



HOLDEN
4WD Club
South Australia

NO HOLDEN BACK

The HOLDEN 4WD CLUB of South Australia

February 2011

Presidents Report



Hello all and welcome to the 1st edition of NO HOLDEN BACK for 2011.

I guess the topical comment at the moment revolves around the weather we are having all across Australia at the moment. Although South Australia has had its fair share of weather, there has been extreme weather and conditions in other parts of Australia, from the West Coast to the East Coast. In WA, there were massive floods in the Gascoyne area, and the usual bushfires down closer to Perth, some of them unfortunately, the result of arson. On the Eastern seaboard, there have been the big floods in Brisbane, and other parts of SE QLD. Additionally there has been flooding in NSW and VIC.

One upshot of the increase of water in the Eastern states is the inflow to SA river systems. The Murray River has risen with increase levels, Goolwa, the Murray Mouth and the Coorong are starting to return to health. SA has also copped some extremes of weather, early December saw some very violent winds rip through the centre and the Flinders down to Adelaide, causing damage and localised flooding. January saw the usual stinking hot days. Spare a thought for our friends in Oodnadatta, nearly a fortnight of plus 40°C days and 5 days straight of greater than 45.C.

Back to QLD, two significant cyclones have severely damaged the state. Cyclone Anthony and Cyclone Yasi. After these two cyclones unleashed their fury on QLD's far north coast and continued to track west towards Alice Springs, it has influenced weather patterns in NSW, VIC and SA. One has to only look at DTEI (Transport SA) website for Outback Roads Network road conditions and there is a lot of red on the map, red indicating roads are closed. Additional to roads being closed, the rail line from Broken Hill has been cut, and also between Pimba and Tarcoola due to washaways. Mmmm, enough of the weather.

2011, a time to reinvigorate driver training within our club, David Richardson has agreed to take over the mantle of Training Coordinator. He will be supported by the Advisors, Trainers and Assessors within our club. Opportunities need to be taken on club trips to take training and assessing as they arise.

Club trips and excursions. 2010 had an adequate number of trips, although there was capacity for more trips. In 2011, it will be good if more trips could be taken. Not everyone can make every trip, as not every trip will appeal to every person. Other than just getting from A to B, there is enjoyment and new experiences to be gained from participating in trips. Trips happen upon inspiration of an idea, a trip leader being nominated and a plan being put into place. Don't be too tied up with a 'plan', as a plan forms a basis for change. If you have an inspiration, but cannot lead the trip, please put forward your inspiration, as there may be someone else in our club who can lead that trip. Some of our standing trips throughout the year have been booked, we have Peake twice, and Dorado Downs. The first trip to Peake is the first weekend in March, again this will have a 'bring along a friend' theme, as will the later trip. For a detailed description of trips, see the trips table in the NO HOLDEN BACK newsletters and the information at our club meetings.

Tri-State 2012 (don't forget 2011) looks very likely it will be based at Whyalla. Recce's have commenced at Whyalla, we are continuing to negotiate access to more properties at Whyalla with the Whyalla and Districts 4WD Club.

Cheers,
Dion.

Upcoming Trips

Peake Come Try Day

5 – 6 March 2011

Mt Pleasant Talunga Park

25 – 27 March 2011

In conjunction with Landcruiser Club

Tumut - Tri State Gathering

21 – 26 April 2011

Jackaroo Club NSW

Committee Positions

Club Directors

President Dion Chandler
Vice-President Moira Hill
Secretary Rob Williams
Treasurer Mike Parsons
4WD SA Delegate Simon Smith

Committee Members

Colin Simpson
Adam Sawtell
Martin Pearson
Denise Richardson

Club Officers (appointed by Directors)

Trips Coordinator Colin Simpson
Membership Officer Ian Delaine
Property Officer Ian McColl
Newsletter Editor Martin Pearson
Web site Manager Helen Sosnowski
Raffles Officer Adam Sawtell
Merchandise Officer David & Jill Chenery

High Country Tent Trip 2010

With the rains that the High Country had in the week before we left home, the trip nearly didn't happen. The plan was for the group (Sue & Simon, Peter & Ricky, David & Margaret and Nat, Michelle, Tegan & Rebecca) to meet and spend the first night camping at the Myrtleford Caravan Park. However, where we would have been camping was underwater! A quick change of plans saw us camping at the Riverview Caravan Park at Porepunkah instead. All of the group arrived around the same time and we set up camp next to where Bill's group were camped. Bill's group were out touring the local eateries and wineries, but arrived back in time for Happy Hour. A great first night was had by all as we started on our mission to empty the 5 litre container of Port that Simon & Sue had bought in Rutherglen earlier in the day.

