



Desert Sky News

"It's All About The Experience – Yours and Ours "



Volume 17 Issue 1

Telephone : 08 8356 1874

April 2015

Our anniversary "Legendary Longreach & Winton" trip has fully booked, however if there is further interest we will consider another departure date.

Other trips- (Sapphire Coast April 27), (Painted Desert May 16, (Birdsville/ Innamincka July 25) and (Birdsville/ Windorah August 8) have bookings with seats still available on these trips. A list of all departures for 2015 is on the back page of this newsletter.

Lake Eyre (Kati Thanda) update

Over the last couple of months there has been some exciting times up at Lake Eyre, with quite a lot of rainfall hitting the area causing an influx of water to start filling the lake.

Reports from Tony Magor (Assistant Manager Community Engagement and Public Lands, Natural Resources SA Arid Lands) over the last two months have shown that Lake Eyre got to around 40% capacity after the large downpours but water soon evaporated, leaving around 15% still left.

From Tony's report, he says; that like always, we cannot predict what will occur this year, there are 3 main variables on what will happen with the lake.

- How long will the Macumba River run into the Lake?
- How long it will take floodwaters from the Georgina River to reach the lake, and how much will there be?
- What happens with the remainder of the monsoon season and any further rainfalls within the catchment?

Although deemed a minor event, there has been increased visitor numbers to the area.

Hall of Fame..... Royal Flying Doctor



An exciting new addition was unveiled at the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame (ASHOF) in Longreach on 10th March 2015, just in time for what is hoped to be a bumper tourist season in Outback Queensland.

An original Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) aircraft, a Queen Air built in 1977, has been meticulously restored and is now on display, suspended in the atrium of the Hall.

CEO Lloyd Mills said the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame had long been interested in featuring the Queen Air and is delighted that that vision has been realised today by their continued close collaboration with the RFDS.

Birdsville Caravan Park

The management of the Birdsville Caravan Park changed from 1 April with Council making the decision that it will engage managers to oversee the operations of the park at the expiration of the current lease with Troy and Margie Minnett.

P.R.O. Management has been appointed as managers for the next 2 years whilst Council considers the long term future and management model of the caravan park.

Burke and Wills - Practical Guide, Maps & Notes

The Hon John Don MBE, a well known lawyer and member of the Victorian Parliament in the decade following the second World War had a passion for accuracy and truth.

He became committed to discovering the true story of the Burke and Wills mission and also outlining in detail how it is possible to follow much of the route that they took in their quest to reach the Gulf of Carpentaria.

John sadly died before the book could be published and his partner Shirley Anderson undertook the challenge and is pleased and relieved to be able to fulfil the promise that she made to him before he died.

The book is over 400 pages of fascinating and revealing information and retails at \$100 which is near cost. If you are interested, I can provide details on how to order a copy.

Welcome to Birdsville!

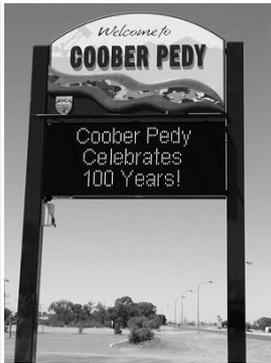


New welcome to Birdsville on the North Side of Town



New "welcome" signs have been erected on the north side of town!

News from out and about



Coober Pedy is celebrating 100 years of history and heritage and there are a number of events planned next month, including a Street Parade, Stalls, Re-Union Parties and a Centenary Ball.



The Shell Roadhouse Coober Pedy has had a major upgrade and the newly crowned "Outback Bar and Grill" restaurant and bar is now finished and will be a wonderful asset to tourism in the town.



Quorn Café has also gone through a major redevelopment over the last couple of months, by expanding into the building next door to almost triple in size.

Since reopening on the 30th of January, owner Toni Bauer has been quite busy with many locals coming in to check out the new look café.

