

Rebecca Fleming

“Don’t Waste Time ... Go North”

The Representation of North Queensland as a Tourist Destination in the Post-Second World War ‘Holiday and Travel’ Magazine

Abstract: This article examines a selection of content from the Australian travel magazine ‘Holiday and Travel’ published between 1947 and 1951 with a focus on articles and advertising promoting North Queensland as a travel destination. The content surveyed reveals a variety of themes from wellness, relaxation, and recreation to calls for further development of regions, contrasting with articles highlighting the virtues of the natural beauty of the North. The articles highlighting the burgeoning development of tourism construct this new industry as a pathway to economic success with little commentary on potential environmental impact. This provides important historical context for the increasing tourism development which took place in the state in the second half of the 20th century and beyond. In some articles the spectre of the Second World War emerges as the benefactor of infrastructure which facilitates easier travel. This article argues that the magazine continued some of the trends in travel writing begun in the interwar period, while also operating in a new post-war context, wherein writers incorporated an active intent to offer readers a mental transition from the challenges of the war years to a potential future of leisure, relaxation and economic prosperity through travel.

To those who live in the southern states, North Queensland and its warmer climate is often appealing in the middle of the year. This was also true in the mid-20th century as the author quoted in this title called out to would-be-travellers seeking warmer climes. This article examines a sample of content published in the ‘Holiday and Travel’ magazine which ran between 1947 and 1951.¹ Published in Sydney, the magazine covered a broad range of topics and tourist destinations in Australia and overseas. This article focuses specifically on content relating to North Queensland to explore how the region was represented in this significant period of development both in North Queensland and in the travel industry in Australia. In doing so it illuminates how North Queensland was represented to a broader Australian audience in the period and reveals trends in the representation of tourism more generally in the post-war period.

The first half of the 20th century had limited opportunities for leisure travel around the country, and the First World War, the Great Depression and the Second World War were obstacles to the development of a strong domestic tourism industry. However, the late 1940s and 1950s, with a rebounding economy, the rise of car ownership and air travel, paved the way for tourism. As a consequence, the immediate post-war period was a turning point for the development of travel magazines in Australia. As Richard White has highlighted, paid leave was increasingly enshrined in legislation in this period, which allowed a broader cross-section of Australians to take extended leave.² This opened a

1 Also known by the titles ‘Air Travel and Holiday’ and ‘Holiday and Travel in Australia’. For the purposes of this article the magazine will be generally referred to as Holiday and Travel.

2 See Richard White: On Holidays, p. 122.

market for commercial publications to curate and promote destinations to fill that leave, both in Australia and overseas. Stephen Garton has also noted technical advances in the 1940s that enhanced magazine production, allowing for visual illustrations – including colour photographs – in an affordable publication for the mass market.³

'Holiday and Travel', which launched in December 1947, aimed to be both an informative and entertaining reference source for its readers. The opening editorial stated:

It will be a real magazine, with authoritative articles by leading writers, photographs in colour and black and white by masters of the craft. We hope to catch your interest, to instruct as well as entertain, so that as our magazine "finds its feet" and expands month by month it will become your constant companion eagerly awaited, not put down until every word is read – and even then placed carefully aside, that you may turn back and consult it at the need.⁴

The target audience for the magazine appears to have been relatively broad. The topics covered and its advertisements were pitched at both women and men. Erica Moran has noted the travel literature of the 1940s and 1950s in the American context tended to focus on honeymooners.⁵ This trend is reflected in many of the articles and advertisements in 'Holiday and Travel' though not exclusively. The articles have less of a focus on families, but children are occasionally mentioned or pictured in articles and advertisements. One advertisement for Dunlop tyres (Fig. 1) featured a family gathered around their car eating a picnic near the beach, explicitly invoking the driving holidays Richard White has argued were prominent in Australian culture in the period.⁶

The magazine was clearly aimed at Australians with a European background. As will be discussed later First Nations Australians do not appear to be part of the intended audience for the magazine. Rather, some First Nations people are framed as part of the travel experience in some articles.

Magazines were an influential source of information and cultural influence for Australians in the mid-20th century. As Anna Johnston and Palo Magagnoli have noted, magazines



Fig. 1: Dunlop Tyres advertisement emphasising the growing importance of the car to family holidays.

