



friends of the flinders ranges national park

March/April 2009

www.friendsofflindersranges.org.au

Special newsletter from Darren re 2008.

Dear Friends

Well as another year quickly draws to a close it is time to reflect on the achievements this year and what a year it has been. This year saw substantial work undertaken on guide hut. The solid effort put in by the Friends and Gordon now has the hut with walls and a roof that is sturdy and will weather the years to come. The work on re-pointing the chimney and installation of the windows were other key achievements. Hopefully 2009 will see most of hut work completed including the doors, the laborious pugging of the walls, laying stone flooring and construction of the rainwater tank stand. The efforts of the group around the homestead and homestead precinct were also very much appreciated. (Special note of thanks to Ron and Marge for their commitment to helping keep the homestead garden looking its best.)

This work alone is something to be very proud of but as I mentioned in the August-September Newsletter "The 2008 Friends Forum", the culmination of years of work, was an incredible effort. The positive feedback and comments were overwhelming and this Forum has been identified as the benchmark for future Friends Forums. Vince and the organising committee had every aspect covered and the attention to detail couldn't be faulted. While it was a major effort and very hectic for all involved, I hope you are all very proud of this fantastic achievement.

Athol and his family continued working on the seasonal events program and we are grateful for their easy going approach to delivering this program with minimal requirements from already stretched DEH staff.

I would also like to mention the hard and ongoing work that Frank Williams undertakes on behalf of you all. Frank makes sure the newsletter is put together, organises accommodation and the program with us for the regular working bee weekends, orders and collects goods and materials, continues to track down historical information to help support our knowledge as well as the plethora of other jobs that come up as President. Thank you Frank, it is a pleasure to work with you.

For the Northern Flinders DEH team, this year has seen some key staff changes with our Regional Conservator John Watkins retiring, District Ranger Joe Stelmann moving to Innes, our Construction Maintenance Worker Gordon Work moving to Stansbury and long serving Oraparinna Team Member Matt Kennewell moving to Western Australia. We have welcomed Nicola Beaton to the Wilpena Crew and Dylan Koener to the Oraparinna team in temporary roles. These staff changes have presented a challenge with all our staff needing to step up to cover the shortfall and time for the new staff to get up to speed. We are looking forward to a more stable workforce in 2009.

Yet again I find myself expressing our thanks to you all, your continued hard work and dedication is a credit to the members of the group and is really appreciated by all the DEH staff. We wish you all a safe and happy festive season and look forward to seeing you at the AGM in February and in the Flinders in 2009.

Darren Crawford/ District Ranger DEH Wilpena

Seen at the AGM 2009:



*Elected Committee Members
2009*

*Frank Williams: Publicity
Margaret Williams: Safety Officer
Tricia Bott: Treasurer
Helen Monterola: Secretary
Tony Bott: President
Vincent Monterola: Vice
President*



Guest Speaker:
Neville Bonney spoke about the plants of the Flinders Ranges, showed us lots of examples and noted their uses by the Aboriginals over the millenia.

March Weekend 2009:

As the forecast for that weekend in Adelaide was below 37 degrees, our March weekend was not cancelled as it had been in 2008, and eleven members met at Oraparinna on the Friday night after travelling along the new bitumen Wilpena – Blinman road, now complete to a few kilometres past Oraparinna. Only a good number of road signs still need to be erected to warn drivers of wildlife, non-banked curves, steep grades and sudden sharp bends - a smooth ride but quite possibly dangerous to the unwary visitor. Currently, the End 110 sign still stands at the end of the old bitumen – no limit apparently until reaching the 60 signs some kilometres along the road!

Nevertheless, a companionable, pleasant evening followed, thanks to Julie's largesse in the form of liqueurs, cheeses and biscuits, and contributions from the rest of us. This was after a few tense moments for the president who found we were one room short for accommodation. Not to worry, all was sorted by Barry and Nicola and then Vince who was determined that no one was going to sleep in a car!

Saturday morning found us listening intently to Margaret expound on the safety regulations under which we have to work on the Park and her reading of the appropriate details for our weekend previously prepared by Tom. Thanks Tom and Margaret. Then - a quick drive to the Appealinna heritage site, and delight at seeing the newly graded car-park on the hill before the road leading down to the stone wall and old parking area. We all then set about our small group activities collecting material for the Parks data base which will eventually list details of every feature, human and natural in the Park. This is one of our ongoing tasks for 2009-2010 (etc.) It's best that Margaret takes up the story of their group's achievements.

Athol and Frank wondering why Frank has his finger jammed in his GPS.
Margaret continues to record the event anyway!



"Saturday turned out to be a hot overcast day, but the group turned up at Appealinna to gather information for a Parks database of ruins, mines and any other buildings on the Park.

