

Woolwash Walk

Strangways pastoral station was established in 1862, not long after Europeans first arrived in the area. Sheep and cattle were grazed around the many springs, watched over by local Aboriginal people, who also worked at the woolwash plant.

Strangways also offered hospitality to travellers, the small settlement being a most welcome stop-over. After the telegraph station commenced operation in 1872 pastoral activities were transferred over a period of some years to nearby Anna Creek and wool washing ceased at Strangways.

This walk takes you past extinct and active mound springs to the ruins of the woolwash plant.

10 SMALL EXTINCT SPRINGS

Strangways has been built up by precipitation of salts and minerals from hundreds of springs flowing over thousands of years. This process has built up an elevated surface of hard springs limestone. However, loss of pressure due to the numerous bores drilled into the Great Artesian Basin has reduced flows in the springs.

The more elevated springs at Strangways have been amongst the first to dry up and many are now extinct.

11 SHRUBBY PIG-FACE

The bush with fleshy leaves in a star-like arrangement is shrubby pig-face (*Hemichroa*), which is related to the common pig face of coastal areas. It is classified as endangered because it only occurs in this locality. Fenced enclosures protecting the plant from grazing stock are located alongside the track into Strangways.

12 WOOLWASH

The fenced spring here was the water supply for the adjacent woolwash plant. Early photographs show fluming carrying water to troughs where the wool was washed by an agitating mechanism. Clean wool was lighter and cheaper to transport southwards and sold better at markets. The spring has declined in flow since those days. It was fenced in the mid 1980s to prevent damage by stock.

13 ERODED SPRING

The central core of this extinct spring is thought to have eroded as a result of acid sulphate soils developing as its flow declined. Sulphuric acid from this soil process probably corroded the limestone, hollowing out the core to its present form. At its peak, water would have been level with the overhang.

14 GIBBER VIEW

Follow the path and cairns up over the ridge to see that Strangways sits above the gibber plains, with their distinct red

weathered pebbles. Erosion of softer sands and clays of the surrounding country has left the Strangways and its multiple springs at a higher level. Flat topped Beresford Hill, 15 km to the south east across the gibber plains, is a single extinct mound spring.

15 SAMPHIRE SPRING

This elevated extinct spring is another which has dried due to loss of pressure in the Great Artesian Basin. The green samphire and other shrubs are all adapted to survive with little or no water.

16 DRILLING SITE

Much research has been conducted into the ground-water systems of the Basin. This drilling site found that springs have been active at Strangways for at least 60 000 years.

17 REEDY SPRING

This spring has just enough moisture in the sandy sub-surface soil to maintain a patch of reeds (*Phragmites*).

Return to the start.

Settlement Walk

There is no defined walk around the ruins, but all the buildings are identified and more information is provided on the interpretive signs.

Take care – the ruins are fragile and loose masonry is dangerous.

Acknowledgements

Strangways Springs is on the Anna Creek Pastoral Lease managed by S Kidman and Co. The Company fenced the springs in the mid 1990s and has worked closely with the South Australian Government in management of the site.

These walks have been developed by Friends of Mound Springs in partnership with S Kidman and Co. and the Walking Trails Support Group. The work was funded by a Natural Resources Management grant from the South Australian Government.

Further Information

More detailed information about mound springs is provided in a separate brochure available at this site.

www.friendsofmoundsprings.org.au



Government
of South Australia



Strangways Springs Walks

*Three self-guided walks taking in the natural
and cultural features of this nationally
significant heritage site*