If you are currently receiving a printed copy of Desert Sky News, and would like instead to receive a digital copy, please contact us to join the digital mailing list:

How to contact us:

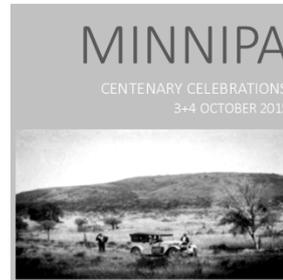
☎ **08 8356 1874**
 ✉ **PO Box 683**
GLENELG SA 5045

📧 **enquiries@desertskytours.com**
 🌐 **www.desertskytours.com**

And another renovation!.....

The Tibooburra Hotel was built in 1882 during the gold rush and is the oldest surviving hotel in Tibooburra.

The hotel has recently undergone some major renovations both inside and to the balcony (*left*)



Celebrating the Centenary of Minnipa 3-4 October 2015:

Town & railway tours, memorabilia, procession, book launch, dinner dance, family reunions, camp grounds, memorial plaque unveil.

Farina, South Australia
 the rebuilding of a ghost town
 ♦ Diana Harris

We need to make sure all the information about the Farina Project is correct so the members of this group know what it's all about.

We are not trying to REBUILD Farina. Volunteers are working on STABILIZING what is left of the stone buildings-- all the wooden buildings were blown away long ago.

The volunteers are attempting to turn what is left of a once thriving town into a tourist stopover for people in the Far North of SA who are interested in the history of the Australian outback. There are now many story boards at points of interest. The town was originally set out on a plan similar to Colonel Light's plan for Adelaide . All the streets have been signposted so visitors can see what was once the plan of Farina. Points of interest like the churches , Bell's store and the brothel (none of them still exist) have story boards.

There is even an FCG (Farina Cricket Ground - - complete with concrete pitch , red soil, stones and bushes depending on whether it has recently rained)

(contd)...

Farina, South Australia the rebuilding of a ghost town

Every year now there is a cricket day which includes teams from as far away as Port Augusta. In 2012 there was also a tennis and golf day - with 2 courts and the golf course outlined in a nearby flat salt pan by some of the volunteers. I even won a prize - really the wooden spoon - for taking the most strokes for one hole (19 in all-- I'm a musician not a golfer!!)

The volunteers have been visiting Farina since 2009 and are there for between 4 & 6 weeks in April/May/ June. Volunteers need to have transport plus tent, caravan or motor home - there is no accommodation - but there is a lovely camp ground in a creek bed with some basic amenities. Of course if there is rain on the spot or up north the creek bed can quickly become a flood. The nearest shop is at Lyndhurst (about 20 ks south) and the biggest town centre is Leigh Creek - - at least 50 Ks south. Mobile coverage is intermittent but if you drive south several Ks and leave the road & drive up a nearby hill you can usually get it!! It's no place for phone addicts.

Things I remember most about the twice I have been there with my husband Peter are:--

the terrific underground bakery which is run by professional bakers who train some of the volunteers to assist-- it's amazing how many people know via "bush telegraph" that the bakery is functioning so the pasties & bread & scrolls are quickly sold out with the profits going to the Farina project. I have been rostered on to the bakery shop selling the goods as well as tea & coffee & chatting to the visitors-- sometimes busloads of them as the outback tour operators love showing their clients around Farina :

the cemetery which volunteers & local school children (from Marree & Leigh Creek) have tidied (required considerable weeding where I have helped) so the graves of the local people are clear even tho quite a few do not indicate who is buried there. (many nationalities

Farina, South Australia the rebuilding of a ghost town

including Afghans in a special section-- as many as possible are listed on a story board):

the work led by stonemasons on the remains of 2 hotels, the police station (I "painted " some of the pointing with paint made of red dust & water) and the Moffat home (a Moffat descendant goes to Farina to help) where older students from Leigh Creek have worked under the guidance of a stone mason.

