

Key contact details

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Thanks to Mr Jeff Close for supplying the 9 Pillars historical content.

Take time to experience Winton – Dinosaur Capital of Australia, home of Waltzing Matilda and Queensland’s Boulder Opal; a rich combination of outback life, landscapes and legend. Stay a couple of days and enjoy our country hospitality.

Experience the history and mystery when visiting Boulia; land of the mysterious Min Min Light, ancient fossils, outback racing events such as horses, camels and drag cars. Endless skies, wildlife and much more in the capital of the Channel Country.

Things to see and do on the “9 Pillars of Cobb & Co”

The drive between Winton and Boulia is one of ancient beauty and is often referred to as one of the best scenic drives in outback Queensland. Mesa rock formations or ‘Jump-ups’ are visible on either side of the road with Cawnpore Lookout offering spectacular panoramic views of the surrounding Lilleyvale Hills. Steeped in history the 9 Pillars of Cobb & Co drive offers a glimpse into our pioneering past and takes you off the beaten track. Stop for lunch at the Middleton Hotel (Pillar 4) the last remaining operating Cobb & Co staging post of the 9 Pillars. See the light at the Min Min Encounter, marvel at Elizabeth Springs, camp overnight at Diamantina National Park and wet a line in the mighty Diamantina River at Old Cork station.

General Information

The 9 Pillars of Cobb & Co is a loop drive approximately 833km and we suggest that you allow two to three days – more if you want to visit the many attractions in Winton and Boulia, explore national parks, swim or picnic. Confirm road conditions with either the Winton or Boulia Information Centres prior to departure. The drive between Winton and Boulia on the Kennedy Development Road is sealed however the loop drive via Diamantina National Park is a gravel road; we recommend 4x4 or higher clearance vehicles. The roads can become impassable after heavy rain or local flooding.

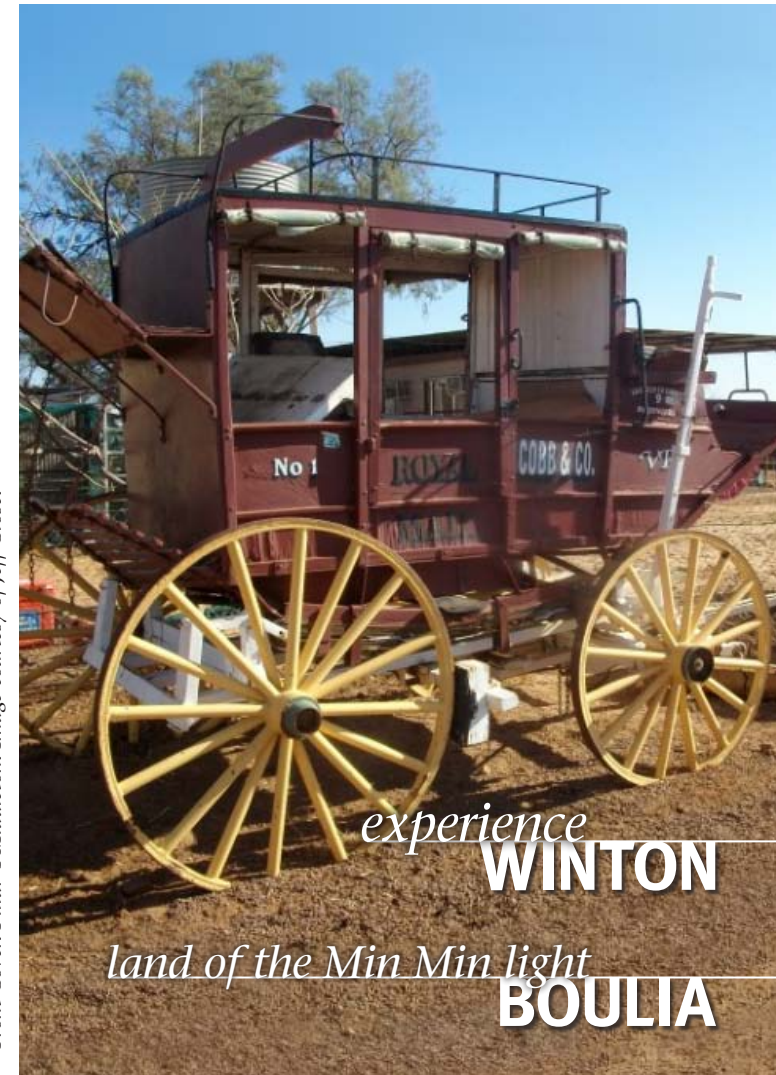
Entry into Diamantina National Park is free, but there is no food or water available. Camping is permitted at both Gum Hole and Hunters Gorge, where bush toilets are provided. Permits are available online www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/parks/diamantina/camping.html fees apply. Bush camping is also permitted at Old Cork Station for self-contained travellers, no services are available.