3 See Stephen Garton: *Return Fantasies*, p. 718.

4 Editorial of 'History and Travel' issue 1, December 1947, p. 4.

5 See Erica Moran: *No Vacation for Mother*, pp. 439 f.

6 See *Holiday and Travel*, June 1951, p. 60. See also, *Holiday and Travel* June, 1951 p. 3; Richard White: *On Holidays*, p. 133.

are “a vast, invaluable and as-yet-untapped archive of everyday life in Australia”.⁷ They suggest examining the run of a magazine offers the opportunity to understand the “diversity within individual titles”.⁸ In this article, examining the North Queensland related specific content within ‘Holiday and Travel’ provides insight into how North Queensland was represented to a wider audience in a commercial publication. For the purpose of this article North Queensland is being defined as Mackay and above. The articles discussed relate to coastal cities in North Queensland, as this was the focal point for travel in the region.

An article in the 1950 issue of ‘Holiday and Travel’ entitled ‘Don’t Waste Time ... Go North’ evokes the typical Queensland sunshine state image readers would expect:

What joy to walk over the soft, warm, yielding sand down to the water’s edge. A swim from a beach on a tropic island must be experienced to be appreciated. The water seems so cool, translucent, and inviting. It’s not cold and not too warm, just the right temperature to stay in for half an hour, one hour, two hours if you feel like it without experiencing that goose fleshy chill so well remembered in the colder South.⁹

This depiction of a Whitsunday Island, describing a warm, inviting destination is a stereotypical piece of travel journalism, but my analysis of the articles in this magazine reveals more depth in the representations of North Queensland than might be expected for a travel magazine. The Queensland tourism advertisements scattered throughout issues over the years of the magazine’s run reflect a similar picture. However, a deeper analysis of the magazine reveals greater depth in how North Queensland was portrayed. Thematic issues relevant to the tourism industry in Queensland in the post-Second-World-War period, such as commentary on the advantages and disadvantages of development, the role of service personnel in the Second World War in raising the profile of the region, the rise of air travel increasing visitation, evidence of the shift to cruising in the Whitsundays and the emerging luxury market in this period, reveal a layered understanding of the tourism context of North Queensland in the mid-20th century.

Examining the representation of one region in depth serves to reveal the editors and contributors had researched the areas well enough to be aware and, in some cases, quite transparent about the potential strengths and weaknesses of tourism in the region. More than solely a vehicle for tourism advertising, the magazine delivered on its stated intent of serving readers as an informative and authoritative guide. In this way, the writers were continuing the educative approach to the North which McGregor argues travel writers had sought to adopt in the interwar period, with travel writing being an ‘entertaining means of informing the public about a part of Australia that few had seen but many regarded with misgivings.’¹⁰ ‘Holiday and Travel’ was one publication seeking to address those misgivings through its articles: accounts of North Queensland vary considerably between articles, depending on the author’s perceptions and biases.

7 Anna Johnston, *Palo Magagnoli: Histories of the Illustrated Magazine in Australia*, p. 4.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

9 Harold J. Pollock: *Don’t Waste Time ... Go North*, p. 14.

10 See Russell McGregor: *Excursions Through Emptiness*, p. 423.

It has been well documented that the late 1940s and 1950s saw an increased focus in infrastructure and other tourism developments in the North Queensland area.¹¹ As late as the 1930s, communication infrastructure between the mainland and the Whitsunday islands was so limited one tour operator is said to have relied on a carrier pigeon to communicate with his wife when he collected guests and transported them by boat from the mainland to their resort.¹² Roads and transport were problematic and the standard of hotels was considered low in some areas.¹³ The tourism development discussion prevalent in North Queensland at the time was also reflected in several articles in 'Holiday and Travel'.

Some articles approached this discussion practically, highlighting the logistics of using new tour buses and facilities. One article detailed at length various organized tours visitors could take from Mackay with timings and prices detailed:

EUNGELLA RANGE - An all day tour to this beautiful range which includes a comprehensive run on the top of the Range covering 130 miles for the round tour. This is the outstanding motor tour in the Mackay District. The Jungle vegetation on the Range is exceptionally rich and luxuriant, orchids, elkhorns, strangler figs, vines, tree and ground ferns being seen in abundance. Eungella is said to be richer in palm groves than other of the Mountain Ranges in Queensland. The name is an aboriginal word meaning "Land of the Cloud". This is a trip visitors to Mackay should not miss. Tour leaves every Sunday, Wednesday and Friday at 8.45am, returning 6pm. Morning tea is available at Netherdale. Coach Tour, including lunch, Wednesday and Friday, £1/14/-. Sunday £1/15.¹⁴

This description of Mackay may have been collaboration between the writer and the Queensland Tourist Bureau. While Barr notes the numbers of tourists who visited the area difficult to ascertain thanks to poor record keeping at the time, magazines like 'Holiday and Travel' are valuable sources demonstrating how the areas were presented to *potential* tourists and the extent to which North Queensland featured as a travel destination against other locations in Australia and overseas.¹⁵

The article also emphasised the client service available in the area. Many articles relating to North Queensland focused more on the landscape than people in the region. This is one of the rare examples of emphasising interactions with the local community, but it is a mediated tourist focused interaction, aimed at demonstrating the locals were capable of providing good service.