The next morning we packed up camp and said our farewells to Bill's group. We headed up the Mt Hotham Rd, but it wasn't long before we were stopped for about 15 minutes whilst a helicopter was sawing trees on the side of the road. We all got out to watch and were amazed at the skill of the pilot to manoeuvre the chopper just above the trees with a circular chainsaw suspended below him cutting down trees – something none of us had seen before. Once the chopper had landed the road was reopened and we continued on before turning off onto the Dargo High Plains Rd. After a quick stop to deflate tyres and have some morning tea, we continued on before reaching the Blue Rag Range Track. We enjoyed the fantastic views along the track and after a very steep and rocky climb we reached the trig point where we got out and marvelled at how far we could see – the sky was clear and the temperature was just perfect. We then back tracked a little to a flat part in the track where we pulled over and had lunch. During lunch, Bill's group arrived and joined us for lunch. We said our goodbyes once again and headed to Upper Dargo via Ritchie Road. The trip was very scenic and apart from one recovery was uneventful. We set up camp at Upper Dargo and enjoyed happy hour before starting dinner.

The next day, we headed off for a drive up Billy Goat Bluff. The track was steep but we all had good traction and once again, enjoyed the fantastic views along the way. We did come across one part of the track that was a little technical which required us to guide each other through. We stopped at the Pinnacles and did a walk to the fire lookout before having lunch. We then weaved our way back to camp via a number of different tracks, stopping to collect firewood on the way.

The next morning, we packed up camp and headed to our next camping destination at Bentley Plain – the scenic way of course! Our first stop was at Harrison's Cut, where Sue caught Gold Fever! It took a lot of coaxing to get her back in the car with Simon collecting bags of soil to take with them to pan for gold later. We then headed along the Birregun Rd stopping at Dogs Grave for lunch. We then headed to Bentley Plain via the Cassils Historic Area and Swifts Creek. We could see the thunderclouds in the distance as we left Swifts Creek and by the time we reached Bentley Plain, the rain was just starting. It was at this point we decided to set up for the night in Moscow Villa rather than putting up the tents. As it turned out, we made the right decision as there was a lot of heavy rain and lightning all around us! We made ourselves at home in the Villa and were surprised at how well it was made – no cold draughts anywhere!



Moscow Villa Hut

The following morning we awoke to a thick fog and drizzle. We decided that a cup of coffee at the Swifts Creek Bakery would be a good idea. We stopped at the Washington Winch on the way and Peter ran into someone he knew from when he lived in the area over 30 odd years ago who was working for DEC! He provided us with useful information regarding track closures in the area and highly recommended the bakery. So off we went to Swift's Creek, and it was well worth the stop – the only difficulty was choosing what to have, it all looked so good! We decided to head to Buchan via the scenic tracks in the area. The drive was uneventful, apart from a few trees to chainsaw, and we arrived at the Buchan Caves Reserve mid afternoon to set up camp. Fortunately, the rain held off and the girls enjoyed watching all the Kangaroos and the local Wombat which wandered nearby. Later in the evening, after dark, we discovered how well the local population of possums is doing! We all locked away any food and fortunately the possums were not a pest.

The next morning, we set off for a day trip driving tracks around Buchan. We headed up Dawson Rd, but it didn't take long before we came across a very large tree fallen across the track. After a bite to eat for morning tea, Simon made short work of the tree with the help of his chainsaw! We then continued our drive turning off Dawson Rd onto Green Hills Track, which had lots of ups and downs, until we came across the Buchan River. Due to the rains the river height was up and flowing reasonably quickly. David took a walk across the river to check the height and speed of the water. It didn't seem too bad, but David did put a snatch strap on Old Jack to cross the River just in case. The crossing turned out to be straight forward and the snatch strap ended up wet for no reason – better safe than sorry! A bit further down the track we stopped at Mellick Mungie Falls where we did a quick walk to see the falls. The falls were flowing very quickly, as we had expected, and on the way back to the vehicles, Nat & Rebecca took a tumble. Fortunately, there wasn't too much damage but they were left with some nice bruises to show for their efforts. We had lunch back at the cars before heading on towards Gelantipy. We managed to find some interesting tracks, nothing too technical, but there were lots of trees across the tracks to be shifted. Fortunately, Simon still had enough fuel in the chainsaw to cut up all the trees we came across that were across the track. Later in the afternoon we popped back onto the blacktop just south of Gelantipy. We went into Gelantipy to see if we could find an icecream, but unfortunately, couldn't find one. On the way back to Buchan, Peter stopped to admire some of his handy work at W Tree that he had engineered some 30 years ago – and it was still going strong (good work Peter!). We arrived back at camp just in time to enjoy happy hour before dinner.

