



Queensland Outback Railway Adventure

With Robert Kingsford-Smith
Townsville • Inlander • Gulflander • Savannahlander • Cairns
16 – 26 June 2012 (11 days)


Renaissance
Tours

The Daily Telegraph

The Sunday Telegraph

THE AUSTRALIAN 



Tour Leader
**Robert
Kingsford-Smith**

In the 1960s Robert expanded a childhood passion for railways and began a quest to record on film the world's disappearing steam locomotives.

His often adventurous travels have taken him to over forty countries. The resulting photographs and articles have appeared in Australian and overseas publications.

Robert's train journeys have also allowed him to indulge his love of history and wildlife.

"I am looking forward to the sense of occasion of boarding the Inlander in Townsville, sleeping as the train rolls westwards and next morning watching the outback stretched out beyond the dining car window. But the real highlight for me will be riding the Gulflander. This railway survived due to a quirk of local geography and now provides a unique glimpse of Queensland's pioneer railways of 100 years ago."

Robert

Queensland Outback Railway Adventure

From the coast to the outback, Far North Queensland boasts three great rail experiences: the **Inlander**, the **Gulflander** and the **Savannahlander** trains.

Linking Townsville and Mount Isa, Normanton and Croydon, Forsyth and Cairns, these train journeys are a wonderful way

to discover a fascinating part of Australia and experience some of our unique rail heritage.

First, enjoy modern air-conditioned comfort on the Inlander, as you travel from palm-fringed Townsville on the Coral Sea to the rugged outback beauty of Mount Isa. Then take a journey back in time on the Gulflander, one of the world's last great characters of rail travel, from remote Normanton to far flung Croydon through the tough and inhospitable Gulf Country. After exploring Cobbold Gorge and the Undara lava tubes, enjoy a leisurely two-day journey on the 'Silver Bullet' (Savannahlander) across the savannah, through the lush Atherton Tablelands and over the famous Kuranda Range to finish in Cairns.



'Capella' steam locomotive - Ravenshoe



The Savannahlander

Affectionately known as 'The Silver Bullet', the Savannahlander was state-of-the-art when it was brought into service by Queensland Rail in the mid-1960s. Now it reflects the pace and grace of a by-gone era, travelling at a sedate pace, with stops at suitable locations for the driver to point out interesting landscape features to the passengers. For the locals of the Queensland outback, The Savannahlander is still a vital communications link.

The Savannahlander's rolling stock comprises three 2000 class railmotor units. These 'PD' (Passenger / Driving) cars have classic 1960s era streamlined front ends and were built for Queensland Railway in 1963. Currently operating 42 weeks of the year, the Savannahlander leaves Cairns on Wednesdays for the four-day return trip to Forsyth. Our tour will join the Savannahlander in Forsyth for the two-day trip back to Cairns.



The Inlander

Twice a week (Suns, Weds) the Inlander sets out from the tropical coastal city of Townsville on a 977 km inland journey to the zinc, lead and silver mining capital of Mount Isa. An overnight journey of 20 hours, in modern air-conditioned comfort, the Inlander travels through Charters Towers, across the Great Dividing Range and through the mining towns of Hughenden and Julia Creek before arriving into the heart of the Queensland Outback.

Your accommodation on board is in comfortable sleeping compartments which offer either a single bed (single travellers) or twin bunk-style compartments (i.e. one upper and one lower berth). Sleeping berths convert to a sofa for day use. Linen is provided and showers and toilets are located at the end of all sleeping cars.

The Inlander features a Buffet Car with a range of meals and light refreshments including hot and cold takeaway snacks, drinks and confectionery, along with a limited liquor service for consumption in the Buffet Car.



The Gulflander

Fondly referred to as the old 'Tin Hare' or 'The Rattler', the Gulflander operates once a week in each direction, between Normanton and Croydon, from 'Nowhere to Nowhere' through the tough and inhospitable Gulf Country.

The history of the Gulflander dates back to the 1880s when plans were drawn up to link Normanton, the beef capital of the North, with Cloncurry, to serve the cattle industry. But the route was changed when gold was discovered at Croydon in 1885. Construction of this railway began in 1888 with the line being completed in 1891. Steam locomotives hauled the trains until 1922 when the first rail motor was introduced.

The Normanton – Croydon line was constructed under the supervision of George Phillips, an engineer and advocate of the Gulf Country. He designed and patented the steel sleepers used on the line which are hollow based and packed with mud, avoiding the need for ballast material in the track. This low cost railway was also designed to be submersible, allowing flood waters and debris to flow over the line, leaving it intact when the water subsides. Today, over one hundred years after its construction, most of the sleepers on the 152 km line are still in place.

ITINERARY

Sat 16 June 2012

Arrive Townsville

Arrival in Townsville and check in to your hotel. This evening, enjoy a welcome dinner with Robert Kingsford-Smith and fellow travellers. (D)

Sun 17 June

Inlander

After a leisurely breakfast, depart the hotel for a short tour of Townsville en route to the railway station. See the Breakwater Marina, drive along the Strand and up to Castle Hill for magnificent views across to Magnetic Island.