Frank, Athol and Margaret headed east of the site with GPS, tape measure and recording folder to map and measure the various ruins of miners' huts, store rooms on the northern side of the creek and then the homestead and fencing boundaries on the southern side of the creek. There was great excitement when the other group of Friends possibly found Joseph Wills grave site. It was like the ABC "Time Team" program. In the afternoon we scoured the Appealinna mine area marking and recording where various shafts were located. To meet legislation requirements some shafts will have to be fenced off."

After a rollicking BBQ dinner the general meeting was held on the outside patio. The new management implemented the practice of setting 30 minutes for the duration of the meeting with the option of the group voting on extensions of 15 minutes. It worked to everyone's advantage because there was only one extension! Then we sat peacefully under the stars which now appeared after threatening clouds had earlier suggested a storm only to be diverted to the eastern seaboard, yet again. The night remained hot and steamy.

"Sunday was a bit cooler and we went off to Guide Hut to meet Steve who has just started working with Parks and will be working with us on the Hut. The main jobs to be done are flagging the floor, making doors, erecting a water tank and pugging the walls. Steve has experience in stone work and should be a great help. The afternoon saw us travelling to Aroona to map the springs, chimneys and the old homestead ruin. It was noticeable that the springs have been affected by the drought."

And, as Helen records, "Sunny Sunday Morning – Following a warm and sticky Saturday, we all awoke to a beautiful sunny, cool morning. A perfect morning to visit Guide Hut for the first time in 2009. The drive, although the country was very dry, once again was admired by all for the beautiful colours that came to life as we travelled along the various valleys on the way to Guide Hut. As we came out of the last of the many creek crossings on our journey, there it was – Guide Hut in all its restored glory. It was nice to be out there once again. Everyone got to work,



Guide Hut and part of the clean up – removing the unused iron as the first step.

measuring, talking, tidying up around the Hut and sorting out what needs to be done to complete the restoration. Following morning tea, we slowly made our way back to Oraparinna for lunch, satisfied that all the effort that has been put into restoring Guide Hut has been well worth while."

As Margaret has already reported, the group drove out to Aroona on Sunday afternoon. It is interesting to note that Gladys Bond, nee Pumpa, who was probably the last woman to live full time in the Aroona Hut, will celebrate her 100th birthday in July this year.

Welcome – We welcomed a new member to our Friends Group – Peter Marmasch from 'the Friends of the Australian Arid Lands Garden, who had this to say about his weekend with us – "My first time with the Friends of FRNP. I was very impressed. It really opened my eyes to what is happening in the FRNP. So much work has been done by the Friends around the Park. The members of the group are all very friendly and help each other out and everyone has so much fun helping around the Park."

We would love to welcome more new members or Friends who have not been able to attend in recent years.

Helen and Vince visited Keith Crossman at his home in Hawker and found him to be looking a lot better than he has in recent years. Kaye, on the other hand, is in Hawker Hospital and seems to understand very little and recognises probably no one.

Speaking of birthdays, good wishes to the six FRNP Friends who have birthdays in April, or in one case, on the 31st March. None of them is even close to 100!

For more photographs please explore web-site.

April Meeting Thursday 16-18/4 - Oraparinna

*******Please note the change of both dates and accommodation venue.** ***** This is due to Wilpena becoming unavailable for the group and the 16-18 being available at Oraparinna, due to the Star Force moving in later on Sunday.

Programme:

Thursday – Arrive, share dinner

Friday - 9am Drive to Guide Hut to work on the roof, tank stand, doors, courtyard etc.

12.30 Lunch, Guide Hut

1.00 pm Back to work at Guide Hut.

4.30 Return to Oraparinna

6.0 Share dinner; no meeting

Saturday As for Friday

Sunday 8.00am Clean up and return home, safely.

(Please Note – If the temperature is forecast to be over 35 we may change the venue to Aroona.)

May Meeting – 15.17/5 Wilpena

Programme:

Trezona Camp Ground – tank stand and drippers to be installed; data base collection at Elatina, Middlesite, Etina and possibly Youngoona.

June Meeting – 26-29/6 Oraparinna

Programme:

Trezona Camp Ground – tree planting; Guide Hut, continuation of the restoration work with Steven Jennings. Possible completion of the data base collection at Elatina etc. Rain (??) may curtail work there due to the possible state of the access track. I'm in doubt about this possibility

BOOKINGS:

Please contact Tony Bott at (08) 8293-2286 or by email: triciab@adam.com.au for your room reservations.

MEMBERSHIP FEES:

\$20 per individual, family now due for 2009 year. (please complete form from web-site)

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