Important Safety Information

When driving take regular rest breaks. Keep left at all times. Avoid alcohol. Wear seatbelts. Drive at a safe legal speed. Take care on dirt roads. Watch for animals particularly at dusk. Avoid driving at sunrise and sunset. Bring at least 7 litres of water per person per day for drinking and cooking. Ensure your vehicle is in good repair, has spare fuel, a spare tyre, fan belt etc. In an emergency, or if your vehicle breaks down, stay with your vehicle. A vehicle is much easier to find than a person!

9 Pillars of Cobb & Co

Winton to Boulia 2 – 3 day loop drive

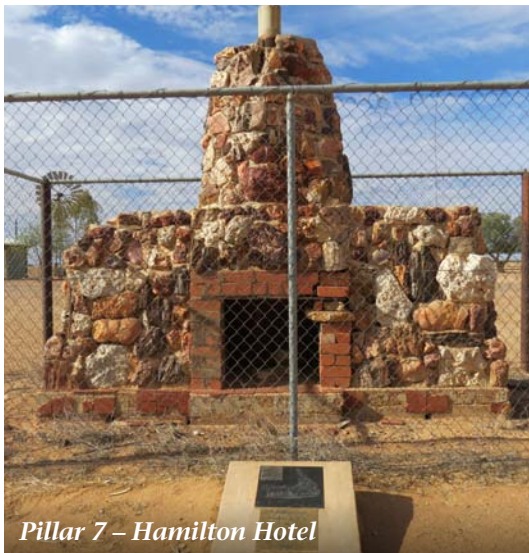


Front Cover: Pillar 4 Middleton. Image courtesy of Jeff Close.

experience
WINTON
land of the Min Min light
BOULIA

9 Pillars of Cobb & Co Winton to Boulia

The mail contract from Winton to Boulia was won in 1892 by Cobb & Co who offered a weekly coach service as Mail Service 216. The coach took 4 days to complete the 240 miles (384km) and Cobb & Co were paid a sum of £1615 per annum. The last Winton to Boulia and return coach was run in 1912, with Steve Wall the last driver. Cobb & Co were firmly embedded in Western Queensland with Davenport Downs south of Winton breeding the horses, and regular horse changing stations and overnight stops across the 240 miles to service the Mail Service. Drought added the extra task of supplementary feeding of the horses. During the drought in the early 1900's, Cobb & Co resorted to using camels to keep the mail route open. Floods added extra time to travels. These 9 Pillars on the coach route were not the only stops and horse changing stations – others like Min Min and The 20 Mile were important too.



Pillar 7 – Hamilton Hotel

- 0.00km
- Visitor Information Centre

Set your trip odometer to zero at the Pelican Waterhole sculpture, Elderslie Street. Enjoy your journey.

- 0.30km / 832.36km
- 22.3900South 143.0369East
- Pillar 1 – Winton

Originally established as Pelican Waterhole in 1875, on the Western River, and soon after moved to the present site to escape the severe flooding. Many hotels offered accommodation and meals. By the turn of the century, Winton was a thriving town with a solicitor, pharmacist, stock and station agents, shops, police station, school, hospital, tobacconist, doctor and dentist, and watchmaker.

