



friends of the flinders ranges national park

July – August 2009

www.friendsofflindersranges.org.au

NEWSLETTER

MEETING – 17-18-19/7 at Wilpena

Once again our intrepid Friends launched themselves into the far distant interior on Friday 17th. Peter was without a car due to Margot commandeering their station wagon for the weekend while his little red car was still being resurrected by the crash repair people after his close encounter with the emu some time ago. Tony picked him up from Melrose and conveyed him safely to Wilpena to find that Athol had also arrived as had Dean and Florence. Julie arrived later with the "goodies". Thankyou Julie! For yet another month a number of the Friends were still away in all directions. Nevertheless, a good dinner and even better companionship wiled away the evening.

Saturday, 9am, saw us driving out on the Jones' Camp track to record the pastoral remnants for the data base and find the Wilpena silver mine which somehow was located on the side of a hill north of the old homestead. Do you know how many hills there are north of the homestead? Dozens in the morning count but millions by mid-afternoon and no, we did not find the mine. While looking for it however, we did find a most intriguing fault line where the strata on either side of a crush zone apparently bear little relationship to each other.

We did see some most beautiful country, however, now green surrounded by washed pine trees and



backed by the ABC and Wilpena Ranges.

We did reach Jones' Camp, Cadby's huts and then on to Cadbys Gorge which cuts through the ABC Range in a pretty spectacular manner. The Cadby brothers were employees of Dr. Browne. He held the original pastoral leases for Wilpena while the Cadby's also had their own lease further east at Reaphook Hill. However, in the shadow of St. Mary Peak they had a number of wattle and daub huts with stone chimneys dotted around a few small creeks. Incidentally, we would love to know who Jones was, why he had a camp there and when. We do know that he must have been height disadvantaged to a considerable degree because of the height of the doorway. Currently, a number of kangaroos have made their home inside the hut – their last! Not only did we miss the mine but somehow a huge gum tree which some of us had seen some years ago also went missing. Disappointing but it does mean we will have to go back for both of them. The beauty of the area makes that an exciting prospect.

Saturday nights are barbecue nights. This was no different except that we were joined by Carmel and Brendan Reynolds from neighbouring Willow Springs station and brought a young friend from interstate (Ellie) and afterwards by Lorraine who lives nearby and has been a stalwart of the Friends group for many years. It was great to have them with us.



Florence and Athol recording GPS for the cutting which may have related to the mine.

Sunday started with a good thickness of ice on the windscreens of our cars. Unfortunately Tony had to be at Oraparinna at 8am with a half hour drive between then and breakfast. As he drove away from Wilpena the thermometer in the car dropped to zero. Some cold water and the car's heater gradually cleared the ice away to make driving possible. However, the position of the sun at that time of the morning was not so friendly and meeting it on the top of sharp bends was hazardous to say the least. Tony met with Sue and Rob Marshall at Oraparinna, with their team, to talk over the future of the various walking trails in the National Park. It was suggested, quite sensibly, that there should be much closer ties between that group and the Friends as we are all involved in doing what we can to provide safe and interesting experiences for everyone who visits the Park.

Meanwhile the rest of the group had emerged from their rooms, had breakfast and headed out to Guide Hut. We had believed that the necessary equipment for further pugging was already out there. So when Tony arrived he found Athol and Dean involved in cutting pine logs into planks to be used in making the doors for the hut and Peter sitting around cooling his heels. Julie had gone off to get the equipment we needed. Julie gives her account of that day- "The sun had risen but I showered in relative darkness. Since the bathroom light switch operates both light and exhaust fan I chose to be in the dark just to dispense with the chill factor of the exhaust fan running. After all, outside the temperature was an invigorating 2 degrees and the window was slightly open as well! Bracing and fresh as it was the early morning ushered in a superb winter's day – clear sky, no wind and a warming sun. My soul sang in harmony with the smells of the long green grass thrusting up from the damp earth, the sounds of elegant parrots feeding in close proximity to where I stood, and the sights of kangaroos wearing wide smiles at the abundance of feed. Don't miss seeing it. It blows you away! As does the newly sealed Wilpena to Blinman road. Less than 4 kms to go!

To cut the story short I drove out to Guide Hut from Wilpena twice that day, once via Oraparinna, 210 kms in total, but it was well worth while because I found Senior Ranger Tom who drove back with me with the wheel barrow etc. which enabled further pugging to occur. While Athol continued to saw up the logs with 'awesome' dexterity, Florence, Dean, Tom and Tony all had a go at pugging the side wall learning on the job as they went. Peter and I went back to Wilpena early where I was lucky because Peter showed me around the resort complex as he had worked there some years ago. Remember him in the store? So this volunteer returned to the Shearers Quarters at Wilpena feeling as though I was being treated to a very special holiday – glorious scenery, good company, peace and quiet, relaxation and a wander through the trees photographing red-capped robins and mallee ringnecks. Just when I thought it could not get any better the rest of the group returned from Guide Hut and we sat around the big table in the dining room-kitchen, eating nibbles and having the odd drink before our dinner." (Thanks Julie for your great effort at 'plugging' the Park, and our work there, instead of doing the 'pugging'.)

