

# CENTRAL QUEENSLAND NEWS

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## Brave a night near waterhole

Is the spooky story true?



**DISCOVER YOUR BACKYARD**  
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THIS week's tale is one of intrigue and in fact for those looking for a "spookier" side to the Central Highlands, who could go past Lilyvale Waterhole and its resident ghost?

Lilyvale Waterhole can be found just a short drive from both Capella and Emerald and is easily accessed via sealed roads.

The remnants of the old township are few but what the town now lacks in infrastructure it more than makes up for in stories.

Stories dating back well beyond the development of coal mines and farming

activity to a time when Aboriginal people used the waterhole as a meeting place and ritual site.

John Gilbert found the waterhole as of part of Ludwig Leichhardt's epic journey of exploration to the Gulf.

Some would say that it was never lost.

And this brings us to Johnny, our ghost.

The waterhole is haunted by Johnny, a man of Chinese origin and Lilyvale's market gardener.

Johnny carted water from the waterhole with a horse and dray.

He used to back his dray down the bank of the waterhole to fill his drums, which he used to water his vegetable patch, which he then sold to the townsfolk.

Because the bank was quite steep, Johnny would back his dray down to a point where it rested against a stump, hence



**MURKY WATERS: The Lilyvale Waterhole.**

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

stopping it from careering into the waterhole.

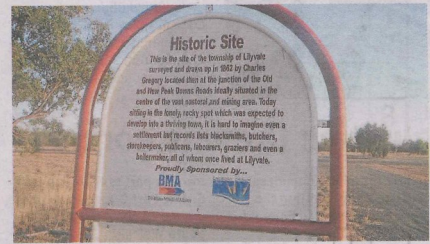
On what turned out to be his final trip his aim was off and he missed the stump and the horse, dray, drums and Johnny hurtled into the watery depths and drowned.

It is reported that Johnny let out a terrified scream and it is these screams that many who camp overnight at Lilyvale Waterhole reportedly hear today.

So be brave, on a dark and

lonely night, head out to Lilyvale, take the caravan, camper or tent and see if you too hear Johnny calling from the depths of the waterhole or is it just the Curlews who come calling?

Though this story cannot be verified, and I myself have never heard Johnny's screams, records show that on October 14, 1870, Johnny, a man of Chinese origin did in fact drown in Lilyvale Waterhole.



**The sign at the historic site.**

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED