



friends of the flinders ranges national park

www.friendsofflindersranges.org.au

ABN 98 085 789 903

Patron: Dr Victor Gostin

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2011

IMPORTANT NOTICE - *Please note that due to the Rangers' commitments for "Wilpena Under the Stars" on and before 18 February 2012 – the Friends AGM will now be held at the Findon Community Centre on **Saturday 25th February 2012***

Report on November Meeting and Guide Hut Opening 18th -21st at Oraparinna

By Thursday evening Fay and Malcolm, Tricia and Tony, Margaret and Frank were settled at Willow Springs while Athol, Anthea, Carl and Jamie, Helen and Vince, and Terrie and Trevor were at Oraparinna. Friday morning saw us all driving out to Guide Hut with a trailer full of "goodies" to prepare for the Sunday opening. Steven and Sarah had done a great job earlier cleaning away unwanted debris and weeds – many thanks. The trailer was unloaded to reveal the table and forms which Vince had made and transported from Adelaide – thanks Vince on both counts, and then Malcolm produced the stand which he and Fay had made to hold the plaque – thanks Malcolm and Fay. Athol oiled the doors again – thanks Athol. The top of the frame for the tent was assembled in case it was going to be hot or wet on Sunday, and left in place. Thanks Andre for this donation. Back to Oraparinna for lunch.

Meanwhile Vince and Tony decided it would be politic to drive back to Wilpena to check on the chairs, trestle tables, p.a. system, lectern and porta-loo. So, Vince drove his vehicle and after a quick check at Ranger HQ and an even speedier pick up of the trailer full of chairs etc. it was back out to Guide Hut there to unload everything and set the chairs out so that the rain would wash them off and the ropes would stop them from blowing all over the Park in the storm. Drat! No storm and no rain and the chairs stayed put. It was good that driving out to the Hut along the Wirrealpa-Pantapinna roads was twice the distance as the Rifle Range track but was a much smoother drive and took the same time. Most people used this route on Sunday.

All this before we gathered at Oraparinna ready for the Christmas party at night. By this time everyone else had arrived and settled in ready to enjoy a most pleasant "happy hour" on the patio before the Rangers cooked the barbecue and the salads arrived from Blinman. In the meantime various people had cut up fruit for the dessert at Willow Springs and at Oraparinna. They blended quite well later in the evening. Thirty nine people sat around enjoying the beautiful weather, the great company and the memorable food. Thanks to everyone involved.

Saturday blew up cooler and cloudy but that was pleasant for our day of geology with patron Victor Gostin who patiently explained the hundreds of millions of years of Earth History on display at 'Trezona Falls', the interp. centre on the Brachina Road, the Stromatolite patch off the same road, the "Golden Spike", the Slippery Dip Unconformity, and the landslide in Brachina. Unfortunately we were too early in the afternoon to see any yellow feet hopping around there. We did experience a goodly shower of rain for about two kilometres along the Brachina road which settled the dust a tiny bit. Morning tea at Trezona Camp Ground and lunch at Slippery Dip filled in the day until it was time to head back to Oraparinna and then Willow Springs for a Friends' barbecue at the shearers quarters. Everyone

contributed items for the salads, savoury and sweet, while the Friends' funds paid for the meat and bread. This was another fun evening especially as the DENR Director, John Schutz, a new member, led the Ranger team and helpers in cooking the barbecue. Thanks guys!

Sunday morning was cloudy and a little threatening but nothing came of it all day. We were glad that we had ignored the earlier proviso about the temperature at Port Augusta and the possible need to move the opening back to Oraparinna. In fact it was 41.3 at Guide Hut on Friday but pleasant on Sunday, so much so that we did not need the tent which was rapidly dismantled and loaded back on to a trailer. Fortunately a number of our members drove out earlier and busied themselves washing the chairs and helping set up for the catered morning tea. By 10.30 everyone had arrived – there were 22 SUVs lined up along the track – most impressive. One of the last to arrive held our special guests, Rhonda and Lawrie Pumpa from Orroroo, driven up by son-in-law and their daughter. (All four had worked on Oraparinna in years past and Lawrie had personal experience of Guide Hut in the 1920s.) Morning tea was a sumptuous affair, something the like of which I am sure had never been seen at Guide Hut before. Thanks to Lisa and Amy from Blinman for their efforts. At 11.00am Tony called the gathering to be seated and then welcomed everyone. He spoke briefly of the early pastoral history and the use of shepherds and shepherds' huts, and the changes brought on with the introduction of wire fences which ultimately led to the demise of all the huts including Guide Hut.

Tony then introduced Lawrie and asked him about his experiences on Oraparinna and especially in Guide Hut on a hard iron bed covered with full chaff bags! He spoke of life on a sheep station and was followed by Rhonda who added her memories as cook and housekeeper at the homestead. The audience was rapt with their presence and their comments, a real highlight of the day. Tony then introduced District Ranger Darren Crawford who congratulated the Friends and Staff Members for their magnificent job spread over four years as well as commenting generally on the value and necessity of volunteer groups in the Park. Director John Schutz followed Darren and reiterated the importance of volunteer works right across the Parks system. Finally Lawrie and Rhonda were asked to unveil the plaque and declare the Hut "opened"! Lawrie then commended us on the magnificent restoration of the Hut.

