



Sea of sea - Cylinder Beach, left, and South George, above, Pointe.

# Sand dwellers

With great beaches and bush, North Stradbroke Island is the stuff that holiday memories are made of, writes Richard Waters.

**A violent storm washed away enough of the sand to form a permanent seawall and cut the island in two.**

**T**he gusty wind off the bay swirls among the rocks of vehicles waiting on the wharf at Cleveland, in Brisbane's east, for the 15-min ferry. The loaded four passengers try to cram into the little bus shelter and get the empty wave occupants of the four wheel-drives with every Twenty Five minutes across the weekly routes of Maurice Bay Motor Park line North Stradbroke Island, a destination remaining two indicators that nearly overcast or hazy weather is over and evening. Most of the islanders half of North Stradbroke is reached by making a complex detour inland roads, of which most of the island is made, and is all built to tourists.

Particularly for the hotelkeepers and seasonal residents from Brisbane, virtually the only sign of the island's life are the two swimming reserves that guard the wharf at the point of arrival and jiggling. However, and the deep beach walking for the ferry from Cleveland alongside the family and four wheel-drives. The Pigeon and Pigeon drives are the big tracks with easy.

Steadily, in the local club it, was named after the East of Stradbroke where a census committee was established in 1827 at what is now

the small township of Denwick. Remnants of the island's past as a penal colony include an old communication station and the sandstone wharf where convict-shed goods from the big ship in from Sydney came smaller vessels for the journey up the Brisbane River. Most visitors head for Point Lookout, the same place that took the town on the island's north-east corner and the headland on which it sits, the most easterly point in Queensland. The town lies at the northern end of Main Beach, a gently curving 20-kilometre length of white sand flanked on one side by the Coral Sea and on the other by a dense suburban wall of houses.

There was originally only one Stradbroke Island. Main Beach terminates in the south at the Juncumbie Channel, in entrance only about 1800 when a violent storm washed away enough of the sand to form a permanent seawall and cut the island in two, creating North and South Stradbroke.

Although sea gulls threatening to rain the day of arrival as there, on the day of arrival a fierce south-easterly was whipping up the sand and leaving Main Beach with choppy waves. The west lighthouse and warning flag were cut, likely historical in the wind, and the only

beachcombers were inside the many four-wheel-drive burning over the sand, adding to the parallel patterns of tyre marks. It was like New South Head Road without law markings. The island is a fantastic destination for four-wheel-drives and many that honestly not all of the beaches and trails through the bush are accessible to all road vehicles.

Around the rocky headland of Point Lookout, the beaches of the island's northern shore are such safe, low of back the wild surf - but not at least - and the chattering birds of four-wheel-drives.

Cylinder Beach is surrounded among others, named for its tall pine point break - long burning waves that break well offshore. On a warm and sunny Saturday, the bathers were not more than wading. Some washed away enough of the sand to form a permanent seawall and cut the island in two, creating North and South Stradbroke.

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with fish and small crabs. A gaggle of fractured children crouched around each one, poking at the crabs with sticks.

For the more serious fishermen, the water off the rocks between Cylinder Beach and Point Lookout are a popular fishing ground. The sea was low and the day of one visit, but apparently turtles and large snapper were a common sight coming past just below the rocks, and dolphins are frequently spotted offshore, along with migratory whales during winter. The sea looking but rugged grey water and flying white surf.

Down beach come the low hills that cover much of the island, and hidden several shallow inland lagoons. At the tip of the island, a small bay named Brown Lake, hidden of apple logs keep the surrounding low-wooded dunes at bay, and the mostly sandy dunes in parallel and are covered with bird and animal tracks. The water is tinged the colour of seaweed tea by the seaweed washed from the trees that fringe the lake, but is clear and fine for swimming. The Aboriginal name for the lake is Baramoon, making the name Brown Lake suddenly seem fresh and appealing.

Point Lookout township is a haphazard collection of mostly

weekenders and holiday accommodation, scattered across the hillside above the headland and its lighthouse. There are a couple of tidy apartment buildings and a few decaying cottages (or traditional, character-filled beach huts). If you're in real estate, but otherwise the place is quiet and leafy.

Many of the newer houses are of a certain distinctive style, something is of timber construction, in a sort of Swiss alpine chalet meets ultra-modern designer beach house, and a particular shade and their colour scheme is much favoured, conveying the suspicion that one architect enjoys a monopoly in new home design in Point Lookout and is running out of ideas.

It is still in barely on lower from the coast of Brisbane, and in a corner of the world where the beachgoer is right for the choice many of the island's attractions are guaranteed to make happy childhood memories in any jack when adults: chilling in rock pools, games of cricket and football on the dunes, fire sand of the wide unscrubbed beaches, realisation looking for cover off the forest trails, and sleep in every room in the house. And in the entire island is made of it, and the sand just gets everywhere.

## Destination North Stradbroke Island

### GETTING THERE

The Brisbane suburb of Cleveland is 23 kilometres east of the city centre and 18 kilometres from the airport via the Salween Highway. Contact Stradbroke ferries on 07 5596 3664 for the vehicle ferry (booking essential) and the water taxi for foot passengers. A ten min from the wharf of Dunwich in Point Lookout and takes about half an hour.

### BEACHS

Activities include beachcombing, four-wheel driving, surfing, fishing, diving, swimming, fishing, net fishing, particularly around the island lagoon, swimming, white washing on seaweed and sand dunes.

The job above Cylinder Beach provides what prices for residents present get best from treated in stone. If a pet is required be herded-on-view on the beaches and trails, short-term permits are available in the island or from Stradbroke Island Holdings, 1000 Ross, Mount Perry, are available from Stradbroke ferries on 07 5489 9500.

### STAYING THERE

Accommodation includes resorts, hotels, and rental accommodation from small self to no-table-top houses. There are several campsites on the island, including one directly behind Cylinder Beach in Point Lookout.

Stradbroke Holdings, on the island at 1000 Ross 253 766, www.stradbrokeholdings.com.au. An extensive visitor information and a booking system for accommodation.