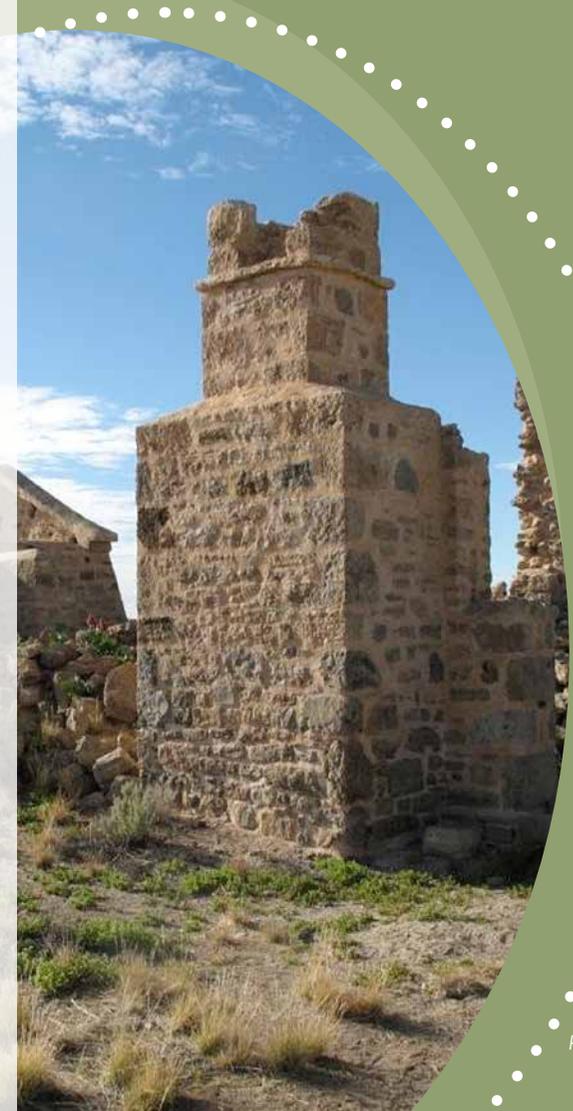


Photo: Anne Jensen

Welcome to Strangways Springs

Here is a place steeped in history:

... from geological times when natural flows of water from the Great Artesian Basin were much greater than today, with thousands of active springs

... to times when Aboriginal groups relied on the springs for water and sources of food in times of drought, giving them cultural ties which persist to the present day

... to European exploration, pastoralism in the 1860s and Overland Telegraph operations from 1872-96.

Pangki Warrunha was the Aboriginal name for these springs and the numerous stone chips and flakes around the springs reflect the importance of the area to Aboriginal people.

European explorer Warburton came upon Strangways in 1858. He named them after Henry Bull Templar Strangways, a South Australian political figure of the day. Later, as Premier, Strangways initiated construction of the Overland Telegraph from Port Augusta to Darwin.

The Overland Telegraph followed an arc of springs to the south and west of Lake Eyre, a line of waters which also determined the route of the narrow gauge (Ghan) railway to Central Australia. Strangways Overland Telegraph Repeater Station was one of 11 stations which relayed the telegraphic signal along the route between Adelaide and Darwin. The Strangways Station operated from 1872 to 1896.

Strangways, with its fascinating history, is nationally significant and is protected under national and state legislation.

There are three easy walks to take you to points of cultural and natural history interest. Follow the markers and cairns.

Mound Springs Walk visits the cemetery and passes a variety of active and extinct springs (marked with posts 1 to 9):

1.8km, allow one hour

Woolwash Walk expands the springs story and includes relics remaining from the unpleasant task of scouring wool (posts 10 to 17):

2.2km, allow 1.5 hours

Settlement Walk gives a feeling for what life must have been like in these buildings (each is identified but no numbered posts):

allow one hour

Mound Springs Walk

1 START NEAR THE OLD TELEGRAPH POLE

One of the last of the original timber poles along the route of the Overland Telegraph in SA. It is from a native pine (*Callitris*) brought to this treeless area by dray from the Flinders Ranges. The pine is termite resistant and has a strong, straight trunk.

2 FRANKENIA SPRING

This is one of many extinct springs at Strangways. The small grey-green mounded ground-cover here is a *Frankenia*. It has tiny pink flowers and is common near springs and other saline areas.

3 REEDY SPRING

This spring has just enough moisture to support a small patch of tall bamboo-like reeds (*Phragmites*), along with sandhill wattles and turkey-bush.

4 STRANGWAYS CEMETERY

This small cemetery has both marked and unmarked graves in sandy ground, where digging was easy. It conveys a real sense of the isolation and harshness of early life in this area, and no grave illustrates this better than that of Mary Hewish, wife of telegraph linesman Albert Hewish. She died at the age of 32 from complications following child birth.