Immediately on arrival, visitors are aware that they are really welcome, townsfolk are friendly and co-operative, and there is a well-worded brochure in every hotel bedroom, giving details of local tours, etc. Hotel receptionists are anxious to let everyone know that the Tourist Bureau officers will gladly assist in the planning of itineraries. Itineraries can be of considerable variety, for as well as a number of organized trips to the Reef Islands, there are beautiful beaches along the coast, visits to the canefields and sugar mills, and fifty miles inland there is the Eungella

11 See for example, Todd Barr: No Swank Here; Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity, David Symons: Made in Queensland, p. 117.

12 See Todd Barr: No Swank Here, p. 34; Lyall R. Ford: Role of the Road Network in the Development of Far North Queensland.

13 See Todd Barr: No Swank Here, p. 34.

14 Catherine Gaul: Editor on Tour Visits, p. 7.

15 See Todd Barr: No Swank Here, p. 42.

Range, where mountain scenery and tropical vegetation provide interesting contrast to coastal attractions. All tours are well organized and clearly set out. The offices of the Queensland Tourist Bureau and the Mackay Tourist & Development Association, are conveniently situated to the leading hotels. Unusual in this country there is the definite impression that assistance is available, and inquiries will be met with courtesy.¹⁶

Meanwhile, describing Townsville, the reference to “several reasonably good hotels” is an acknowledgment that hotels in North Queensland were considered inferior to luxury hotels in the south.

In Townsville itself there are plenty of facilities for sport and recreation: golf, bowls, tennis and swimming. The theatres are cool and comfortable and there is a good shopping centre. Hotel accommodation is of varying standards, but there are several reasonably good hotels.¹⁷

In their history of Queensland, Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity, and David Symons, note the post-war period marked a turning point in the development of tourism infrastructure in the region.¹⁸

While development was noted as a selling point in some articles, others picked up on the tensions between the need for development and the potential impact on the environment or the potential for over commercialization. The following 1950 article noted the importance of ‘planning, control, wisdom and caution’:

At the moment the North Coast has a future more than a present. Air travel is one factor which is bringing it within the time factor of the average holiday maker. But there is still much to do in the way of organisation. Those who travel there at this moment must not expect all the comforts of home. Old timers hope that it will not suffer the same fate of exploitation which faces the tourist in the South Seas, where everything is reduced to a sale of cents and dollars and the tourist is a bewildered character dressed in a spotless suit, straw hat and carrying a camera; kidding himself that he is living as nature intended. There is a future for the Reef and a good one, providing there is planning, control, wisdom and caution; and there is little reason why the North Coast shouldn't become the playground of the world.¹⁹

Another author reflected on the same issue regarding National Parks:

Authorities differ as to what a National Park should embrace, or what its purpose should be. It all depends on which side of the fence you sit; whether you view the scene in light of public recreation mainly, or whether your eyes are centred on the objective of preserving natural features and native fauna and flora. In the past there have been some pretty vigorous debates on the subject. In more than one case, the threat of commercial exploitation has put a keen edge on the controversy.²⁰

The growth of tourism in this period may have been influenced by the Second World War. Fitzgerald, Megarrity and Symons note the presence of troops in North Queensland in the Second World War served to promote awareness of the area as a potential tourist destination in the post-war years.²¹ Todd Barr also confirms military personnel returned as tourists post-war and Government

16 Catherine Gaul: Editor on Tour Visits, p. 7.

17 Id.: Editor on Tour, p. 50.

18 See Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity, David Symons: *Made in Queensland*, p. 117.

19 s.n.: *Following the Sun to the Great Barrier Reef*, p. 91.

20 William Kinsella: *Australia's Scenic Strongholds*, p. 19f.

21 See Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity, David Symons: *Made in Queensland*, p. 117.

officials believed "ex-servicemen had contributed significantly to the growth of Queensland tourism".²² Several articles in 'Holiday and Travel' magazine in the post-war period mention that troops were stationed in the area, using this recent history to provide context for their readership. An article about the 'Atherton Tableland' notes:

When Japan entered the war and our soldiers were scattered on the Tablelands, these lakes were a Mecca for troops on leave. Barrine was a Convalescent Depot, and Eacham was a Sunday resort for all troops. It seemed incongruous in an isolated and sylvan spot like Eacham, to see different sections of the shore earmarked for different ranks of soldiers. One shady corner for instance, was labelled "officers Only," whilst another were reserved for "AWAS" or "Ors".²³

'Don't Waste Time ... Go North' was written in the second person, consciously addressing a population which was still unsettled by war:

Are you nervy, unsettled, longing for a break from the monotonous routine? Are you frightened of the future, your health, income tax or old age? Does your tie feel as though it's choking you? Do your feet ache to be free of shoes? Do you long to walk barefoot over warm, golden sands and bathe in cool water? Do you dream of sundrenched tropical islands, seas alive with iridescent fish, coconut palms and blazing white beaches? Well then, don't waste time. Throw a few things into a port and hurry North to the Great Barrier Reef. You'll soon forget your problems in the sheer joy of exploring this wonder of the world.²⁴

The caption for a photograph in a 1951 article also addresses a weary reader: "If you're bored with the winter, the city, or life in general there is always something new on the reef; be it a yarn, new companions or tastier fish".²⁵ Many returned service personnel were perceived as 'nervy' or unsettled and there was a popular expectation they may have been having trouble adjusting back to civilian life. It seems possible the magazine editors were consciously or subconsciously harnessing this sense of dislocation and cultivating it toward an interest in travel and thus an ongoing readership. Stephen Garton has argued there was an explicit societal attempt in this period toward "remasculinisation, returning men to 'civilisation' and the behaviours and subjectivities demanded of productive citizens, faithful husbands and dutiful fathers".²⁶ Travel could be seen as one means by which to encourage returned men to conform to the 'traditional' nuclear family model.

More generally, the magazine did conform to traditional gender norms. This is particularly evident in the fashion spreads which were a common feature in the magazine. 'Holiday and Travel' often featured fashion advertisements for women and men's travel attire. This inclusion is illustrative of the growing commodification of travel which began in the mid-19th century.²⁷ The May 1949 issue featured a women's fashion spread which complemented a feature article on the Great Barrier Reef. It sold the idea that a trip to the reef required a specific wardrobe:

22 Todd Barr: No Swank Here, p. 34.

23 Henrik Brammal: Atherton Wonderland, p. 50. 'AWAS' is the acronym for 'Australian Women's Army Service' and 'ORs' is an acronym for 'Other Ranks'.

24 Harold J Pollock: Don't Waste Time ... Go North, p. 13.

25 s.n.: Isles of the Sun, p. 6.

26 Stephen Garton: Return Fantasies, p. 718.

27 See Will MackIntosh: Ticketed Through, p. 63.

"If you plan a trip to the Barrier Reef to escape the cold months ahead, these pages may help you cope with your wardrobe problems".²⁸

Erica Morin has argued travel literature reinforced traditional gendered roles through:

clothing representations, recommendations for daily activities, implied recreational preferences, assignments of tasks or responsibilities before and during vacations, vacation destination decision-making, concern for the enjoyment of "all family members," and the distinct presence or absence of certain family members in travel articles.²⁹

The Great Barrier Reef fashion spread (Fig. 2) included ten designs, the majority of which were dresses or skirts, reinforcing traditional gender expectations with a focus on femininity and fashion.

Morin notes that this presentation of women in "delicate skirts and blouses, often in high heels, and with perfectly coifed hair" was common in travel articles and advertisements in the 1940s and 1950s.³⁰ This particular fashion spread included a few nods to practicality such as a "cover up blouse, very necessary in the tropics", a reference to pique as a practical material, useful "if launder-