12.40 pm: Depart from Townsville on the Inlander. Settle back in air-conditioned comfort and watch the constantly changing scenery as the train travels through Charters Towers, across the Great Dividing Range and through the mining towns of Hughenden and Julia Creek. The dining car serves hearty meals while the bar and lounge are perfect for a relaxing drink with fellow adventurers (not included in tour cost, own expense). Overnight on board (twin-share sleeping compartments, limited single compartments available). (BD)

Mon 18 June

Mount Isa

9.35 am: Arrival in Mount Isa. Disembark and join a local guide for a tour of 'The Isa' which came into existence because of the vast deposits of lead, silver, copper and zinc found in the area. During the day visit the Hard Times Mine where you will go deep into mining country and experience a day in the life of the famous Mount Isa miners. Real miners guide visitors through 1.2 kilometres of tunnels, the history of Mount Isa mining, and the unique experiences in the mine. In addition, see, hear and feel the heritage of Mount Isa come to life in the interactive multimedia Isa Experience Gallery. Finish with a visit to the Riversleigh Fossil Centre. Dinner and overnight at your hotel. (BD)

Tue 19 June

Mount Isa – Normanton

Morning flight to Normanton. Established on the Norman River in 1867, Normanton started life as a port for the Gulf of Carpentaria's cattle industry and grew in importance with the discovery of gold at Croydon in 1885. There are a number of interesting buildings in the town, including the distinctive Purple Pub, the Albion Hotel where Captain Percy Tresize drew a series of humorous paintings on the bar room walls, the Bank of New South Wales (1896) and the Normanton Railway Station.

This afternoon take a trip on the RM60, a railmotor as unique as the Gulflander which you will travel on tomorrow. Built at the Ipswich Railway Workshops in 1931, this 45-horsepower Associated Equipment Company (AEC) railmotor was in service on the Normanton-Croydon railway from 1960 to 1964. Dinner and overnight at Normanton. (BD)

Wed 20 June

Normanton / Cobbold Gorge

8.30 am: Depart Normanton on the Gulflander on its weekly run to Croydon. During the 5-hour journey, the Gulflander will stop for an impromptu morning tea supplied by the locals and for photo opportunities at Norman River Bridge. On the way experience the amazing outback diversity from wetlands and grasslands to arid Savannah country.



Townsville



Hard Times Mine tour



The Gulflander at Normanton Station



Normanton River (Credit Tourism Qld)

After arrival in Croydon at 1.30 pm, enjoy a pub lunch at the Croydon Club Hotel before an afternoon drive to Robin Hood Station, a vast outback cattle property which also contains a geological wonderland, Cobbold Gorge. Dinner and overnight at Cobbold Village Cabins. (BLD)

Thu 21 June Cobbold Gorge

Morning tour of Cobbold Gorge. Visit the grave of pioneer John Corbett, learn about the geological history and enjoy a boat cruise along the extremely narrow gorge, which is no more than two metres wide in places, with spectacular 30-metre cliffs on either side.

In the afternoon, on a tour of Robin Hood Station, gain an insight into the cattle grazing industry as you see first hand some of the implications of management today and the future on such a large property. The tour overviews the day to day issues such as water infrastructure, herd performance, nutrition, ecology and at times cattle being mustered through the yards. (BLD)

Fri 22 June Forsayth – Undara

Early morning transfer to Forsayth to board the Savannahlander, departing at 8.30 am for today's journey to Mount Surprise. Arrive at 2.15 pm and disembark for an afternoon visit to the Undara lava tubes which were formed some 190,000 years ago.

Continue to the Undara Experience for dinner and overnight in wonderfully restored railway carriages dating back to the turn of the last century. (BD)

Sat 23 June Undara – Cairns

Reboard the Savannahlander at Mount Surprise at 8.15 am for a full day's journey to Cairns. During the day stop at Bullock Creek for morning tea, Almaden for lunch, and Dimbulah for afternoon tea (meals not included in tour cost, own expense). After a stop at historic Kuranda Station, the journey culminates in a late afternoon descent of the Kuranda Range into Cairns, arriving at 6.40 pm. Transfer to your hotel for dinner and overnight. (BD)

Sun 24 June Cairns

Full day at leisure. The gateway to the Great Barrier Reef, Cairns abounds with day trips to the Reef, to the Daintree, and not least on the famous Kuranda Scenic Railway and Skyrail Rainforest Cableway (tours are optional and not included in tour price). (B)

Mon 25 June Cairns

Your Queensland Outback Railway Adventure culminates with a day tour to Ravenshoe on the picturesque Atherton Tablelands. Enjoy a 2-hour return trip to Tumoulin, the highest railway station in Queensland, on a fully restored train pulled by a 1925 D17 'Capella' steam locomotive. Return to Cairns for a farewell dinner. (BD)

Tue 26 June Depart Cairns

Tour arrangements conclude after breakfast today. (B)



The Albion Hotel, Normanton



Undara lava tube



Kuranda Station



Savannahlander at Kuranda Station

TOUR PRICES ...

| | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Per person, twin-share | AUD 4,250 |
| Single supplement* | AUD 650 |
| Deposit (per person) | AUD 500 |
| Final payment | 02 May 2012 |

*Single travellers may request to share. Please advise at time of booking.