- 5.66km / 826.99km
- 22.3725South 142.9893East
- Boulia Road turn-off

- 56.60km / 776.06km
- 22.2805South 142.5104East
- Pillar 2 – Elderslie

An early lunch after breakfast stop at the 20 Mile Cobb & Co. Elderslie Station was selected by Forsyth in July 1873, declared stocked in 1874, with an area of some 2500 square miles. Elderslie country was where the Wokingham Creek and Western River flowed into the Diamantina River. Donald Smith Wallace was a partner for a while, but by 1875 Sir Samuel Wilson from Victoria was the sole owner. By 1881 a manager's house and outbuildings made of stone cut from nearby Mt Booka Booka were under construction, and completed in 1882. Elderslie was like a small town in its own right and the size of the workforce and the pastoral business provided much business to Cobb and Co. Ramsay Kinnard & Co were proprietors in 1895. Elderslie boasted fine Thoroughbred and Draught Horse studs.

- 124.12km / 708.54km
- 22.2849South 141.9124kmEast
- Pillar 3 – Woodstock

Pillar 3 was the Cadell Creek Hotel from 1884 and became Woodstock Hotel in 1890. The original hotel became a homestead. This was one area where the coach driver blew his horn to advise of mail drops.

- 168.85km / 663.81km
- 22.3527South 141.5497East
- Pillar 4 – Middleton Hotel

A lunch stop for the weary Cobb & Co passengers. The Hotel was set up in 1876 by a carrier named Wiggins, but the first official licensee was Frederick Henderson in 1889. The township of Middleton was proclaimed on the 9th of May 1908, and quickly grew into a thriving town with Police Station, hotel, shop, school, market garden, hall and several carrying and droving plants. The hotel is still in operation and is a great place to stop for ale.

- 200.83km / 631.83km
- 22.5274South 141.3077East
- Pillar 5 – Makunda Hotel

It was here that the eastbound and westbound coaches met. This hotel was established by Mr Charles Fraser in 1893. Eventually the licence was surrendered in 1955 and the building pulled down and the timber recycled as a private dwelling at 70 Vindex Street in Winton.

- 220.29km / 612.37km
- 22.6372South 141.1641East
- Cawnpore Lookout

The Cawnpore Lookout offers spectacular panoramic views of the surrounding Lilleyvale Hills and is a highlight of the drive between Winton and Boulia. It is located on the edge of both the Winton and Boulia Shire boundaries.

- 247.59km / 585.07km
- 22.7399South 140.9333East
- Pillar 6 – Lucknow

After Cobb & Co had a meal break at Thompsons Tank – Lucknow Station was up and running by 1881.

- 253.77km / 578.89km
- 22.7650South 140.8775East
- Min Min Hotel Ruins turn-off

- 285.23km / 547.43km
- 22.7730South 140.5978East
- Pillar 7 – Hamilton Hotel

A night stop for Cobb & Co – J B Dargie opened the Hamilton Hotel in 1897. Shinplasters (I.O.U's) from the hotel have been found.

- 319.44km / 513.21km
- 22.9167South 140.3129East
- Pillar 8 – Warena Bore

25 miles to go to Boulia. The bore had been put down by 1891 and offered a watering point in one of the dry stretches of the mail run.

- 362.61km / 470.05km
- 22.9116South 139.9110East
- Pillar 9 – Boulia (Min Min Encounter)

By 1878 Boulia Station was in existence, and Boulia later became the most westerly township in the Colony. 1280 acres was proclaimed for a township on the 2nd August 1879. Hotels such as the Royal were well patronised, and later there were shops, blacksmiths, a police station and a school.

■ **388.00km / 444.66km**
■ **Springvale Road turn-off**

■ **406.155km / 426.510km**
■ *23.0226South 140.3010East*
■ **Hamilton River**

This River is one of the main river streams connected by various channels that flows into the Georgina River before making its way to the Lake Eyre Basin. During the wet season this stream can reach high levels cutting access off from Boulia for many days.

■ **414.57km / 418.08km**
■ *23.0523South 140.3689East*
■ **Turkey Nest**

This is known as Fish Hole Bore where you will see a Turkey's Nest (dam) has been erected to replace the old damaged tank as to keep a constant steady flow of water to the water trough. Turkey's Nests are used frequently as a source for water storage throughout not only Outback Queensland but throughout Australia and the world.