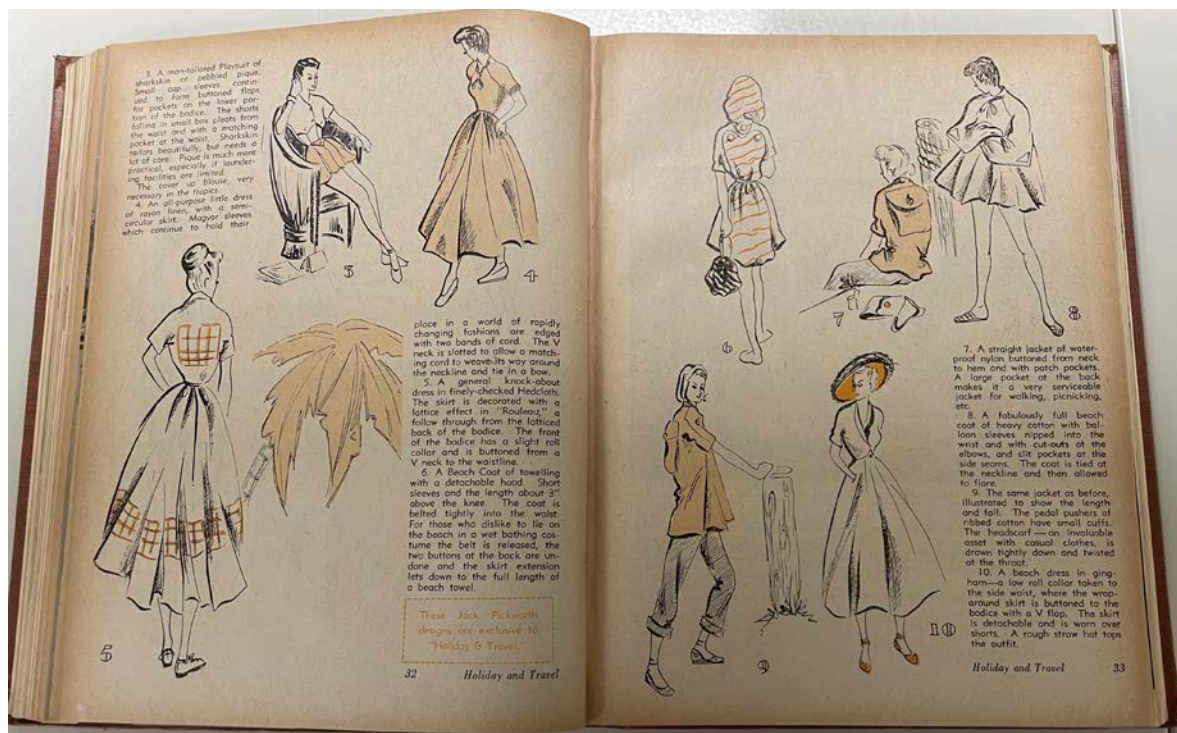


Fig. 2: The fashion spread promoted the designs as exclusive Jack Pickworth designs created for the magazine.

ing facilities are limited" or a "water-proof nylon" jacket with "a large pocket in the back [which] makes it a very serviceable jacket for walking, picnicking etc".³¹ Notably none of the clothing would facilitate any rigorous activity this aligns with Morin's suggestion that travel literature presented particular activities as gendered, in this case by implication through the clothing presented. The

28 s.n.: Following the Sun in Cotton and Rayon, p. 31.

29 Erica Morin: No Vacation for Mother, pp. 439f.

30 Ibid., p. 446.

31 Ibid., p. 33.

gendered activities were also reflected in the photographs for the companion article. The women were presented lying or walking on the beach, sitting by the pool or gazing at the view in the distance, while the men were pictured undertaking the more 'masculine' fishing activities.

The Great Barrier Reef article also references the burgeoning luxury market in the region, but tempers the expectations of tourists. "Apart from a few instances", the author warns that "hotel accommodation would rate as fourth or fifth class to any other nation". It also alludes to the postwar challenges in building accommodation with "many other industries still having priority in the building line". The article notes the purchase of Hayman and Daydream Islands by the Barrier Reef Islands Pty Ltd, and some luxury cruises around the islands.³² Dunk Island is singled out as coming the closest to matching luxury tourist brochure superlatives but with the accommodation described as "provided for forty guests in fibro army type lodges",³³ the expectations of luxury for a reader must have been low.

While the articles may have tempered expectations somewhat, advertisements were less circumspect. The March 1951 issue an advertisement for the Royal Hayman Hotel dubbed it "The finest resort South of the Equator". It encourages the visitor to "Holiday in idyllic luxury at the Royal Hayman Hotel, the finest vacation playground south of the Line".³⁴ Another advertisement for the Italian Flotta Lauro cruise line advertised the Barrier Reef as part of the route to Italy, a stopover for the emerging international tourism market.³⁵

Richard White has observed in this period that many Australians of different classes regularly returned to the same coastal location for holidays, usually driving to the destination, staying in modest accommodation. White suggests people spent money on travel goods rather than travel services.³⁶ To some extent magazines like 'Holiday and Travel' challenged this trend by promoting both domestic and international destinations, with regular advertisements for air travel, because such magazines were aiming to shift the market to promote holidays in more distant locations and encourage the exploration of different destinations rather than a regular holiday destination. However, the magazine editors were also keen to tap into the trend for buying travel goods, with a regular feature page on decorating vacation houses providing encouraging people to spent money on goods to fill the home, as White has noted.

Another feature of the magazine was the monthly competition feature 'Worst or Best Holiday' run in the 1951 issues which offered readers the opportunity to share their own experiences with photographs. The winning entry for July 1951 written by Mr and Mrs Krause from Palm Island provides a rare insight into the travels of a North Queensland couple in other parts of Australia. The couple begin the article explaining this eight-month trip had been anticipated for thirty-two years. They note many people enquired why they hadn't travelled overseas for such a long trip, the couple reflected:

32 See s.n.: Following the Sun to the Great Barrier Reef. *Holiday and Travel*, May 1949, p. 11.

33 Ibid.

34 *Holiday and Travel*, March 1951, p. 34.