The next morning, we enjoyed a slow start, followed by a tour of the Royal Cave. When we emerged back into daylight, the sky was dark and it was just starting to rain. It was decided to go to the local Buchan Café where we enjoyed a delicious lunch and coffee before heading up the road to McKillops Bridge. On the way, we passed through the little town of "Seldom Seen" which certainly had character. The road down to the bridge was very long, narrow and windy. When we reached the bridge, it was difficult to imagine why it needed to be built so high! After a quick stop (as it was raining) we back tracked a fair distance before heading off on a 4WD track towards Jackson's Crossing on the Snow River. Unfortunately, we took a wrong turn and ended up on a track that suddenly dropped off into nowhere! A bit more back tracking and we were back on track again. The drive down to the river was very scenic and Sue got gold fever again! After a walk around near the river, we headed back to Buchan for an ice cream before heading back to camp to cook dinner. Overnight we had a little bit of rain, but not too much.



By next morning, the rain had cleared, so we packed up camp after breakfast and headed back north on Nunnett Road. We stopped for morning tea at Green Hill Huts and were disappointed to find they had been vandalised with windows smashed, beer bottles strewn everywhere and in a general state of disrepair. The temperature was very cold and after leaving the huts the rain set in. We weaved our way along a number of tracks (even coming across a wild stag on one track) before eventually ending up at Moscow Villa. It was around lunchtime, but instead of stopping here, we continued back on to Swifts Creek hoping to get a hot lunch at the Bakery. We were all disappointed to find that it was closed, but found a local café to have lunch at instead. We then headed up the black top to Omeo. We had booked cabins in the caravan park as the forecast had been for snow in the alpine regions. After settling into our cabins, we headed into the main street of Omeo to refuel and take a look at the local attractions. David then decided to lead a trip on some 4WD tracks towards Benambra. In the distance we could see the dark storm clouds rolling in and figured we had about 1hr before the storm hit. At a junction in the track we had a choice of 2 tracks to take. We decided to take the one labelled as "Steep" as opposed to the one labelled "Very Steep". It was an uneventful trip down into the valley. We had wanted to reach a section labelled as "Don't attempt without a winch" just to see what it was like. Unfortunately, or maybe fortunately, the track to get there was overgrown with blackberry bushes and given the time of day and the storms coming, we decided to turn around and take the other track labelled as "Very Steep" out of the valley. The rain started as we headed off making it a little slippery. The climb out needed considerable skill and a lot of concentration, but we all made it out just as it started to bucket down. We arrived back at Omeo to enjoy happy hour in the Hardy's cabin before going our separate ways to prepare dinner.

In the morning, we checked out of the caravan park and had a look at the cuckoo shop in Omeo. It was amazing how many cuckoo clocks, amongst other treasures, they had in the shop. We then left town and turned off on the Bogong High Plains Rd towards Falls Creek. The lady in the cuckoo shop had said there had been snow the day before with enough for snow clearing machines to be out and clearing the road at Mt Hotham. We all hoped we would find some snow, and fortunately we were not disappointed. We enjoyed having a big snowball fight on the side of the road and were thankful that the turbos had been working hard on the drive so that we could warm our hands on the bonnets of the cars! We then continued onto Falls Creek Village, where we found a tavern that was open and serving hot lunches. After filling our tummies we headed down the hill to Mt Beauty, where we found the local DEC office to talk to them about track closures. They were very helpful and gave us a few 4WD alternatives to get to Bright. The first road we attempted had just been graded and was clay based. After only a few kilometres we decided to turn back and try another route as the road was becoming extremely slippery and very chewed up with each vehicle that drove on it. Fortunately, the other track suggested to us had a rock base rather than a clay base. We enjoyed the scenery as we traversed our way towards Bright. Upon arriving in Bright we decided to get 2 cabins to share in the caravan park. We enjoyed Happy Hour before preparing dinner.

The next day, we decided to do a drive through the Buckland Valley. Sue & Peter decided to stay back at Bright so Ricky joined Simon for the day. We headed down Buckland Valley Rd and were amazed at the amount of debris from the recent floods and how high the water had been. We then turned onto Selwyn Rd before joining on to the Mt Selwyn Track. The drive was very scenic and it wasn't long before we were on Walsh's Track. We came across a number of fallen trees (yet again!) that we sawed up before continuing on. Unfortunately, Michelle hurt her back trying to shift a fallen tree and was a little uncomfortable. We decided to head to Riley's Creek Hut for lunch which saw us travelling the West Humphrey Rd and East Riley Rd, which weren't too bumpy. We had lunch at the hut and were surprised to see that some basic supplies had been left for anyone seeking emergency shelter – cans of soup, cups of noodles, cans of vegetables and even a can of beer! After lunch, we decided to head back to Bright on the most direct route, which saw us drive along East Buffalo Rd, Abbeyard Rd and then return to Bright via Myrtleford. Michelle spent the remainder of the afternoon resting while the others wandered around Bright before we all met up for happy hour back at the cabins.