As Julie reported the rest of us mixed the pug and then took it in turns to slap it into the gaps between the pine logs in the wall. I think Tom had the right idea, at least the easiest, when he started throwing the pug in instead of trying to be delicate with the trowels and, of course, spilling most of it down the wall.

By the time we had used up all the pug that had been mixed Athol had finished sawing the slabs with his new device which enables him to cut planks using his chain-saw. There were a few teething problems but they seemed like nothing when we were stacking the products of his work in the Hut. Well done Athol. It was also noteworthy that we used the water out of the tank which we had put there in June and had obviously seen some rain out there. It must have been lucky because there were very few signs of rain on the road out there, at least after leaving the Wilkawillina/Wirrialpa Road.

Special thanks to Athol for his wood cutting and the loading/unloading of all the equipment in his vehicle; Dean for his advice and knowledge of the Park on Saturday, his help to Athol on Sunday; to Florence for her knowledge, her notetaking, the 'goodies' that she arrived with and the pugging; to Peter for his photography, patience, 'goodies' and his Web-Site work; to Julie for her 'goodies' her note taking and photography on Saturday and her driving around on Sunday. TB

AUGUST MEETING arrive Fri.14pm14;15-16-17-18; depart Wed.19am AT ORAPARINNA

Note: All Friends are invited to attend this weekend even if some cannot be there for the whole time. If you want accommodation please book with Tony at 82932286 or at tricia@adam.com.au by 10.8.2009

Programme: Friday 6.00pm – shared dinner

Saturday 9.00am – Drive out to Guide Hut; mix the pug and continue the pugging of the walls; cut chicken wire and attach to pine.

12.30pm – lunch

1.00pm - continuing pugging and wiring.

4.00pm - drive back to Oraparinna before 'roo time'

6.00pm – dinner

7.00pm - short meeting

Sunday: 9.00am drive to Guide Hut; continuing pugging

12.30pm – lunch

1.00pm - as for the morning.

4.00pm – clean up site; drive back to Oraparinna

6.00pm - shared dinner

7.30pm – relax in lounge chairs – we will need it!

Monday: 9.00am drive to Dingly Dell and Perawurtina – data base Collection

12.00pm – drive to Blinman; lunch at Blinman Hotel

**2.00pm – inspection of Williams' house next to the Café.
Mine visit.**

4.30pm – Return to Oraparinna

6.30pm – dinner and more lounge chairs!

Tuesday: 9.00am - Drive to Guide Hut and continue pugging OR Etina and Elatina data base collection and searching for mines, gardens and tracks.

12.00pm lunch at Guide Hut or Etina

1.00pm – as for the morning

4.00pm – return to Oraparinna

6.30pm – dinner

7.30pm – photo show from the weekend’s activities.

Wednesday: Clean up and leave the quarters in perfect shape.

Noon – coffee etc at Quondong Coffee in Quorn.

(This programme does depend on the state of the roads to Guide Hut and Elatina. Rain between now and then may mean we have to change the activities on Saturday and Sunday to avoid any further damage to the roads.)

VHS REVIEW:

Our work in the Park has brought us face to face with many of the environmental changes which have taken place over time. These are clearly displayed in the rock strata across the Geological Trail. Each of these contains examples of climate changes which have been many and often dramatic. To gain further insight into what that means in the broader picture the following video from your local library is highly recommended.

State of the Planet BBC-ABC, V3637, Local Library – David Attenborough reviews the impact of islandization, pollution, over harvesting, the introduction of alien species of plants and animals and habitat destruction on the environment with the subsequent impact on climates across the world. One interesting example was the finding of mammoth bones on the floor of the North Sea indicating that that was dry land with abundant feed for mammoths only some thousands of years ago.

Stop Press:

- Margaret and Frank have returned from their trip around the Baltic, the UK and Ireland, tired but happy with all they saw and experienced although the narrow roads in England with their hedges and stone walls on both sides and the lack of parking seem to have stood out in Frank’s mind.
- Athol and family are preparing for their stint at Wilpena and Rawnsley during the Spring Events again. Let’s hope that there are plenty of visitors to watch the stars and planets and no clouds to minimize the fascinating experience.
- Vince and Helen are still away in the national parks of southern Queensland.
- It is planned that the Sunday lunch during the October weekend (3rd) at Oraparinna will combine the Friends, Park’s staff and the pastoral families from around the Park. Invitations will be sent out in September.

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per family subscription for this year–
Feb.2009 to Jan.2010?**