5 SEDGE SPRING

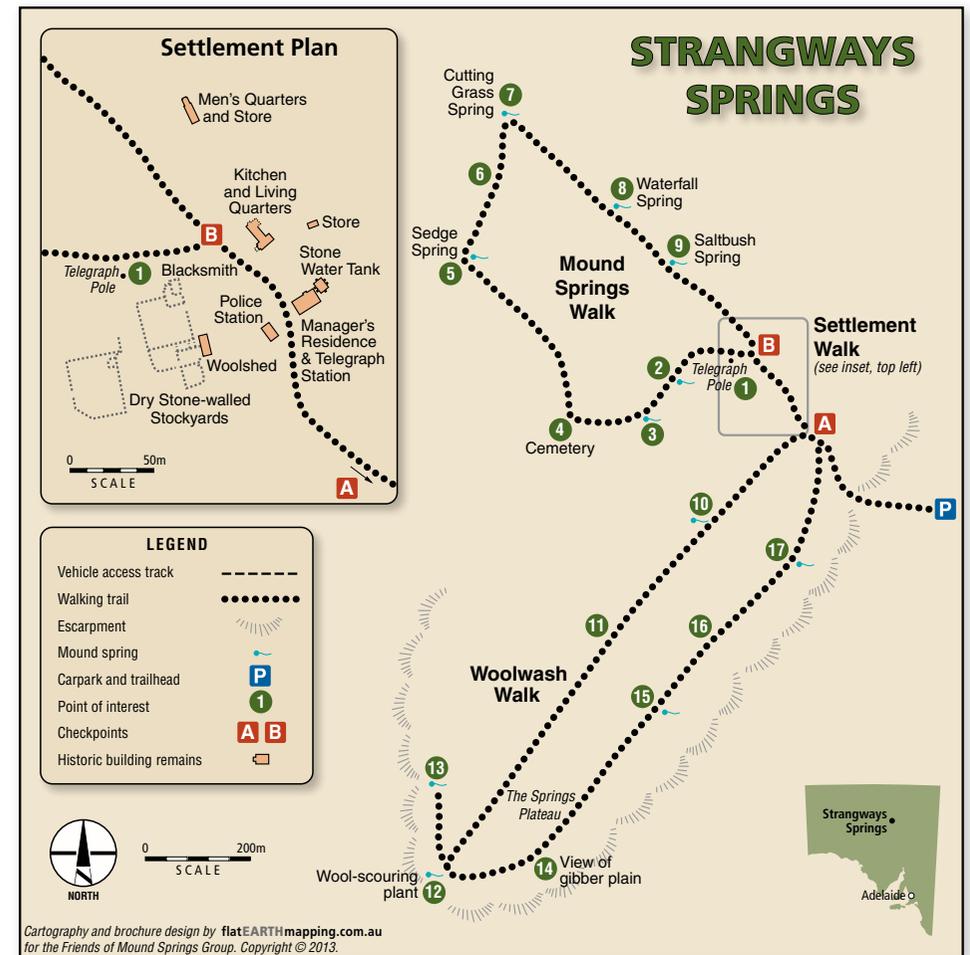
This small rocky spring includes two sedges (the smaller and finer *Cyperus laevigatus* and the taller *Cyperus gymnocaulos*), typical of many mound springs. If you look closely in the water you may see small slater-like creatures (isopods), 8-10mm long. The ledges indicate the original depth of the pool and are fragile: please avoid walking on them. The overflow forms a tail of permanent water supporting the sedge community.

6 SAMPHIRE

The low, succulent, reddish bushes on the open flat are samphire. These plants grow in saline areas inhospitable to many other plants and are also found in coastal swamps. Small birds eat their fruit.

7 CUTTING GRASS SPRING

This large mound is well vegetated, including cutting grass, *Gahnia*



trifida. Cutting grass occurs at some other mound springs, but its nearest other occurrence is hundreds of kilometres away in south-eastern Australia. **This is a steep and fragile mound – please do not climb it. There is no pool at the top.**

8 WATERFALL SPRING

This small waterfall feeds a tail of tall, dark green *Juncus* rushes and small *Cyperus* sedges, though the flow has diminished. In 1871 a north-bound traveller wrote that showering under the fall was '... a very good sort of arrangement and by opening your mouth you can get a mild dose of medicine.' The pool has isopods and water snails, with native couch, sedges and samphire plants.

9 SALTBUSH SPRING

This damp spring supports rushes and saltbush (*Atriplex*), the low bushes with silver-green leaves to the right of the mound.

From here the trail takes you back to the settlement.