■ **436.26km / 396.40km**
■ *23.1694South 140.5294East*
■ **Gravel Pits**

These gravel pits are created by the process of screening the stone out of the gravel, transporting it to another location where the stone is crushed to create aggregate and then supplied to the roadwork operators in our region. This process is carried out all year round whilst the gravel is dry enough to process. The white like gravel that you can see is called mud rock and is used to create a more weather resistant seal on gravel roads like the one you are travelling on now.

■ **438.28km / 394.38km**
■ *23.1834South 140.5417East*
■ **Dog Fence**

The Wild Dog Barrier Fence, previously called the Dingo Barrier Fence, was first proposed in 1948 to protect sheep from wild dog attacks. However, erection was not completed until the late 1950's.

Up until the early 1970's much of the Barrier Fence was generally maintained, however regular instances occurred where pressure had to be applied to landholders to maintain the fence. In their defence, landholders cited poor economic conditions, changes in land use, damage by fire and flood, difficult terrain for fence maintenance and the successful use of baiting for dingo control.

■ **444.54km / 388.12km**
■ *23.2226South 140.5834East*
■ **Diamantina Shire boundary**

■ **483.26km / 349.40km**
■ *23.5260South 140.6959East*
■ **Springvale Bore**

This is a natural bore where there is a constant flow of water rising up from the Artesian Basin. The "Great Artesian Basin" provides the only reliable source of freshwater through much of inland Australia. The basin is the largest and deepest artesian basin in the world, stretching over a total of 1,700,000 square kilometres (660,000 sq m), with measured temperatures ranging from 30°C to 100°C. It underlies 23% of the continent, including most of Queensland, the south-east corner of the Northern Territory, the north-east part of South Australia, and northern New South Wales. The basin is 3,000 metres (9,800 ft) deep in places and is estimated to contain 64,900 cubic kilometres (15,600 cu m) of groundwater.

■ **507.59km / 325.07km**
■ *23.6622South 140.8480East*
■ **Diamantina National Park**

From abundant waterholes, wetlands and river channels to sand dunes, clay pans, gibber plains and weathered sandstone ranges. Diamantina's 507,000ha is home to many rare and threatened species, including bilbies, kowaris and the ground dwelling Plains Wanderer.

■ **522.19km / 310.47km**
■ *23.6747South 140.9875East*
■ **Gum Hole turn-off**

Camping sites are shaded by Coolibah and Bauhinia trees on Whistling Duck Creek, providing the perfect place to pitch a tent.

■ **533.02km / 299.63km**
■ *23.7018South 141.0876East*
■ **Hunters Gorge turn-off**

The campground is located 4km from the turn-off next to Mundewerra Waterhole. Hunters George is a place of great significance to the Maiawali and Karuwali people who have used it as a gathering point for thousands of years.

■ **542.60km / 290.06km**
■ *23.7638South 141.1419East*
■ **Park Headquarters Information Centre**

Take a visit to the Park Headquarters. Learn about the traditional people and what life was like before European settlement. Discover what happened after settlement. Camp, fish and bird watch, or follow the signs for the 175km Warracoota self-guided scenic drive.

■ **550.50km / 282.16km**
■ *23.6948South 141.1493East*
■ **Janet's Leap Lookout turn-off**

Named after Janet Holmes A'Court, a bush track leads to a lookout where the Goyder Range to the West, and the Hamilton Range to

point before the establishment of Winton. The mail came by packhorse from Aramac.

■ **676.93km / 155.72km**
■ *22.9208South 141.9057East*
■ **Diamantina River Road turn-off**

■ **714.23km / 118.42km**
■ *22.7095South 142.1702East*
■ **Rain Gauge / Open downs Mitchell Grass**

The annual rainfall of channel country is quite variable in both its intensity and timing. The rain gauge in the enclosure provides an ongoing record of rainfall. The post and rails prevent damage by stock. Common on the heavy clay, black soil plains around Winton is the native Mitchell grass. This perennial tussock grass is one of the main pasture grasses for beef production in central western Queensland.

■ **733.13km / 99.52km**
■ *22.6030South 142.2974East*
■ **Macalreas Gap**

The origin of the name of this landmark is as yet unknown. Macalreas could have been a member or friend of one of the exploration parties to pass through the area. It is also a possibility that it was named during surveys of the area: Frank Scarr produced the first survey of the area in 1875 and George Jopp surveyed the district in 1879/80.