The next morning we were all up early to say our farewells as we all headed home in different directions. It was another good trip that ended too soon.

Michelle & Nat

The High Country in Comfort

Five cars with their occupants met at the Riverview Caravan Park in Porepunkah - Ian & Wendy in the Navarra and camper, Iggy & Jocelyn in the Rodeo and tent, Ted & Elsie in their Commodore and caravan, Steve & Maryanne in the Patrol and KK and Bill & Norma in the Rodeo and Goldstream.

The high country had been deluged during September 2010, with serious damage incurred by roads, bridges and structures, and we kept a nervous watch on reconstruction efforts thereafter until our departure date. A further deluge 2 days before our arrival in the area put driving on a great majority of the tracks west of Bright out of the question. We were greatly impressed by the volumes of water flowing through places like Wangaratta and were in no doubt that plans we might have made before leaving Adelaide would need serious modification.

So it was that the first day's itinerary saw us travelling the bitumen to such exotic places as Beechworth (morning tea at the Bakery), Yackandandah (lunch at the hotel), the lovely Kiewa Valley and Mt Beauty (afternoon tea at the icecreamery), and eventually completing the round trip to Porepunkah via Bright. The only disappointment of the day for some was not entering Yackandandah multiple times just for the splendid avenue of trees there. The jangled end-of-year nerves were starting to settle, and talk soon got around to which wineries and cheese factories we might visit tomorrow!!!



But no, Mt Hotham and Mt Blue Rag track were to be the focus of day two. Morning tea and "a good look around" were had at Hotham before heading down the Dargo High Plains Road to Mt Blue Rag turnoff. An enjoyable and largely uneventful drive out to the lookout point, sadly to find the trig point marker had been torn out of the ground and left on its side, a crumpled mess. Still this most special of viewpoints was appreciated by all. On the way home, not a winery, but a visit to the Bright micro brewery rounded out another pleasant day. The fairer members of the group decided that a walk along river paths from Bright to Porepunkah was called for and the mood in camp at night was now very definitely relaxed.

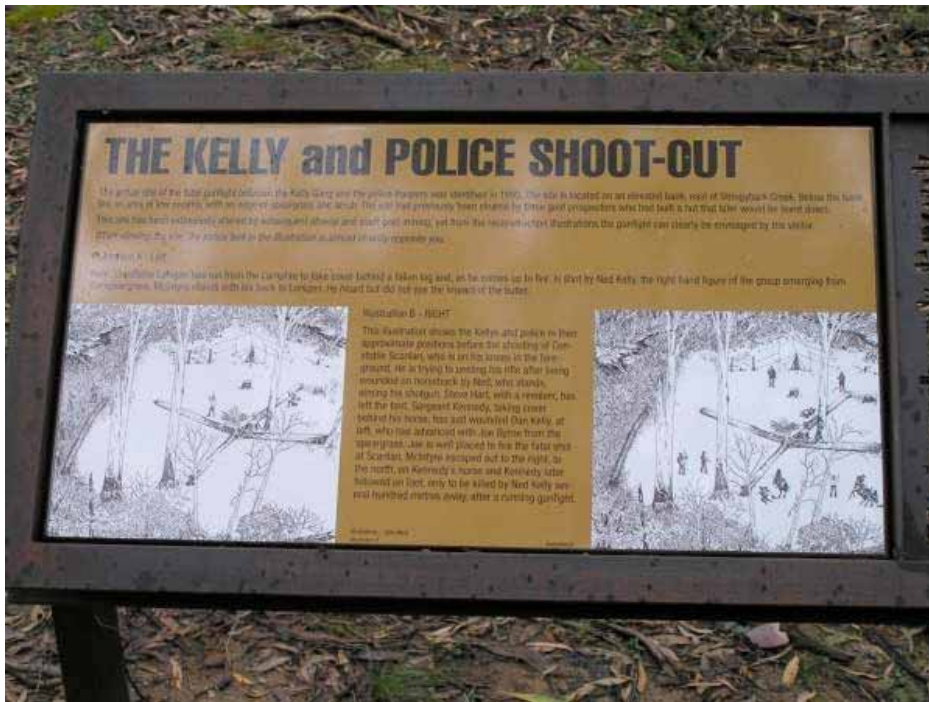
Day 3 and time to relocate to the Dargo region, but not before a visit to Mt Buffalo with its rather down-at-the-heel resort buildings, and the speccy views

at The Hump and The Horn. Back to hook up trailers for the journey to Dargo.

