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IT'S TIME WE REDISCOVERED THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH OF YESTERYEAR.

Tim Flannery, esteemed author and ecologist, said during his Australia Day address in 2002, that Australians could only become a 'true people' by developing a 'deep, sustaining roots in the land'. He said the land was, 'The only thing that we all, uniquely, share in common and our best hope for the future was that this wide, brown land might claim us as its own'.

The Australian ideals of mateship, larrikinism and tenacity against adversity were forged in the bush. It's time for us all to rediscover what the bush was all about so that we develop an appreciation of how it has been the force behind shaping our wonderful nation. The Gladstone Region is dotted with a myriad of spots that offer plenty for everyone to regain an appreciation of what life was like in the Australian bush.



The Calliope River Historical Village, situated 26 kilometres South West of Gladstone, beside the Bruce Highway, is a perfect destination to step back in time and relive the early days of the region. Developed by the dedicated volunteers of the Port Curtis Historical Society, the village is home to an array of buildings which have been relocated and restored to their former glory.

Soak up what life used to be like in the bush by touring such buildings like the Barmundoo and Rosevale Homesteads and view the various historical displays. The tools and machinery in the Woolshed highlight how back-breaking working on the land must have been. The Slab

House is a superb example of the harsh conditions our early settlers endured in the Australian bush. Visit a fully restored old county pub, the Clyde Hotel or relive the school years at the Machine Creek School. The village is open seven days a week and comes alive on selected Sundays at the country markets.

Located 70 kilometres south west of Gladstone is the Boyne Valley. Consisting of four small communities: Nagoorin, Ubobo, Buliyan and Many Peaks, they have withstood the test of time. The picturesque valley was put on the map by gold and copper in the late 1800s, but is now more known for its timber and agricultural industries. This area is home to many wonderful heritage sites which pay testament to the hard work and determination of its early settlers. Their descendants will happily tell you a yarn over a cool drink at one of the general stores or pubs.

Alternatively, the Boyne Valley Historical Society Cottage, located in the heart of Ubobo, caters for tourists who want to leave the usual sightseer trail and enjoy some genuine country hospitality and historically significant sites. Run by an enthusiastic group of volunteers, the cottage houses a large display of photographs and memorabilia which convey bush life of yesteryear. After viewing the display why not relax on the veranda and enjoy a delicious homemade Devonshire Tea. On the 3rd Sunday of each month, local volunteers gather at the cottage to share the history of the valley with the passing public. A special tour of an historic local site is also organized annually.

West of Gladstone, in the bush heartland of the region, lays Banana Shire. This area is home to a range of heritage sites which transport patrons back in time to the heydays of the country Queensland when the bush was well and truly alive. The

Silo Heritage and Industry Displays found just outside of Biloela are an ideal place to start a historical bush journey. The facility is home to Ruth Maynard Pioneer Village, incorporating Pioneer Place Museum and Callide Dawson Machinery Preservation Club Shed. The village features displays highlighting times gone by, while the Pioneer Walk provides tourists with information on the Callide-Dawson Valley early families. The Silo is also the region's Rural Hinterland Visitor Centre. The friendly staff can supply sightseers with interesting bush heritage information as well as other places of interest in the Banana Shire. The Silo is open 7 days a week from 9 am to 4pm.

A significant bush historical site located in the township of Biloela is Greycliffe Homestead. Positioned on the Dawson Highway, the homestead was the residence of the Nott family from Greycliffe Station for over one hundred years. Relocated by the Banana Historical Society, the century old traditional homestead is a well preserved specimen of early settler architecture. Its round bush timber rafters, fireplace and calico lined bedrooms capture the essence of how hard and rough living in the Australian outback must have been back in the 1800s. The small museum further compliments any visitors stay. The homestead can be enjoyed by appointment only. Bookings can be made through the Biloela Visitor Information Centre in Callide Street.

Venturing about an hour and a half drive west of Biloela is the town of Moura. The Coal and Country Museum and Information Centre is home to displays illustrating the pioneering heritage and coal mining of the area. Another 30 kilometres south of Moura is Theodore, home to the Dawson Folk Museum, located in the town's original Power Station. The museum gives a rare insight into bush life with a variety of objects and displays relating to the region's indigenous history and 'white settlement'. Visiting the museum is by appointment only and enquires can be made through the Theodore Information Centre.

The life of a drover, an iconic image of the Australian bush, was a particularly tough one. A visit to the historic flagged road, near Glenmoral Gorge, 37 kilometres from Theodore allows one to truly appreciate the tenacity these workers needed to survive. In 1863, HC Gregory with a party of government men took 6 weeks to build the stone bullock track over a steep hill that formed an essential part of the wool carting track between Roma and Rockhampton. Some of the rocks used in the flagging weighed approximately 220 kilograms and were laid neatly into the ground by hand. Interestingly, because of the steepness of the track, trees would be cut down and dragged behind the wagons to steady them as they made their descent.



For a dose of bush nostalgia, a visit to Baralaba is a must. Located 95 kilometres from Biloela, this quintessential Australian country town provides fantastic examples how the bush used to be. Step back into the thriving bush of yesteryear with a trip to the Historical Village. Alternatively, tourists can immerse themselves in the Baralaba Historic Photos Collection, found in the Baralaba Landcare and Community Resource Development Centre. The 1000 historic photos will give visitors a real appreciation of what life was like in this country town.

Cracow, the once prosperous gold mining town, is found 154 kilometres south east of Biloela. Once considered to be an outback ghost town, it has been given a lease of life with the reopening of the gold mine. Enjoy the mixture of old and new bush experiences by taking a walking tour of the town. Examine the mid 20th century architecture through exploring the deserted hospital and shops. Rumours suggest that ghosts inhabit the town. When one wanders over the creaking boards of the old Boarding House the eerie feeling of being watched is uncanny. For an encounter the more mortal kind, visit the Cracow Hotel. A popular meeting place for friends from near and far, the beer and food is superb while the Front Bar heritage display gives visitors an insight into the once flourishing town. The locals are happy to give commentary on the displays of dedicated Australian stockmen and outback larrikins as well as Fred Brophy's boxing tent memorabilia, a former icon around these parts.

To rediscover the Australian bush, contact Gladstone Area Promotion and Development on (07) 4972 4000 or www.gladstoneregion.info for further information.