■ **773.13km / 59.52km**
■ *22.3387South 142.3475East*
■ **View to Mt Booka Booka**

At 225 metres above sea level, Mt Booka Booka is a standout landmark on the Diamantina River flood plains. It was also a landmark for aboriginal people, and it was also mined for the sandstone that went into building the Elderslie Station complex which was completed in 1882.

■ **777.43km / 55.22km**
■ *22.3274South 142.5325East*
■ **Abandoned Collingwood Town**

When Corfield left Townsville in 1878 with wagon loads for a shop, Collingwood was freshly surveyed. He rode ahead and decided the area was too flood prone and turned back to Winton. Two years earlier Thomas Lynett had made the same decision. There is mention of three buildings being on site in 1880 – waiting for hotel licences. However, the Government still offered for sale 69 Collingwood town lots at 12 pounds an acre – the sale being held at Winton in 1882. By 1885 a postal receiving box had been established, and by 1888 a contract had been let to Angus McCrimmon for a weekly mail service from Winton to Boulia via Collingwood. 1890 saw St Patrick's Day horse races being held at Collingwood, and Mr Louis Webber is mentioned as being the owner of the Western Hotel in Collingwood in 1897. Collingwood was

- 458.36km / 374.29km
- 23.3390South 140.5927East
- Elizabeth Springs turn-off

Elizabeth Springs Conservation Park is a small 101 ha park that protects rare mound spring habitats and supports uniquely evolved wildlife. This park is distinctive from its surrounding dry desert environment because of permanent artesian mound springs.

Mineral-rich ground water from the Great Artesian Basin aquifer filters into the park producing mound spring formations. This flowing water deposits calcium and other salts onto the surface, which is the beginning of the mound. These deposits combine with wind-blown sand, mud and plant debris that settles around the outflow area, and mounds are formed that can reach two metres in height. They are often surrounded by dense vegetation of significant conservation importance including the salt marsh pipewort and endemic aquatic herbs and grasses.

- 581.80km / 250.86km
- 23.5403South 141.3736East
- Mayne Hotel ruin

Ruins of Mayne Hotel at the foot of Mayne's Peak. Cellar ruins and cemetery.