Oops! - overnight the Dargo Shire people had decided to close the High Plains Road to through traffic, even though we had travelled part of it the day before. A quick phone call to the Shire office confirmed "yes, we have closed the road because of flood damage and it must not be traversed". A short hastily convened meeting decided that the Omeo area and perhaps Moscow Villa Hut would be our new destination. So it was on up to Hotham again and down the other side through Dinner Plain. The VicParks people at Omeo were not entirely helpful - they suggested Moscow Villa might not be the best place to take caravans and suggested instead a riverside bush camp at Angler's rest, 20 km north as a pleasant place to stop and which we did enjoy for 2 nights, but found little else to recommend the region. In particular the "friendly country pub" - the Blue Duck Inn - despite signs suggesting that lunch and dinner were available didn't in fact open at any time during our 2 days there and no sign or person was available to explain?? Tracks in the region initially showed promise but after a 5km trek and having negotiated a quite severe bog hole we were suddenly confronted with a "no through road" sign and a locked gate, so with swollen rivers blocking 2 other directions, it was back to camp the way we came. A decision was made to relocate back to the Mansfield region the next day.

This proved to be a most pleasant drive firstly up the Omeo highway to Mitta Mitta and then following the Mitta Mitta river, with swollen flood plains from the discharge of Lake Dartmouth, up to Tallangatta (with its inevitable bakery for those who hadn't packed lunch). A picturesque drive skirting the backwaters of Lake Hume took us southwest onto the highway before turning left to the King Valley and Whitfield. A quick visit to the VicParks office here convinced us the only track open was to the Lake Cobbler area, which quickly settled the next days drive. The Gentle Annie Caravan Park just out of Whitfield had been highly recommended, and we could see that it must have once been quite idyllic sitting on the banks of the King River. Unfortunately, the September flooding of the King Valley washed a large chunk of the park away, along with the approach to a bridge next to the park - a most dramatic example of the damage caused by flooded rivers in the high country. None-the-less we were made more than welcome to what was left of the park and enjoyed the setting for three days.

Next day off to Lake Cobbler, up past Dandongdale Falls and, after the lake, on for 3 or so hours on some steepish shaley tracks out to Abbeyard Road before heading back to Whitfield. This being Ted Else's last night we went for a rather expensive dinner at the local hotel - perhaps a touch too upmarket for its own good, but a pleasant enough night before heading back to camp and the inevitable campfire.



The following day was to be given over to walks - Powers lookout, Paradise Falls, even Mt Buller from the resort car park to the summit. The rain moved in and wiped out those plans. After a drive to the car park for Powers Lookout and finding it wet and visibility at zero we headed through the Tolmie countryside to reach Mansfield in time for a bakery lunch. You might sometimes think these things were planned!!!! A drive then to the Stringy Bark Creek site of Mister Kelly's spat with the constabulary of the day and after a short period of walking there, we managed to find a little sunshine at a pleasant winery serving various plated tasties of scones & cream, savouries, etc to accompany the liquid tastings. Yet another pleasant end to a day.

With more thunderstorms forecast over coming days Ian & Wendy, Iggy & Jocelyn and Bill & Norma decide to up stumps and use the wet days to travel home - saying our farewells to Steve & Maryanne who would use the remaining time to explore real estate opportunities around Mansfield.

All in all a different and for the most part thoroughly enjoyable mix of off-road and pleasant and relaxing on-road sightseeing in an area crying out for more time to be spent enjoying what it has to offer. ??Next year??

Bill Kingston

Little Desert Trip 1st to 4th October

Participants:

Alan Dash & friend (Navara)
Barry & Linda McElhenny (Prado)
Rick Farlow (Pathfinder)
Harry & Jill Richards (Pathfinder)
Craig & Sue Findlay (Defender)
Ian & Anne Blainey (Prado)
David Dobson & grandson (Jackaroo)
Ray & Lynne Bridger (Patrol)
Jan & Michael Martin (Jackaroo)
Mark Eames & Maddie (Pathfinder)
Peter & Jo Williams (S.A. member)

Jan Martin reports:

We arrived at Kiata campground on Thursday evening, just in time for Happy Hour, enjoyed around a great camp fire with wood provided mostly by the N.P. rangers.

On Friday, we joined Ian and Anne Blainey on a reconnoitering trip to the east side of the park. The new growth was astounding, having seen the devastation the drought had caused the previous year. Where there had once been acres of dead and dying vegetation, there was new lush growth and water in the waterholes.

Most notable were the banksias, which had mostly died off last summer, but were now regenerating with hundreds of small plants appearing everywhere, including across the tracks. The sandier tracks had dried out and some had quite deep sand drifts which cleaned the bottom of the Jackaroo nicely.

