberland.

"Barrabungale," a lofty mountain of Granite, was the chief point of that range, but on ascending it, the weather was unfavorable for my observations; a group of open forest hills were connected with Barrabungale, they enclosed vallies richly covered with grass and all well watered. We passed over many fine tracts sheltered by open forest hills, and crossed various fine streams, all flowing westward. At length, on the 11th July, I discovered the summits of a noble mountain range of broken and picturesque outline, and by subsequent survey I found that this was the predominant feature of that vast territory lying between the River Murray and the southern coast, giving birth to numerous streams of convenient width and constant current, by which the surrounding country is watered abundantly. These Grampians of the south are situated between  $36^{\circ} 52'$  and  $37^{\circ} 38'$  of south latitude, and between

$142^{\circ} 25'$  and  $142^{\circ} 47'$  of east longitude; the latter being the longitude of Mount William, the highest and most eastern summit, and on which I passed a night, vainly hoping that the clouds would rise above it.

Situated thus centrally, this lofty mass, so essential to water the lower country, presents no impediment like the coast ranges of the settled district to the formation of roads, and the progress of colonization.

The principal river flowing under the north side of these mountains is the "Wimmera," which has no steep banks, and appears to be a very constant stream. I explored its course to the  $142^{\circ}$  of longitude, when it turned to the north-west, leaving me in a country covered with circular lakes, in all of which the water was salt or brackish. These had semicircular ridges on the eastern side, as in those of Biga, on the Murray, and the land about them was in general very good and grassy, its mean elevation above the sea being about 580 feet.

From the continued rainy weather the earth was in a very soft state, and this at length became a most serious impediment to the progress of the expedition, the party being unable, even with the greatest exertion, to proceed through the mud, above three miles a day. But for this, I might have returned at least two months ago.

When we gained the head of a small ravine falling towards the principal river rising in the Grampians, we found firmer ground, and our progress was much better, although still occasionally impeded by the soft and boggy state of the earth.

The river, which I named the "GLENELG," flows first westward, and then southward, entering the sea at the deepest part of the bay between Cape Northumberland and Cape Bridgewater. I explored the last fifty miles of its course in the bogs, having left Mr. Stapylton with a depot, for I had great reason to hope that it led to some important estuary; the average width was 100 yards, the mean depth 4 fathoms. In this hope I was, however, disappointed, for the river terminated in a shallow basin within the sand hummocks of the coast,—the outlet being between two low rocky heads, but choked up with the sands of the beach.

In the higher part of the Glenelg the rock over which it flows is Granite, but after it passes through a ridge of primitive sand-stone covered with forests of Iron-bark, (and which forms there a kind of Coast range) the banks consist wholly of a secondary limestone. The soft state of the earth had rendered our progress by land almost hopeless when I launched the boats on the Glenelg, but on quitting that river with the party, I succeeded in re-crossing the Iron-bark range with the drays, by following up a tributary flowing to the Glenelg from the eastward. The difficulty of this movement was much increased, by numerous swampy creeks and swamps which we had to cross. The eastern part of that range is highest, and on the higher parts, where the basis of the soil is trap-rock, the enormous growth and thickness of the trees presented a new impediment to the progress of our drays, the fallen timber covering so much of the surface. The trees consisting of Stringy-bark and Blue Gum, were many of them six feet, and some as much as eight feet, in diameter.

Beyond this range, which terminates in Cape Bridgewater, I expected to have found some con-

siderable river entering the sea at Portland Bay; I found only, however, three small rivers, which I named the "Surry," the "Fitzroy," and the "Shaw," entering the bay at different points east of the anchorage.

On approaching this bay, situated on what I considered an unexplored coast, the unwonted sight of houses drew my attention, and a vessel at anchor. I soon ascertained that Messrs. Henty from Swan River had formed a whaling and farming establishment there. These gentlemen accommodated me with a small supply of flour, although the supply for their own establishment was nearly exhausted.

Portland Bay appears to be a good anchorage in all winds, save those from the S.S.E. It is much better sheltered from the prevailing winds by the lofty promontory of Capes Bridgewater and Nelson, than any part of Port Phillip is, (which harbour I reconnoitred from Macedon on the 1st instant,) and the position of two reefs seem favorable for the formation of a small harbour.