TOUR CODE

RLWY - QLD JUNE

SUGGESTED AIRLINES

Virgin Blue, Jetstar or Qantas

Please contact Renaissance Tours for assistance.

TOUR PRICES INCLUDE

- Accommodation in centrally located 3- or 4-star hotels with private facilities
- Twin-berth or single overnight sleeping compartments on the Inlander with shared facilities (NB. Limited single berths available – allocated in order of booking)
- Accommodation in restored railway carriages at Undara Experience with shared facilities (NB. Limited single carriages available – allocated in order of booking)
- Daily breakfast in hotels (B). Other meals as per itinerary (L= Lunch, D=Dinner) including special welcome and farewell dinners
- Economy class flight Mount Isa – Normanton
- Reserved seats on the Gulflander and Savannahlander
- Comprehensive sightseeing including local guides and entrance fees as per itinerary
- Gratuities for local guides and drivers
- Hotel portorage (1 piece per person) where available

DO NOT INCLUDE

- Flights to Townsville and return from Cairns
- Transfers on arrival and departure
- Railway and airport portorage
- Drinks with meals, except welcome and farewell dinners
- Items of a personal nature, including telephone, laundry, mini-bar etc.
- Travel insurance (recommended)

YOUR HOTELS ...



Holiday Inn
Townville
★★★★



RedEarth
Boutique Hotel
Mount Isa
★★★★



Gulflander
Motel
Normanton
★★★



Cabins
Cobbold Village



Undara
Experience
Railway
Carriages



The Hotel
Cairns
★★★★

NB. Hotels of a similar standard may be substituted.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

How to Book

Complete, sign and return the Booking Form available from Renaissance Tours with your deposit.

Deposit / Final Payments

Your deposit is due at the time of booking and is used to pay hotel, airline, performance tickets and/or other deposits. It is non-refundable in the event of your cancellation.

Final payment is due 45 days before departure. Failure to make the final payment by the due date may result in cancellation of your booking and loss of deposit.

Payments are accepted in cash and by cheque, bank transfer, American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa. A 3% service charge applies for payment by American Express and Diners Club.

Cancellation & Refunds

a) Cancellation by You - Cancellation charges will be applied as shown below, calculated from the day written notification is received by Renaissance Tours. In addition to cancellation fees for tours operated by Renaissance Tours as shown below, airlines, hotels and other third parties may impose up to 100% cancellation charges.

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 45 days or more | Forfeit of deposit |
| 44 – 31 days | 50% of tour cost |
| 30 – 15 days | 75% of tour cost |
| Less than 15 days | 100% of tour cost |

The above cancellation charges include applicable GST.

In addition to the above, cancellation charges may apply for additional arrangements booked by Renaissance Tours, such as air tickets, hotels and travel insurance premium. If the reason for cancellation is covered by the insurance policy, you may be able to reclaim these charges.

b) Cancellation by Us - We reserve the right to cancel a tour for any reason (such as failure to reach minimum tour participant numbers). Except for force majeure, we will not cancel a tour less than 45 days before departure. No further compensation will be paid in the event of cancellation by Renaissance Tours. A full refund of monies paid for tour costs will be the full extent of our liability.

Cancellation and/or amendment fees may apply for additional travel arrangements booked by Renaissance Tours.

Travel Insurance

It is highly recommended that you are covered by travel insurance for domestic tours. Your travel insurance can be arranged by Renaissance Tours.

Fitness and Participation

For the overall benefit of the group, all tour members must possess a moderate level of mobility, including the ability to:

- negotiate airports and railway stations without wheelchair assistance
- use combined shower/bath facilities (it is impossible to guarantee walk-in shower facilities)

- undertake walking tour of 2-3 hours duration, including using stairs, walking over cobblestones and other uneven surfaces
- stand for long periods in museums and other sites
- embark / disembark coaches, trains and other methods of transportation without assistance
- handle your own luggage

If you (or we) have any doubts about your ability to participate in your chosen tour, you may be required to have a doctor's appraisal. This would require a doctor to read the itinerary of your chosen tour and provide you with a written confirmation of your ability to participate.

Terms & Conditions

You can find the full terms & conditions on the Renaissance Tours booking form. They can also be found at www.renaissancetours.com.au or we would be happy to post you a copy on request.



The Savannahlander



Cover image: Termite hills seen from the Savannahlander
Back page image: Cobbold Gorge (Credit Tourism Qld)



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