Eagle Swamp Track had a great section with a series of wriggles through deep sand. The middle of another section had a strange change of level which left the passenger suddenly looking down on the head of the driver!

By Friday night we had nineteen people at the camp, with two more to come early Saturday morning. Next morning the

group split into two, with Ian leading one group and Alan the other. We joined Alan's group to go on some of his favourite tracks. (See Lynne Bridger's report which follows, for details of Ian's group's explorations).

Frequent stops to look at wildflowers were the call of the trip. I don't know how he does it. You'll be driving along a section of track that looks just like the track before and after, but then he will suddenly say "We'll stop here" and lead us to look at some tiny orchids.

Left: We often stopped to look at a variety of wildflowers.



Below left and right: the contrast between the Wimmera River last year and this.



On Sunday, many of the group headed west to visit the historic Serviceton railway complex near the S.A. border. Michael and I went off by ourselves to look at the Wimmera River. We were the only ones on this trip who had been on last year's trip when we saw the river change from a dry bed to a proper river as the water came flowing down after a ten year drought.

Last year we had waited patiently in the dry river bed until the water slowly welled up through the reeds and came flowing down. We went looking for that same spot. What a difference! Now, it was quite wide and flowing strongly. The reeds were now below the surface.

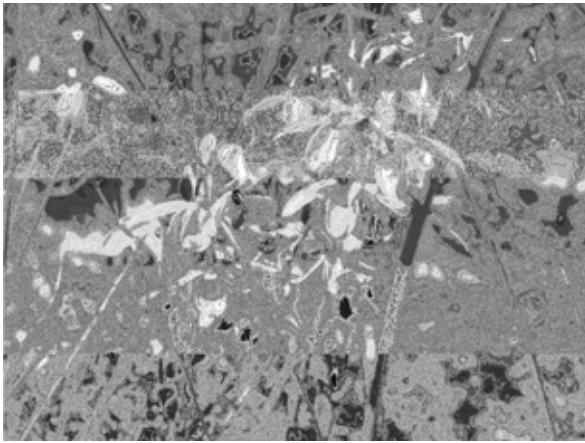
Last year, Alan led a convoy over the levee bank of Lake Hindmarsh and down onto the dry lake bed. We drove for several kilometres until the sand under our deflated tyres became decidedly spongy. Alan felt it was prudent to go no further, so we backtracked. We decided to go to that point and see what the ensuing twelve months had brought. The track now disappeared into a vast expanse of water. It was hard to tell how deep the water was, but all the one metre high bushes we saw in 2009 were gone and there was water everywhere.

Right along the banks of Lake Hindmarsh, a garden of yellow daisies was in prolific flower. What a contrast to the previous year.

Lynne Bridger reports:

On Saturday 2nd October, Ian and Anne led a small group consisting of Mark and Maddie, Peter and Jo (from South Australia) and Ray and I along the Salt Lake Track, a short distance from the camping ground.

We stopped to look at any number of beautiful wildflowers. One or two of the orchids were huge in comparison to the delicate colourful blooms we had seen the day before. ; They were blue/ mauve star like flowers.



We travelled along the Stump Jack Track to Albrecht's Mill, then on to McCabe's Hut, or what was left of it. There was a rough outline of corrugated tin in the ground, about three inches (8 cms) high, in a rectangular formation surrounding a concrete base. (A forerunner to concrete slabs of today?). There was also an old water tank.

Traversing more deep sandy tracks, the drivers were kept busy swerving across the terrain. Peter, following Ray, commented on Ray's great "sashaying" manoeuvres as we climbed a hill. Eagle Swamp was our destination for morning tea. Two ducks on the water caught our attention. Through binoculars, we identified them as Australian Shelducks, with bronzed wings, vibrant green heads and white bands around their necks.



Left: The ruins of McCabe's Hut

Below: Eagle Swamp



Above left & right: The Ebenezer Mission

Left: A graveyard to remind us of the hardship of the area



Continuing along the Pomponderoo Track, we came to Dimboola. The bakery and other shops were all closed, but we found one café, cum take away, open. Just as well, as the female members of our group were able to get sustenance from chocolate coated licorice sticks. From there we went on to the Ebenezer Mission. This fascinating place was established in 1859 by the Moravian Church to “civilise and christianise” the aboriginals. It was used until 1909. The beautiful white church building was a short distance from the other smaller outbuildings, including a kitchen and “dunny”. Missionaries came from as far away as Austria, Switzerland and Germany. A forlorn graveyard testified to the harsh conditions the people here would have endured. It made us wonder what life would have been like here all those years ago.

Our trip continued on through Jeparit, birthplace of Sir Robert Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia through the 1950s, to the edge of Lake Hindmarsh. We think we were actually in the lake, or what would have been the lake, at one stage. It was amazing to see the amount of water in the lake now. After that we went on to Four Mile Beach, which once held

a huge fishing fleet. Again, an amazing expanse of water lay before us. We noted a great little camping ground with free powered sites beside the beach. A possible site for a future trip.