35 See *ibid.*, p. 38.

36 See Richard White: *On Holidays*, p. 147.

we wanted to know our own land first. Places hitherto just named on a piece of paper or a mere dot on a map now mean something to us. They are realities, and if it ever should become our good fortune to go abroad we feel we could now go as ambassadors of this great land of ours with a greater confidence having had this first hand knowledge of it.³⁷

Through this series of reader accounts we gain an insight into how people constructed themselves as travellers and their reflections on the destinations they visited. Mr and Mrs Krause, who were likely unusual in the length of their domestic trip, reported visiting New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. They began their trip in the Tablelands of North Queensland, recording it as 'the most entrancing' of their trip, with natural wonders like the Baron Falls and the Millstream Falls among the highlights. The winner for the November-December issue focused on a 'worst trip' – a woman described her rained-out camping trip with her younger brother Charlie. The author slept in the car for the night, while her brother slept under a tarpaulin strung between two trees. The heavy rain began to pool above the sleeping Charlie until

the bulge of water on the tarpaulin above Charlie became lower and lower (he still slept) until it was only an inch or two above his face. When John discovered this, he called out to Charlie to move, and Charlie sat up in a great hurry, bumped his head into the canvas above him, and sent the water in it splashing in all directions.³⁸

These kinds of accounts are valuable additions to travel memoir literature, revealing a wider cross-section of travel accounts providing insight into travellers who may not have recorded their experiences in a longer memoir.

The representation of North Queensland as a place and the depiction of the region's landscapes varies in the magazine. The dominant presentation in many of the articles is of a sun-drenched landscape with an emphasis on exploring and an active lifestyle. This aligns with Josh Woodward's recent analysis of the representation of Mount Buffalo advertisements in the 1930s issues of 'Walkabout' magazine. Woodward suggests this presentation of an "idealized version of Australian nature" was intended to have a democratizing effect and harnessing nature for development.³⁹ Woodward argues this imagery had its antecedents in "the cultural and nationalist art and literary movements of the nineteenth century".⁴⁰ While Mt Buffalo and North Queensland are very different locations there is a through line of sun and outdoor recreation in the presentation of landscape in these different tourism focused magazines.

One 1950 article in 'Holiday and Travel' depicts the peace and tranquillity of Eacham and Barrine, while also emphasizing the recreational opportunities.

Not far from here lie the beautiful volcanic crater lakes Eacham and Barrine. Eacham is almost circular with a surface area of 126 acres. It is a lovely and tranquil spot, sapphire blue, smooth as glass, and warm to swim in, though incredibly deep. Thick scrub and high trees enclose it on all sides, and resonant birdsongs echo through the cool fern laced jungle. Pathways lead to the water's edge, where there are dressing sheds, spring boards, and floating platforms for sun-baking.

37 Mr & Mrs Krause: *Our Ideal Holiday*, p. 39 ff.

38 Gayle Lynd: *Charlie's Camping Holiday*, p. 27.

39 Josh Woodward: *Glorious in Spring, Exhilarating in Winter*, p. 544.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 555.

The sister lake, twice as big and about fifteen miles distant by road is said to be connected by subterranean river, as the water levels are always the same.⁴¹

Other representations are more otherworldly and 'othering' in a way that differs from the Mt Buffalo depictions described by Woodward. North Queensland is Australia, but it is emphasized by some authors as different, a kind of exotic domestic travel.

In the April 1950 issue, the article 'Caves – and Chillagoe' writer Robert Archer emphasizes the difference of place. It opens with a haunting image, the sun present but not welcoming:

Sun-Bleached grass, blue black rocks reflecting the heatwaves shimmering down among the lonely ironbarks and bloodwoods, somber, black cockatoos, mournfully crying from the red quartz ridges, pink-breasted galahs wheeling in sudden flight against the jagged outlines of a jutting mass of limestone – this is the Chillagoe country, land of a thousand and one mines, a million hopes, and one vast ruin of closed-down smelters.⁴²

The language is abrupt, harsh and unsettling. Words like "jagged", "lonely", "wheeling in sudden flight" emphasize the effect. Later, the caverns in the region come into focus, the writer highlights danger mixed with adventure describing the activities of a group of miners and prospectors.