- 583.66km / 249.00km
- 23.5290South 141.3902East
- Winton Shire boundary

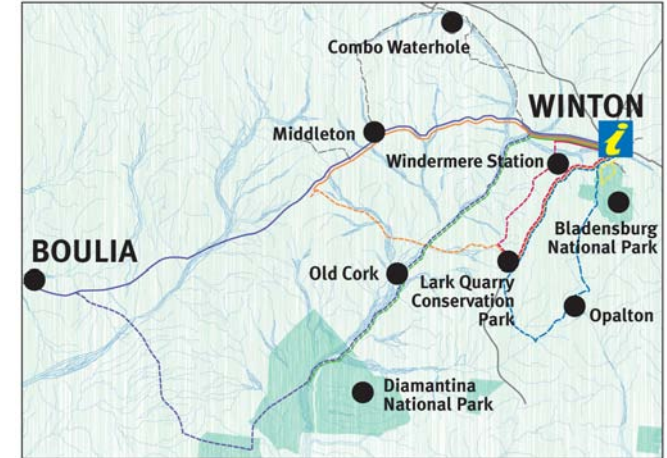
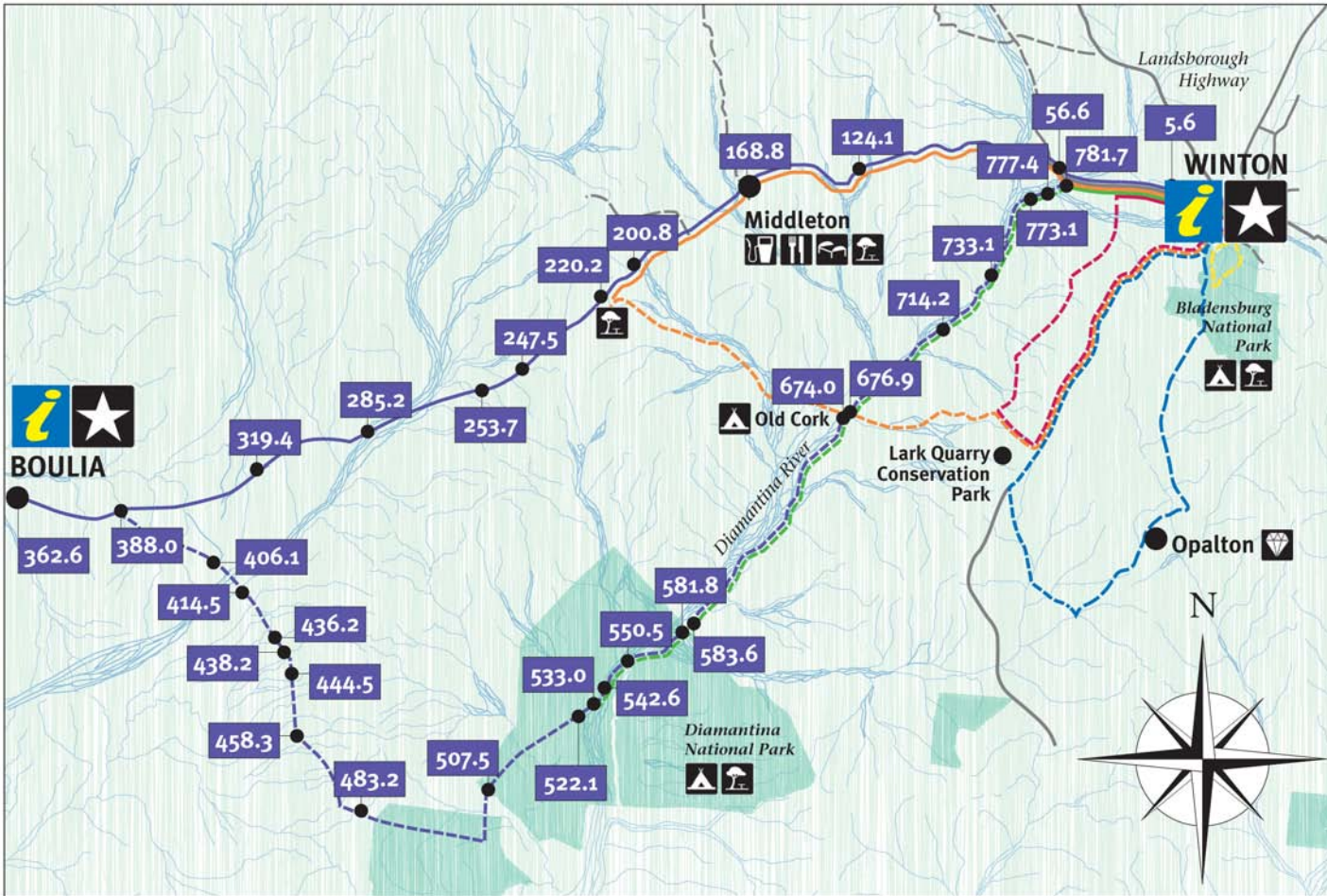
- 674.02km / 158.63km
- 22.9254South 141.8741East
- Old Cork Station

Old Cork Homestead is a vintage sandstone homestead – one of the original properties in Western Queensland. The property was first settled in the 1870's and became the local mail distribution

not far from Elderside Station, almost like a town in its own right. Eventually the problems caused by the flooding of the Western and Diamantina Rivers saw Collingwood's demise.

- 781.74km / 50.92km
- 22.3056South 142.5568East
- Kennedy Development Rd

- 832.66km / 0.00km
- 22.3900South 143.0369East
- Pillar 1 – Winton



Legend

- Sealed Road
- - - Gravelled Road
- - - - Dirt Track
- Rivers
- National Park
- All Facilities
- Fuel
- Accommodation
- Food
- Camp Sites
- Rest Area
- Fossicking

Drive Routes

- 9 Pillars of Cobb & Co
- Route of the River Gums
- The Dinosaur Drive
- Try Your Luck
- Pioneer's Trail

The 9 Pillars of Cobb & Co drive is a return loop drive starting from Pillar 1 in Winton. Points of interest are listed as kilometres and GPS points, so set your trip metre to zero at Pillar 1.