The AFL Grand Final replay was on and we kept checking the scores. However we lost interest when we heard Collingwood was winning easily.

After a very enjoyable day, we headed back to camp to relive our experiences at Happy Hour around the campfire.

Four Mile Beach



Harry Richards continues:

Next day, Alan led many of the group on a trip through the park to Serviceton, an important railway terminus on the Victoria/South Australia border until 1986. Along the way, we had a number of stops to look at a diversity of



The impressive railway station at Serviceton

wildflowers and checked out the World War II practice bombing range. At Serviceton, we were treated to an informative and amusing tour of the imposing station by a local historian. The station, surrounded as it is by vast open plains, came into being because of the different railway gauges of Victoria and South Australia when the respective tracks met in January 1887. Trains travelling from South Australia to Victoria had to change at the border as Victoria had a wider gauge track than South Australia. Needless to say, trains travelling the other way also needed to exchange passengers and freight.

To accommodate this arrangement, this impressive station was built supposedly on the border. However, due to a surveying error, the actual border should have been 4.5 kms to the east and has been disputed ever since. When the railway came through in 1887, facilities were needed to handle this change from one gauge to the other. And so the station was built in 1887. This was long before Federation and the two colonies (as they were then) of South Australia and Victoria could not agree on its establishment. Although the cost of the station was shared, effectively the building was separated. It had two station masters, two sets of staff and two sets of infrastructure. Consequently, a town developed around the station and its activities. That town has since largely disappeared as the new national gauge now means trains can travel through unhindered.

The station was built of red bricks from Horsham and has an impressive seventy metre platform which somehow seems out of place when one can only see vast empty plains in all directions. It was interesting to see the duality of the facilities. Two customs offices, two ticket boxes, two waiting lounges (although these have now been amalgamated) and the two living areas of the two station masters. There was also a mortuary to hold bodies while awaiting exchange between trains and cells to hold prisoners, similarly being transported interstate.

On the day we were there, we saw the aftermath of a wedding which had been held there the previous evening. The

local historical group now manages the station and is open to these type of bookings. They have been granted money to restore the station and work has begun, starting with the foundations. If you haven't seen the station, it is well worth a visit if you are in the area.



Above: The now combined waiting rooms

Above right: A reminder of times past

Below right: The 70 metre platform



From the station, we journeyed to nearby Wolseley, a small village whose only claim to fame is that it hosted a number of large tanks which stored fuel through the years of World War II. We bid farewell to Peter and Jo, who were heading back home, then enjoyed afternoon tea in the pleasant surrounds of the town's park before heading back to camp after an interesting and rewarding trip. After breakfast next morning, the group began to decamp and make our separate ways home.

Thanks to Alan particularly and to Ian for arranging a great weekend with plenty of variety for the participants. We look forward to next year, where I understand the venue will be the Big Desert. Can't wait.



Tom Welsh passed away on the weekend of 22-23 January 2011, after a long illness. He now is at peace.

We will of course, miss a character who was always full of the love of life, ready with a joke or a funny story and was well known to many in the Holden 4WD club and the two Jackaroo clubs. He attended many of the joint trips as a travelling companion for Alan Dash. Tom attended 6 or 7 tri-staters, including the very first event at Mopoke Hut. He also worked in the organising of Roto and Eldorado.

Beachport 2011

Because Australia Day was on the Wednesday this year, there was a lot of confusion about when to be at Beachport. Do you take the weekend before and have Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday or do you arrive on the Wednesday and stay till the weekend. One disadvantage of this latter option, is that you miss out on the great Australia Day Breakfast that Beachport Lions Club puts on.

Some like the McIntyres who live in Mt. Gambier, arrived just before Christmas and stay until Australia Day and go fishing (and Crayfish) whenever possible. Some with flexible work arrangements (or retired) arrived on the weekend before and stayed until the following weekend.

I was able to arrive at Beachport on the Monday afternoon and stay till Saturday. Unfortunately, the block of Caravan sites that we had booked last year got spit and rearrange slightly by the caretakers. There was also the confusion of some arriving earlier than originally intended. I was told that there were also a lot of cancellations due to the excess water problems around Australia.



When I arrived on the Monday, my booked site was still occupied for another day, so I had to erect my tent on another site for a night. Not the neighbouring site (which was vacant), but a site 6 further down. In the morning, I emptied the contents of my tent into my car without deflating the airbed and removed all the pegs from my tent without collapsing it (it has an external frame and is quite rigid). After the booked site was vacant, 4 of us lifted a corner each and walked the tent down to its new location. It was quite an unusual sight.

