



friends of the flinders ranges national park

www.friendsofflindersranges.org.au

ABN 98 085 789 903

Patron: Dr Victor Gostin

NEWSLETTER

MAY –JUNE 2011

Greetings Friends:

May 20-28 Report:

Friday 20th May

Athol, Peter, Frank, Neal and Tony had all arrived safely at Oraparinna by late pm, followed by Helen and Vince. Our after dinner discussion was centred around the forecast for bad weather to come so we decided to start our work at Appealinna first thing next day.

Saturday 21st May

True enough we all gathered at the cook's/blacksmith's cottage at 9am when Vince weeded the inside before Tony and Neal shovelled the sand from outside across the floor so as to get it level and ready for the paving stones. Athol and Neal who did a great job kneeling there for so long laid these. Meanwhile Vince, Frank and Tony grubbed out the horehound and onion weed from around the cottage so it does look now as though some group is proud of this bit of our heritage. Vince, Neal and Tony filled the gaps in the floor with sand, Vince and Athol then spending their time on their knees cleaning off the residue. Peter meanwhile continued to record our efforts on his camera. Unbelievably, all this was completed by lunchtime. (See the website for a photograph of the floor and walls of the cottage).

Lunch was eaten in the comfort of Oraparinna 1-2pm.

The fine afternoon seemed like a good time for the group to investigate Vince's claim that he had found another hut a week or so earlier near Slippery Dip on the northern side of Brachina Creek. Terrie and Trevor and family joined us, as we drove upstream along the creek until we found a little cairn of stones where we parked and then clambered up the slope to the aforesaid hut. The stone chimney remains along with some timber and further up the slope, remnants of a brush yard. There are some interesting questions arising here so we will have to return at a later date. Even more puzzling is the track, which starts some distance from the hut but heads west towards Slippery Dip. Harry Martin from the Blinman Mine had taken his bullock team from Blinman to Brachina and out to the Western Plains in the 1860s so quite probably this is the remains of that track. The problems there is that it appears now that there is no clear way along the mountain side of Brachina-Enorama Creeks, nor across the creeks to line up with what was later the Youngoona Eating House and Post Office. Despite that problem some of us followed the track to where it joins the present main road. After all the walking and climbing the group of very tired Friends headed for Oraparinna for a well-deserved barbecue and the odd drink or two. A general meeting at which Liaison Ranger, Tom, brought us up to date on what was happening around the Park followed these. Thanks Tom. (Minutes of the meeting are available on request)

Sunday 22nd May

8.30am watched with disbelief as Vince and Tony arrived at the Appealinna Miner's Dugout to start the tedious job of dragging all the soil and rocks off the roof and piling them up far enough out of the way to allow access to all the timbers that had supported it. The team, including Ranger Tom, arrived to join in and it was with some amazement that by lunch time we were down to the

plastic and bags which had protected the timbers and made the Dugout waterproof. The timbers were also examined and those that were bent or rotten were removed and put on a nearby fire. I feel sure that any white ants still living there were thus quietly "managed".

An exhausted team returned to Oraparinna, only a few kilometres away, for lunch.

Despite the approaching rain we all drove out to Dedman's to look over the earlier hut remains, the waterfall, the gorge and yards. Terrie and Trevor who also went hunting for the Mount Emily Mine joined us here. We drove around like "mad snakes", walked miles and climbed mountain after mountain, (or so it seemed) and still did not find the Mine. We were not only tired by this time but frozen stiff by the fierce wind which had blown up during the afternoon. Sitting in front of the fire back at base was a welcome end to the day.

Monday 23rd May

Helen, Vince, Terrie and Trevor had to return to Adelaide in the morning so that left the "5 of us" to drive to Blinman for Devonshire Tea, followed by lunch at the Hotel. It had been raining on and off since the previous night so it was not surprising that everything was very wet, the sides of the main road were running quite seriously and it continued to blow a gale. It is a little surprising to report that Frank and Neal stopped off at Perawurtina to photograph the rock engravings between showers. Intrepid or just plain wet and cold?

