

From Wilpena Pound, it was time to head south and begin our journey home. But, not without a few more sites to see and finally, the chance to lock the hubs in and see what the Patrol could do. With the huge amount of water and more on the way, the last part of the trip was sure to be an adventure.

Visiting Quorn is a bit of a hub when it comes to exploring the Flinders Ranges. There are so many places to see leading out from this quaint little town. There are good facilities and a playground for the kids. But one of the main attractions is the Pichi Richi railway.



The charming town of Quorn is a popular stop in the Flinders area. Photo: David Leslie

The Pichi Richi Railway

The Pichi Richi railway was opened in 1879 to link Quorn to Port Augusta as part of the Great Northern Railway. Nowadays it is a great tourist attraction. It still runs some of the old steam and diesel engines along, taking passengers to and from Port Augusta. If you don't book tickets on the train, it's still worthwhile watching as the train rolls into the station.

It was quite spectacular and educational for the kids to see a magnificent steam engine rolling into the station. Operating as traditionally as possible, it takes you back into an era gone past. Once stopped you can get up close to the engine and have a good look, and take a few photos.

The spectacle draws quite a crowd as the engine turns around. It then hooks back up to the carriages for the return journey to Port Augusta. If you time this with lunch at the playground, it makes for a great part of your day.



It's quite exciting to watch an old steam engine operate. Photo: David Leslie.

Argadells Station

Just North of Quorn is a station called Argadells. This property is well known for its camping and 4WD'ing and is home to Mount Arden. This is the highest peak in the Southern Flinders Ranges. Along with 5 gorges on the property, you can spend a lot of time exploring this beautiful area.

Just when we thought we had seen a lot of flowers... well, I have never seen anything as spectacular as the sea of colour from Mt Arden out the back of Argadells.

Camping at the Argadells

Argadells has a caravan park and unpowered sites further down along the creek. It also has bush camping out the back only accessible by 4WD. We stayed in the unpowered campsites which was absolutely wonderful. Shady trees line the creek, there's lots of grass, a big fire pit - and a flushing toilet!



The unpowered campsites at the Argadells was a great experience. Photo: David Leslie.

Settling in for a rough night of weather

As we set up camp, lit the fire and got ready for some tucker – the wind picked up and some big black clouds rolled in over the range. I had about 10 minutes from the time we noticed the change before it unleashed its fury on us. As I hurried to secure the fly over the caravan, and put double pegs on the ropes – thunder and lightning struck.

With the torrential rain came a very strong and fierce wind that rocked the caravan. We hadn't quite finished cooking, so I had to run out to grab the oven off the fire. Once inside, we sat down to a hot meal while the storm raged around us. Whilst a little scary, we were safe and warm in the caravan and I found myself thankful that this time we weren't in a tent!



The torrential rain made the creeks rush with water. Photo: David Leslie.

The ascent up the Arden 4wd track

The next day the sun was shining and there was little evidence of the storm that hit the evening before. The caretakers came down to make sure we were okay before checking on some other campers. They told us they would check out the tracks and make sure it was alright to head up Mt Arden. After a hearty breakfast of bacon and eggs, we got the all clear to venture out.

Whilst the track was muddy in some places the going wasn't too tough. As we passed through a steep gorge to the west of the property it was like heading back to when dinosaurs roamed the earth. We very quickly forgot we were just 20km from Quorn as we headed out along the tracks to climb Mt Arden.

The track at Mt Arden is very steep and definitely only suitable for vehicles with low range and a bit of clearance. As we started to climb higher and higher the view behind us became even more spectacular.



The Mt Arwen track is pretty steep but absolutely worth the views. Photo: David Leslie

A carpet of flowers

As we climbed higher, the view behind us became even more spectacular. From driving through overgrown tracks littered with flowers, we were now gazing out onto entire mountain sides that had turned bright yellow or purple. This really is the meaning of seeing a 'carpet' of flowers. The only way to describe it is magical!

Once at the top, we were greeted with calm conditions and 360-degree views all the way to the Gulf and as far north as Wilpena Pound. After one more photo, it was time to head down the other side.



The sides of Mt Arwen were absolutely bursting with colour! Photo: David Leslie

The descent

Now if we thought heading up was steep, we didn't know what steep was until we started

heading down. The track is one way, you are not allowed to climb up the descent track. We soon realised why, as we were left hanging by our seat belts staring straight down! The track has some big holes, so the Patrol soon found its limit as it stretched its legs and picked up a few wheels. This resulted in us sliding for half a metre or so at times. All in all, if you remember to pick a smooth line, stay in the ruts, first gear low range and keep braking and steering to a minimum – it's a straightforward yet exhilarating descent.

Once back down we continued through the valleys, following the creek back to the range and back to camp. This was a very fun track with a few steep inclines and declines in the creek bed and surrounding hills. There was plenty to see, as the wildlife was out to greet us along with even more flowers, turning it into a sea of colour.

Argadells is an adventure destination all by itself. We could easily spend a week here exploring the property and surrounding areas. Make sure you put Argadells on your list for your next Flinders Ranges trip!



A family snap at Mt Arwen before we began the descent back down. Photo: David Leslie

A spontaneous stop at Mambray Creek

Now, truth be told we were never planning to visit Mambray Creek as this is predominantly a bushwalkers paradise. But we had received word that there was more nasty weather on the way. For us, Mambray Creek provided the perfect stop over to ease the distance of heading home.

I have stayed at Mambray Creek many times as I used to arrange guide walks through the Mt Remarkable National Park. I have seen water in the creek, but nothing quite prepared me for how full it was this time. To see the debris marked a few metres higher in the trees, it's a wonder the actual campsite had not been washed away in the storm.



The water was flowing rapidly through Mambray Creek. Photo: David Leslie

This is a beautiful spot, though it's a little more commercial these days as it resembles a caravan park. It's still set amongst the old river gums and gives you a sense of bush camping with some clean facilities only a short walk away.

If you get the chance, pack your hiking boots and an overnight pack and explore the National Park, as its true treasures are accessible only by foot.

We took the opportunity to stroll along the nature walk beside the creek, finding hollowed out trees for the kids to play in and lots of wildlife to see. After that, it was just one last fire and a game of scrabble left for our Flinders Ranges trip.



Mambray Creek was the perfect place for a stop on the way home. Photo: David Leslie

A summary of our Flinders Ranges trip

The Flinders Ranges is a remarkable area, boasting some of the oldest geological formations in the world. There is so much to see and so much adventure no matter what you're into. This place is a spectacular spot to visit all year-round.

But, just add water and it's like the entire country comes to life! It lifts everything up a gear, and I can honestly say that in all my years of travelling and guiding the area, there is nothing

like the Flinders Ranges in the spring!

Catch [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) of the Spring Adventure in the Flinders series if you missed them.

When do you think is the best time to visit the Flinders Ranges?