On Tuesday afternoon, several of us went for an on-road drive. We drove and walked to Lanky's well in the town, then to Woolley Lake which we circumnavigated on foot. After this we drove to the Woakwine Cutting. Most visitors to the area have seen this Cutting, if you haven't, I cannot emphasise enough the need to see this feature.

By Tuesday evening, there were 14 Vehicles/Families: Kevin and Chris; Theo and Jo; Bruce and Denise David, Kel and family; Laz and Jane; Pat and Birgit; Graham and Fay; Kym and Annette; Steve and Helen; Trevor and Moira; Ian and Sandy; Beth and Geoff; Trevor and Julie; Martin. On Tuesday evening, it started raining fairly heavily at about 5:30pm. The rain nearly stopped a couple of times and then finally decided to quit at about 9:30 when everything was very wet and muddy.



Wednesday morning was cool, not raining and things were starting to dry out. We went and enjoyed the Lions Club breakfast in the park in warm dry conditions. We went for a drive along the beach to Nora Creina where we stopped on the bay for lunch. After lunch, some decided to drive back to Beachport by road, some to Robe by (dirt) road and 5 of us decided to continue along the beach to Robe. The beaches so far had been rather soft (despite the rain), they were to get softer. It can be difficult judging a suitable amount of momentum that gets you across a beach without bouncing too much. The McIntyre's were pleased that as the beach trip leaders that they had found the correct beach exit to come out at the rubbish dump.

Wednesday night saw the remaining arrivals for a total of 20: Simon and Sue; Gavin and Naomi; Adam and Carli; Jan and Jim; Greg and Louise; Steen and Brenda.

On Thursday, there were several trips. The longest trip (time wise), was Carpenters Rocks to the Vic border, which ran into difficulties when one vehicle needed rescuing several times. Another trip up to Robe encountered some less than delightful scenery at a car that needed rescuing. As I was on my own trip visiting a long lost friend in Casterton, I can't relate any details of these trips. The stories I heard around the campfire were patchy and short on completeness.

Friday Morning was the big beach cleanup. Two large groups went along the beaches from Nora Criena to Robe and Nora Criena to Beachport. Each group filled a trailer with bits of plastic and foam, bits of rope, dead chairs and a tv.



Friday afternoon was alternative activities with some just going for a stroll. Bruce had organised kite flying which several participated in, while other got handed the string and had to hold on. In fact, some unexpected people had difficulty quitting at the end of the day.

On Saturday, Greg and Louise and I had to leave Beachport and make our ways home. Some of the others were off to try and finish the trip started the other day.

Beachport was, as usual a pleasant diversion for normal. The days were pleasantly warm with the danger of sunburn. The nights were cold (low teens) and Kevin's heater was a star attraction most nights. The company was pleasant as usual. Next year presents another problem, Australia day is on the Thursday with Friday being a work day.

Martin

SOME INTERESTING WEBSITES

WEBSITE

TOPIC

www.flindersoutback.com

follow links for free tracks & UHF repeater tower downloads.

www.police.wa.gov.au/recruitingandtheacademy/pdf/aids22.pdf

desert survival

www.parks.sa.gov.au

D.E.H. website – follow the links to download Recreational Vehicles Handbook (Visitor Information)

www.volunteering.sa.org.au

information for volunteers

www.exploroz.com

Too many to highlight – just take a look

www.cartographics.com.au

Maps, Mapping Software, GPS Units etc.

www.westprint.com.au

Maps, general information, link to newsletter subscription page.

www.4wdonline.com

Everything 4WD – lots of links

www.holden.com.au

Follow link thru ABOUT US at top of page to environment & community

www.raysoutdoors.com.au

Camping & clothing catalogue

www.gme.net.au

GME Electrophone site – communications equipment & Garmin GPS

www.dotars.gov.au/roads/safety/bulletin/index.aspx

Look at VSB 1,(PDF) section 10, Electrical plug wiring for trailers.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

TO THOSE MEMBERS WHO WILL BE CELEBRATING THEIR BIRTHDAY IN THE NEXT MONTHS

| February | | March | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Barbara Jardine | Julie Deer | Brendan Atkinson | Annette Atwell |
| Fay Gibbs | Marlene Hartwig | Paul Barbara | Nat Hardy |
| Margaret Keelan | Steve McRae | Helen Sosnowski | Chris McIntyre |
| Bruce Richardson | Kelly Richardson | Judy Smith | Rob Williams |
| Birgit Stokes | Jan Wissel | | |

Apologises for any inaccuracies or omissions, the above information was extracted from the membership list



Remember
 You might be OLDER than you've ever been BEFORE
 But you're also YOUNGER than you'll ever be AGAIN