Tuesday 24th May

We all drove down to Wilpena to discuss progress with the Rangers and then went with Maintenance Officer, Steven, into the forests to collect logs for the roof of the Dugout. We loaded the Park's truck and returned to the Dugout to unload and start fitting each log into the appropriate place. Neal and Athol did an amazing job while Steve cut the logs to the required size with a chain saw. Unfortunately the gale continued to blow over our exposed position so it was quite a relief to stand by our fire watching the unwanted materials going up in smoke.

Wednesday 25th May

The intrepid Five plus Steven and Luke spent the morning getting the logs right and then went off to lunch at Wood Duck Dam. This was after Neil had located the fourth shaft at the Appealinna Mine and we were assured that the red steel lid did in fact cover the third shaft.

After that pleasant break we drove out into the forested area again, a different one, and collected smaller logs and transported them back to the Dugout. Early evening saw us at the Blinman Hotel for a very nice dinner. The drive back to base was uneventful which was a relief as it was very definitely "roo time".

Thursday 26th May

This turned out to be a day to remember but not relived. The seven of us completed logging the roof, re-laid as much of the old bagging as possible and then covered the whole roof with new bags which Ranger Tom had brought up from down south the day before. It was still blowing a gale as we unrolled the 200um plastic sheeting and then spread it in overlapping layers on the bags. Lunch followed on site after placing unused logs across the roof to stop the plastic from blowing away. At this stage we all thought that we were tired and that a good rest would be advisable. Not so because we then took it in turns to shovel that great pile of earth back on to the roof. This only took about three hours! However, despite the pain, lack of breath and sheer exhaustion, we finished the job and it is looking far better than it did before we started. We cleaned up around the site, although not completely, so that it now looks more like a heritage site of which we can be justifiably proud. Well-done guys.

So that nobody could call us slackers four of us then drove down to the Wilpena turnoff and followed the old bullock/telephone track south along the main range until we stumbled upon another hut which Athol had been shown years ago. Again it had a massive but incomplete stone chimney, a possible stone floor and very thick posts, which had formed the walls. No yards were discernable but there was a spring in the creek about 100 metres from the hut. The journey to and from was made all the more exciting by the presence of maybe more than one hundred kangaroos, all hopping about like a mouse plague. Great stuff!

Friday 27th May

Athol and Tony drove out to Guide Hut to join Steve and Luke in the big burn. We sorted the remaining logs from the original hut into re-usable and 'burnable' and set fire to the already large mound which has been building up over the past three years. More logs were added to the fierce

fire which was far too hot for marshmallows or even toast. We also picked up all the metal, wire and tin from the area and raked out any bark and other debris from what had been the big wood heap. Steven sprayed the area inside the log barriers with weed killer, especially the paved path around the hut. Back to Oraparinna for lunch and an afternoon rest. Frank and Neal had spent the day looking at mines, and Peter had gone home to Melrose earlier in the day.

Saturday 28th May

As we cleaned up the kitchen, dining-room etc we were more than a little concerned that Athol was not well and Neil offered to drive his car and him back to Adelaide, via a hospital if necessary. Eventually Athol decided that he could drive home which he did, arriving in time to be whisked off to a clinic and then to RAH.

***** Stop-Press. ***** JUNE MEETING 24 -30/6 *****Cancelled *****

Please note that this meeting and working bee has been cancelled due to the illness of some of our members while others will be away inter-State. Tricia and Tony will be attending a Northern Areas Meeting at Oraparinna on 1st and 2nd July as representatives of the Friends Group.

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Note: . We wish Athol Jackson a speedy recovery and best wishes from members.

Reminders:

Annual subscriptions for the year 2011 are due - **\$20 per family. Please advise any update to your email address.**

Copies of the booklets "Exploring the Flinders – Flinders Ranges National Park Tours" and "Diary of an Artist" are now available for distribution and sale to/by members for \$10 per copy.

Friends of Flinders Ranges **Badges** are now available for purchase from the Treasurer- \$10 each.



Finished Miner's Dugout



Removing old Miners Dugout Roof