Here are some of the largest and most beautiful caverns to be found, almost unknown and unexplored. Four intrepid men made many trips into their uncharted depths, braving the treacherous, yawning chasms, winding galleries and narrow passages, finding several large caves, and risking their lives by precarious rope-descents into the depths of great holes in the floors [...]. Few make any deep penetration into these caves, the way is unmarked, the going arduous and the risks very real.⁴³

Here the language of the explorer is deployed, moving beyond the outdoors as a site of recreation to a site of exploration. In invoking the 'unknown and unexplored' the writer is evoking the nostalgia for a 'real Australia' and 'pioneering past' McGregor notes was evident in some interwar writing – while also silencing any First Nations history and connection to the land.⁴⁴

In her analyses of the representation of First Nations peoples in Great Barrier Reef tourist ephemera, Celmara Pocock notes that First Nations' peoples labour and knowledge on which much of the industry was based is rarely if ever acknowledged.⁴⁵ In the case of travel literature in the interwar years and in 'Holiday and Travel' First Nations people were mentioned but it is through a tourist gaze.⁴⁶

Pocock also notes tours were often conducted on missions, subjecting people living on the mission to the tourist gaze.⁴⁷ This served to compound a settler narrative reinforcing the white Australian perception of the land as 'belonging'

41 s.n.: Chasing Winter Sunshine, p. 25.

42 Robert Archer: Caves and Chillagoe, p. 17.

43 Ibid., p. 17.

44 Russell McGregor: Excursions Through Emptiness, p. 431.

45 See Celmara Pocock: Aborigines, Islanders and Hula Girls in Great Barrier Reef Tourism, p. 173.

46 See Russell McGregor: Excursions Through Emptiness, p. 433.

47 See *ibid.*, p. 179.

to the tourist, with First Nations people sequestered and arguably depicted as part of the landscape rather than active agents in own right. At least one article in 'Holiday and Travel' appears to engage with this practice:

Palm Island, the principal aboriginal settlement in Queensland, is also close to Townsville. It is a rugged mountainous island with a coastline of white sandy beaches fringed with coconut palms and Mango trees. The aboriginal settlement is at Challenger Bay where there are fourteen hundred people.⁴⁸

Another simultaneously acknowledges First Nations people's knowledge of the environment while also representing the people in a patronising manner:

Sharks, yes I guess they're there too, but apparently Nature provides well for these monsters. The native boys say "plenty shark but no bite."⁴⁹

This condescension and minimisation of the contributions was a continuation of the tone travel writers had adopted in the interwar years and it was not limited to First Nations people.⁵⁰ This paragraph describing Chinese Australians stands out for its derogatory tone and description, it was also reflective of the 'White Australia' views of the time:

The few Orientals now left are aged and decrepit storekeepers, who in an apparent atmosphere of poverty are reputed by the locals to be amassing substantial fortunes for their ultimate return to China. Near Atherton, on the Herberton Road, stands an ancient Joss House tended by a tiny withered Chinaman who looks 100 years old. Bent to a right angle, he shuffles wearily about with the aid of a queer bamboo stick. He cannot speak English, but indicates, with feeble gestures, that visitors should remove their hats. A rusting metal lamp hangs dejectedly over the broken gateway, and the portico, decorated with faded red and gold characters, leads to a dark and musty interior, drably resplendent with a finely carved wooden shrine towering to the roof. Hanging lamps, and many quaint figures and designs in faded colours are grouped about the shrine – melancholy reminder of an ancient faith.⁵¹

Many travel writers in the interwar years had found diversity in the north confronting.⁵² This post-war article was perhaps seeking to alleviate the fears of a population still entrenched in the White Australia policy by suggesting that a significant population of people of Asian descent in North Queensland was a relic of history. In this way, the writer was continuing themes prominent in travel writing in the interwar period.

The articles in 'Holiday and Travel' reveal a diverse representation of North Queensland. Some of the articles suggest the authors and editors had a nuanced understanding of tourism developments in the region at the time. Some writers demonstrated a prescient awareness of the potential issues of tourism such as the potential issue of development on the environment. The editors and some of the contributors of the magazine also demonstrated an understanding of their readership, contextualising North Queensland for their readers in the context of the Second World War personnel who had served and perhaps even tapping into a sense of restlessness which may have encouraged an interest in travel and by

48 Catherine Gaul: *Editor on Tour*, p. 50.

49 Harold J. Pollock: *Don't Waste Time ... Go North*, p. 14.

50 See Russell McGregor: *Excursions Through Emptiness*, p. 432.

51 Henrik Brammal: *Atherton Wonderland*, p. 25.

52 See Russell McGregor: *Excursions Through Emptiness*, p. 432.

extension the magazine. More than that, they included readers stories through competitions such as 'Best or Worst Holiday' which provided an (albeit curated) insight into the personal travel experiences of everyday people in the era who may not otherwise have published accounts of their travel in travel memoirs or other publications.

In contrast, other articles reflect the dominant settler narrative of the time; excluding the voices and contributions of First Nations people and others to the industry. The stereotypical 'sunshine state' imagery we are used to seeing for Queensland tourism was also apparent in many articles which obscures the diversity of the North Queensland region may have fed and reinforced a desire to travel to the Whitsunday islands and the developing luxury market, rather than encouraging a more diverse exploration and understanding of the region.