Lots of photographs were then taken, chairs collected and loaded onto the trailer, the area cleared and we all headed back to Oraparinna for the wonderful catered lunch – again thanks to Lisa and Amy.. That also gave time for people to talk to Lawrie and Rhonda as well as to Jan and Ingrid, visitors from Swaziland and their relatives, Victor and Olga Gostin. Meanwhile the trailers were brought in from Guide Hut – thanks Steven and Sarah. It was a really happy occasion, helped by a few wines and great company – A fitting finale to the Guide Hut Project. Thanks and congratulations to all those involved over the years and especially during this weekend. Special thanks to Helen and Vince for their roles in the planning of the weekend, buying some of the supplies, collecting the heavies from S.Plympton and taking them to Oraparinna and to Tricia who was part of the planning group and spent a couple of weeks running around chasing specials and buying the necessities for the weekend, including picking up the meat from Port Augusta. (Preezy would also like to thank everyone for ensuring that every day he had the most amazing experiences of his life, as well as talking to so many adults who did not speak Chinese!) Later in the afternoon we had an informal meeting to talk about next year, the AGM and possible tasks for which we might volunteer our time and labour.

It must also be said that it was a new experience having David Salomon filming the activities over the whole weekend. We hope that much good will come from his efforts with this material.

Suddenly it was all over except for the cleaning on Monday and the Quandong Café in Quorn for some of the group.

Please ensure that you look at the web-site for photographs of the Guide Hut and Opening

All that is left is to say Happy Christmas to everyone from hon. pres. T.B.

Message from Darren

2011 has seen a huge amount of change for the District.

One of the more obvious changes has been in staffing. The District has had a relatively long period of stability in the staffing structure in the District. However this year has seen:

- Nicola Trebilcock take maternity leave and Sarah Franks coming on board to backfill her while she is away. Nicola is due back in March.

- Peter Watkins has transferred to Bimbowrie and his old position of Senior Ranger Oraparinna has been called.
- Wade Johnson our maintenance worker at Vulkathunha has transferred to Mambray due to compassionate grounds. This will be until the end of January at this stage.
- Finally, we are sadly losing our amazing Admin Officer Rebecca Clemas. Bec will be undertaking her honours year next year and we wish her all the very best, she will be sorely missed. We will be working hard to find a suitable person to fill the role and do the job to the extremely high standard that Bec does.

Our staff have all been working very hard to be involved in the integration of the old DEH and NRM agencies into the new DENR. Some key objectives for this integration is the streamlining of business functions (everything from HR to accounting), trying to develop "one stop shops" across the state for the public to access DENR and most importantly, bringing agencies that are working at the same objective on different land tenure together.

The signing of the Co Management Agreement (CMA) and Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) on 6 October was attended by representatives of the Friends also represents change. While Co Management has not been unexpected – we have been speaking about this for a while now – some Friends have expressed to me concerns about the impacts of a Co Management Board on Friends activities.

The main aim of the Board is to manage the strategic direction for the park. The operational and delivery aspects of the park management are the responsibility of the District staff and Friends activities fall under this.

The Board is made up of 4 representatives from the Adnyamathanha Community and 4 from DENR, each with equal voting rights. John Schutz, Executive Director Regional Services, will be the chair of the Board and I expect the Board to be very busy over their first couple of years of operation focusing on the mechanics of getting the Board operating effectively and working through the development of the New Park Management Plan.

I would like to reassure the Friends that the working relationship we have with Co Management Board at Vulkathunha is excellent and I would not see the Flinders being any different. While Co Management presents some challenges it also presents some great opportunities. I know the Board will want to engage with key stakeholders including our Friends and I expect there will be a Board open day held fairly soon after they commence – their first meeting is scheduled for the end of January 2012.

Guide Hut Opening. Sunday 20 October was one of those days that come along rarely. It was the opportunity for the Friends to show all the hard work that has gone into the Guide Hut project and the commitment made over so long. I just wanted to say congratulations to everyone involved again, it is an achievement to be very proud of.

We are planning our annual Friends planning catch up in January so look forward to finding some great projects for the Friends to sink their teeth into. We would welcome your thoughts about this and I suggest if you have any ideas you let Tony know about them prior to January.

On behalf of the staff and their families in the Northern Flinders, we wish you all a very happy and safe festive season and we look forward to working together again in 2012.

Darren

Meeting dates for 2012, all booked for Oraparinna – Advance notice

March 23-26 April 20-23 May 21-29 June no scheduled meeting July 20-27

August 17-20 September 14-18 October 19-26 November 16-19

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Lawrie and Rhonda Pumpa unveiling the Official plaque at Guide Hut opening



One of Dr Victor Gostin's talks on Saturday's Geological Excursion.

