



# **friends of the flinders ranges national park**

**April-May 2010**

[www.friendsofflindersranges.org.au](http://www.friendsofflindersranges.org.au)

**Patron – Mrs Elizabeth Jamieson**

## **NEWSLETTER**

### **16-19<sup>th</sup> April at Oraparinna**

Friday Margaret and Frank arrived at Oraparinna early in the afternoon, unpacked, and then doubled back to the Bunyeroo turn-off so they could see for themselves the impact of all the recent rains on Bunyeroo, across to the Brachina road and from there back to Oraparinna. They reported that it was strange seeing areas, like Bunyeroo where it seemed as though no rain had fallen at all, to the Brachina end where the roads have been washed out six or seven times since November. At that time Brachina Gorge was still closed to traffic due to the almost total lack of road it having being replaced by an increased abundance of large rocks, fallen trees and other flood debris. By late afternoon Tony had arrived followed by Helen and Vince and later still, Florence and Dean. A happy dinner was enjoyed after which our Ranger, Nicola visited to share the local news and advise on the probability of our driving out to Guide Hut the next day. The temperature being cooler than during the previous meeting was conducive better sleeping.

Saturday was a beautiful day, enhanced by the arrival of Marge and Ron, in time for all of us to clamber into three Land Cruisers with their higher clearances to venture off along the track, which though graded less than a month ago, was showing the scars of two inches of rain during that week. There were plenty of flat surfaces enriched by cunningly hidden gullies, gutters and ridges which made driving challenging or nightmare-ish depending on one's skills and nervous disposition. The creek crossings all showed flood debris at levels beyond description, especially the mighty Moodlatana Creek which was still boasting pools of water, saturated sand and the dreaded wet bull-dust. This crossing was navigated with care. We were accompanied by Ranger Nicola who worked with us all day which we really appreciated. Thanks Nicola! Athol also took time off from his Autumn Events to do his share. While the women cut the remaining wire and stapled it in the gaps, the men mixed and pugged the walls to complete the first room and then to make a start on the room with the fireplace. It was hard work and everyone gave their utmost in the morning with barely a word of conversation or camaraderie. After lunch the situation changed subtly, for as we all grew more tired, and the light/darkness in the rooms made it difficult to see the walls let alone find the gaps to pug. I, for one, will never know how Nicola managed to pug all the gaps behind the door in what seemed like total darkness. Nevertheless, the level of conversation continued to rise rapidly until it was decided, on the voices, that it was time to return to Oraparinna where, we soon found, the hot showers eased the aches and pains. Thanks to everyone; the day's achievements were amongst the best we have ever had.

A barbecue dinner was well attended by the nine of us and then we were joined by Rangers Nicola and her new husband, Michael, who chatted for some time and then showed us a DVD of their wedding which had been celebrated only a few weeks earlier at Wilpena in and around the homestead gardens. It was great to be able to share their experience through what were beautifully crafted photographs, even the one of the bridal party standing in front of the public toilet. Nicola did assure us that he did not recognise the lovely stone wall for what it was. It will be hard to forget other shots in front of the pug and pine cottages, under the gum trees and on the massive fallen logs. Well done Nicola and Michael! And thanks for sharing them with us.

Sunday was a divided day with Dean and Vince heading valiantly out to Guide Hut, yet again, where they all but finished the pugging inside the second room. Well done guys, great job! Marge and Ron continued the clearing out of the dead wood from the fig trees in the Appealinna garden until they had to head back to Whyalla so Ron could go to hospital on Monday morning. Hope all went well Ron. Helen and Florence braved the spirit of a dead kangaroo in Size's cottage and cleared the rooms of horehound and onion weed, and then immediately around the outside walls. Michael fortunately arrived with a shovel and 'managed' the roo's resting place further away from the cottage. The weeding was a back breaking job so all credit to the ladies for their efforts. Tony flitted from job to job, doing some sawing, some weed pulling and then, with Nicola, helping Margaret and Frank over at the Appealinna Mine to identify the old

shafts and then measure out and mark the boundaries of the proposed safety fences required around each of them. This has been one of the Friends' listed tasks for some years but the Guide Hut reconstruction has tended to put Appealinna and the Mine on the backburner so to speak. Lunch together under the trees at Appealinna was fairly pleasant although I think that the flies may have got more out of it than we did. It was great sitting there and seeing the long pools of water still lying peacefully after the raging torrent of some days ago.

Sunday afternoon proved a massive bonus. We decided to check out the Youngoona coach station and associated water holes. Once down in Youngoona-Enorama Creek we were amazed at the impact that six or seven floods had had on the banks and bed of the creek. Many of the big guns were gone; some lay across the creek bed while many of the smaller trees and bushes were lying on their sides attesting to the direction and strength of the floodwaters. What had been almost impenetrable bush, sedges, gravel mounds and masses of young trees was now largely a smooth, well graded stream bed with clear running water flowing over clean sand and gurgling over the occasional water-worn rocks. It was so peaceful that I felt that if I had not been wearing boots I would have stopped and paddled my feet in some of the pools. Frank and I felt privileged that we were present in this beautiful environment, which is not blessed with running water very often. We returned to Oraparinna, where the early part of the evening was spent recounting the adventures of the day.

Monday was clean-up time although we were spared some of the tasks because Florence and Dean, in their caravan, were staying on for a while and would use the kitchen, lounge room and 'other services'. Six of us did go into the homestead at Wilpena to clear up the mess in the battery room – left over materials from the Forum, and check the Friends' Library in the Shearers' Quarters. Then it was down the highway to Quorn and our usual lunch of quandong pie, coffee and whatever else and finally homeward bound.

We missed Julie who was in Adelaide nursing a wounded neck. However, a late report assures us that she is right again and back at work. Peter, too, was absent due to his earlier involvement with the Autumn Events.

On a happy note, we all wish Marge a great big happy 80<sup>th</sup> birthday (27<sup>th</sup> April) However it is with regret and sadness that we report the death on the 25<sup>th</sup> April of our immediate past Patron, Brian Powell after a lengthy illness.

**City Meeting of the Friends' Group – Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May at 10am, Room 2, upstairs in the State Library, North Terrace, City. (Meet Tony inside the main doors, ground floor at 10 am.)**

Agenda – Park's interpretation signage; the Appealinna Project; Guide Hut; Walking Trails and Tracks; Floods

**Please bring writing materials, reading glasses etc. so that those who wish will be prepared after the brief meeting to research topics of their interest but relevant to the Flinders for inclusion in the data base.**

### **May Meeting: Oraparinna Friday 21st – Monday 24<sup>th</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> week-end)**

Friday – Arrive Oraparinna - shared dinner at 6.30pm

Saturday – 9.00 am Drive to Guide Hut to finish pugging and begin work on the floors

12.30 pm lunch

4.30 pm return to Oraparinna

6.30 pm barbecue and evening at leisure

Sunday - 9.00 am Data Base information collection along the Bunyeroo Track and beyond Youngoona.

12.30 pm lunch

5.00 pm return to Oraparinna

6.30 pm dinner, followed by review of material collected during the day.

Monday - 8.00 am Clean up Quarters;

11.00 am morning tea at Quandong Café, Quorn.

Room Bookings to Tony by Sunday 16th May please.

**CONTACTS:**

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**A reminder that the 2010 Annual Membership fee remains at \$20 per family.**

**Please pay your Annual Membership asap as members working in the Park need to be financial for insurance purposes.**