The writers and editors of 'Holiday and Travel' in presenting these varied versions of North Queensland were, in some ways, demystifying what had been known as the 'empty north'.⁵³ In curating a variety of articles from different viewpoints, the editors showcased the region as diverse and populated. For southern readers the magazine made North Queensland appear accessible if, in some ways, foreign.

Future research might explore how the representation of North Queensland has evolved in the decades since the 1940s and 1950s, perhaps with some comparative analysis of how modern mediums, such as social media, engage with the locations and themes represented in 'Holiday and Travel' and other magazines of the era.

Acknowledgments

The author and the National Library of Australia would like to acknowledge the generous support of Tony Wheeler who has funded the digitisation of 'Holiday and Travel' magazine. The author would also like to thank the editors of this issue and attendees of the Australian Historical Association 2025 conference session in which she presented an earlier draft of this article for their thoughtful feedback and discussion.

References

- Barr, Todd: No Swank Here? The Development Of The Whitsundays as a Tourist Destination to the Early 1970s. Townsville: James Cook University 1990.
- Fitzgerald, Ross, Megarrity, Lyndon, David Symons: Made in Queensland. A New History. St Lucia: University of Queensland Publishing 2009.
- Ford, Lyall R: Role of the Road Network in the Development of Far North Queensland. 1860s to 1960s. PhD thesis, Central Queensland University 2012.

53 For a discussion of the presentation of Northern Australia as the 'empty north' see, for example, Lyndon Megarrity: Northern Dreams, p. 29; David Walker: Anxious Nation, p. 114; Russell McGregor: Excursions Through Emptiness, p. 422.

- Garton, Stephen: Return Fantasies. Martial Masculinity, Misogyny and Homosocial Bonding in the Aftermath of the Second World War. In: *Gender and History*, 37, 2025, pp. 715-730.
- Gaul, Catherine: Editor on Tour Visits – The Holiday City of the North. In: *Holiday and Travel*, June 1950, pp. 5-9.
- : Editor on Tour – Townsville. In: *Holiday and Travel*. June 1950, p. 50.
- Johnston, Anna, Palo Magagnoli: Histories of the Illustrated Magazine in Australia. In: *Journal of Australian Studies*, 47, 2023, 1, pp. 3-9.
- Kinsella, William: Australia's Scenic Strongholds. In: *Holiday and Travel*, September-October 1950.
- Krause, Mr and Mrs: Our Ideal Holiday. In: *Holiday and Travel*, July 1951, pp. 39-41.
- Lynd, Gayle: Charlie's Camping Holiday. In: *Holiday and Travel*, November – December, 1951, p. 27.
- MackIntosh, Will: Ticketed Through. The Commodification of Travel in the Nineteenth Century. In: *Journal of the Early Republic*, 32, Spring 2012, pp. 61-89.
- McGregor, Russell: Excursions Through Emptiness. Interwar Travel Writing On Northern Australia. In: *Journal of Australian Studies*, 41, 2017, 4, pp. 421-434.
- Megarrity, Lyndon: Northern Dreams. The Politics of Northern Development in Australia. North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing 2018.
- Morin, Erica: No Vacation for Mother. Traditional Gender Roles in Outdoor Travel Literature 1940-1965. In: *Women's Studies*, 41, 2012, pp. 436-456.
- Pocock, Celmara: Aborigines, Islanders and Hula Girls in Great Barrier Reef Tourism. In: *The Journal of Pacific History*, 49, 2014, 2, pp. 170-192.
- Pollock, Harold J.: Don't Waste Time ... Go North. In: *Holiday and Travel*, April, 1950, pp. 13-15.
- s.n.: Following the Sun in Cotton and Rayon. In: *Holiday and Travel*, May 1949, p. 31.
- : Following the Sun to the Great Barrier Reef. In: *Holiday and Travel*, March 1950, p. 91.
- : Chasing Winter Sunshine. In: *Holiday and Travel in Australia*, May 1950, p. 25.
- : Isles of the Sun. In: *Holiday and Travel*, April 1951, p. 6.
- Walker, David: *Anxious Nation. Australia and the Rise of Asia, 1850-1939*. New Delhi: SSS Publications 2009.
- White, Richard: *On Holidays. A History of Getting Away in Australia*. North Melbourne: Pluto Press 2005.
- Woodward, Josh: Glorious in Spring, Exhilarating in Winter. Advertising Mount Buffalo in *Walkabout Magazine*, 1934-1939. In: *Australian Historical Studies*, 55, 2024, 3, pp. 544-564.