I still entertained hopes of finding a good port on that coast, and should have thoroughly examined it, for an object so desirable to the valuable and extensive territory I had explored, but the almost impassable state of the ground, and our very limited stock of provisions, confined me to the direct line homewards from Portland Bay, by which I travelled completely round the Grampians, crossed all the rivers, and determined the position of the principal heights. I wished much to have examined "Cadong," which, according to the natives, is a large piece of water on the coast, westward of Cape Otway. This receives as they said, several small rivers which I saw flowing southward, over the plains from the Australian Pyrenees, a groupe of very fine forest hills of considerable height, eastward of the Grampians. From one of these, I observed the eastern shore of a piece of water, in the direction indicated by the natives.

The country on that coast generally, is low, and almost swampy, but the soil is rich, and the climate being sufficiently moist and water abundant, it appears better adapted for agriculture on an extensive scale than any other part of New South Wales. The soil consists chiefly of decomposed trap or limestone, these being the rocks immediately below it. The whole of the coast country eastward of Cape Nelson, is of volcanic formation, as many interesting geological phenomena attest; amongst others an extinct volcano, (which I named "Mount Napier"), is not the least remarkable, having an open crater, and being surrounded with ashes and scorice to the distance of two miles around its base. From the fresh appearance of the lava at the summit, I thought it might have been in activity within the memory of man, but I could not find any allusion to fire in the aboriginal name (Murrōwan).

We encountered much soft ground near Mount Napier, and by the time the party attained the southern extremity of the Grampians—most of the cattle were exhausted, and one poor animal died in the shafts. Some weeks of repose were absolutely necessary, and this, our stock of provisions did not admit of; on the contrary, I could only hope that they would last to the end of the journey, by allowing the men a very reduced ration.

Having some spare cattle, I decided on proceed-

ing in advance with a light party, and a month's provisions, leaving the rest to refresh for two weeks, with a party under Mr. Stapyilton, whom I provided with two month's provisions, that he might at the end of the two weeks follow my track at leisure, through Australia Felix. I hoped thus, by proceeding faster, to survey and reconnoitre the country with more freedom, and also to reach the Colony in time to send back a supply of provisions to meet Mr. Stapyilton on the banks of the Hume.

My route homeward from the vicinity of the Australian Pyrenees, passed through a country of the most varied and fascinating description. At intervals of fifty or sixty miles, we crossed ranges of granite, through all of which I found passes for the carts across the very lowest parts, by reconnoitring the ranges as far as possible in advance. The districts between the different ranges consisted of excellent land, thickly covered with the *Danthonia* grass, and well watered.

I hoped to have met with some advanced station before we reached the Murrumbidgee, but although we did not, we were fortunate in finding a way for the carts to this point, unobstructed by mountains or swamps. It is near the station of Mr. Thompson, a gentleman who has accommodated me with a supply of provisions, to be sent back to the other party to-morrow. We reached this station the third day after our supply had been exhausted.

I have succeeded in working a continual chain of triangles along the heights between Cape Nelson and the banks of this river, thereby connecting my work on that Coast with the Survey of the Colony.

I trust that the results of this expedition will prove satisfactory to His Majesty's Government, considering the various difficulties surmounted, and the elements with which I have had to contend. Besides establishing the fact of the identity of the Upper and Lower Darling, it has been in my power, under the protection of Providence, to explore the vast natural resources of a region more extensive than Great Britain, equally rich in point of soil, and which now lies ready for the plough in many parts, as if specially prepared by the Creator for the industrious hands of Englishmen.

I have much pleasure in stating that I have had reason to be well satisfied with the zeal and perseverance of Mr. Stapyilton on all occasions. It will be seen by this report, and, more fully, by my journal, how well I could rely upon both.

All the men of the party have behaved well, and are returning in safety, with one exception, James Taylor, who was unfortunately drowned in endeavouring to swim a horse across a swampy river on the 13th instant.

I beg leave to bring also under His Excellency the Governor's notice, "Piper," an aboriginal native of Bathurst, who has accompanied me throughout this eventful journey, and has proved a valuable auxiliary, as will appear in almost every page of my journal.

I have the honor to be

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

T. L. MITCHELL,

Surveyor General.

To the Honorable  
The Colonial Secretary.