

The History of Googs Road

For many years, Goog and Jenny Denton had stood on the back verandah of the Lone Oak farmhouse, looking north and wondering what was out there in the scrub. They decided to find out for themselves. In 1973, they set out to build Googs Road – from Lone Oak farm to Tarcoola.

The following is a brief account of the building of that road.

Goog and Jenny Denton, their children (Martin, Debbie and Jeffery) together with Denis Beattie (Jenny's brother and Goog's mate) began the memorable task of building the road in June 1973.

Clearing the track began with a Fordson tractor fitted with a front-end loader blade and a Toyota two wheel drive Ute. Then the going got tougher and the sandhills bigger and steeper. At this point it was decided that a bulldozer and four-wheel drives were needed, so the Allis Chalmers HD14 was employed.

Work on the road proceeded for another two years, on weekends only.

Roughly fifty five kilometres up the road, and eighteen months later, a shack was built, which served as a base camp for the rest of the road through to Mount Finke. At this site the road branches north to Mount Finke.

The shack was removed in 1977, at the request of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Opposite this site, are memorials to Goog Denton and eldest son, Martin "Dinger" Denton.

Five kms east of the shack site is a salt lake, which is approximately 15 kms in length and over a km wide in places.

As the edges around the lake are very soft in places, we advise you not to drive around it. In the past, many vehicles have had to be pulled out, having been bogged to the axles in the clay.

The black oaks, at the foot of the lake, make a very good spot for BBQs, camping and relaxing with a cold drink or two. Sit back and admire the view. Contemplate just how long it took to get the road this far and the hard work and effort that went into what you are now enjoying.

Further along this track you come to Lois Rock, Narlara Rockhole and Childara Rockhole it is possible to travel to Lake Everard Station and onto the Kingoonya/Wirulla main road.

Seven kms north from the shack, progress on the road came to a halt for about 6 months, due to problems with the dozer and other commitments.

All fuel, water and supplies were carted up on the back of three landrovers. Considerable fuel and supplies were donated by various local people, to assist in the process of making the road to Tarcoola – they could see the value of such a road. Without their support, it would not have been possible to complete the road. The costs involved in clearing the way were enormous and Goog and Jenny would not have been able to do it on their own.

A grader was purchased in about March 1976 to make the road easier and safer to travel. The sand was very soft on some hills. Many had to be graded from each side, as it was impossible to grade over the crest, due to the steepness of the hills.

Some weekends the road progressed three to 5 kms and on others, 8 to 10 kms. Some weekends no progress was made at all. The going got tougher; the nights got colder. On many occasions, rain prevented work from continuing. On these occasions, over drinks at the campfire, discussions about progress and how to proceed with the road consumed many hours.

In August 1976, the road to Mount Finke was finally completed after 3 memorable years. The site where the road ended is known as Drum Camp.

The road from Mount Finke to Malbooma was cut through the axes by station owners, who had hoped to get their wool through to Thevenard quicker. The project became tough and they abandoned the project. Two drums of water were left at this point (Drum Camp). This was the point at which Googs Road ended.

This was as far as the grader went. The road to Tarcoola was cleared.

The Tarcoola Races, held in October, is still an annual event for some local people.

We hope you enjoy your journey along the road.

However, we ask that you keep the following in mind:

- If you have a UHF radio, please use channel 18. This will enable you to know of others along the road, coming towards you or behind you. This is for your safety. Lone Oak farmhouse also operates on Channel 18.
- Be considerate! Think of people coming the other way over the Sandhills.
- Please stay on the defined roads. Two wheel tracks through the scrub go nowhere.
- Please take all your rubbish with you. Do not bury it, as the wild animals will dig it up.

Please enjoy the scenery. Leave it as you would like to find it!