In 2013 the railway house & station precinct was the main stabilization project (Farina was once the head of the Ghan but the railway was pulled up when the new Ghan line was planned):

the wonderful sky in the outback - - day time and night when the stars are unbelievable-- as well as the magnificent scenery - - particularly when the station owner , Kevin or his wife Anne take a 4 wheel convoy through their property which features watercourses you can't believe exist in the outback and some phenomenal land shapes - absolutely needing 4WDs to traverse

the very special dawn service on ANZAC Day in 2012 at the war memorial built by the volunteers - - well over 100 people turned up from who knows where - the rising sun and the sounds of flocks of birds in the nearby trees provided sights and sounds not imagined in the city. We even managed to have the sounds of the last post at the end of the ceremony (with a little help from modern technology - a bugler would have been wonderful)

The opportunity to meet a very different group of interesting people whom I would never expect to meet amongst my musical friends.

If anyone wants to find out more about the Farina group & what it is doing check out

<http://www.farinarestoration.com>

This article by Diana Harris, is from the facebook page—"Farina, South Australia—the rebuilding of a ghost town.

2015 Itineraries



The Sapphire Coast

(8 days)

\$3500pp

Monday 27th April

Portland, Great Ocean Road, Otway Tree Top Walk, Apollo Bay, Metung, Lakes Entrance, Eden, Twofold Bay, Pambula, Merimbula, Bega, Victorian coastal towns, Meeniyan, Camperdown, Dunkeld, The Coorong.



Kangaroo Island

(4 days)

\$2125pp

(Includes Sealink ferry!)

Tuesday 3rd November

Penneshaw, Antechamber Bay, Cape Willoughby, American River, Kingscote, Flinders Chase National Park, Cape Borda, Admirals Arch, Cape De Coudic, Seal Bay, Emu Bay, Stokes Bay, Snelling Beach, Western River Cove



Coongie Lakes

(7 days)

\$2900pp

Monday June 1 & Monday June 22

Old Strzelecki Track, Innamincka, Coongie Lakes, Camp LXV, Cameron Corner, Sturt NP, Tibooburra, Broken Hill, Loch Lilly and Quandong Stations, Burra.



Yorke Peninsula & The Southern Flinders Ranges

(5 days)

\$1575pp

Departure by demand

Ardrossan, Port Julia, Port Vincent, Edithburgh, and Wool Bay. Scenic drive to Troubridge Point and Marion Bay. Innes National Park includes Cable Bay, Cape Spencer and Pondalowie Bay. Corny Point, Warooka and Yorketown. Moonta, Kadina and Wallaroo. Southern Flinders Ranges, Alligator Gorge, Melrose.

2015 Itineraries



**Legendary
Longreach
& Winton**
(11 days)
\$4200pp

Monday 6th July

Strzelecki Track, Innamincka, Windorah, Lark Quarry Dinosaur Trackway, Winton, Waltzing Matilda Centre, Longreach. Visit The Stockman's Hall of Fame, Qantas Founders Museum, Sunset Cruise on the Thomson River.

Barcaldine, The Tree Of Knowledge, Blackall Woolscour, Tambo, Charleville. Cunumulla, Currawinya National Park, Hungerford, The Darling Track to Yantabulla, Fords Bridge and Bourke.

A day exploring Bourke visiting Mt Oxley and local attractions and a cruise aboard the Jandra paddle-steamer on the Darling River.

Wilcannia via The Darling River Run through Louth, Tilpa and on to Broken Hill. Old Pastoral route to Burra, Adelaide



**Birdsville &
Innamincka**
(9 days)
\$3750 pp

Saturday 25th July

Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, Mungerannie, Birdsville, Innamincka, Camp LXV (the Dig Tree), Cameron Corner, Sturt National Park, Tibooburra, Broken Hill, Old Pastoral Route via Loch Lilly Station to Burra, Adelaide



**Birdsville &
Windorah**
(9days)
\$3750 pp

Saturday 8th August

Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, Mungerannie, Birdsville, Betoota, Windorah, Quilpie, Toompine, Thargomindah, Cunnamulla, Bourke, The Darling River Run, Louth, Tilpa, Wilcannia, Broken Hill. Old Pastoral Route via Loch Lilly Station to Burra, Adelaide.

2015 Itineraries



**Head of
Bight & The
Eyre Peninsula**
(9 days)
\$3150pp

Saturday 22nd August

Cowell, Tumby Bay, Pt Lincoln, and Whalers Way. Coffin Bay, Talia and Woolshed Caves, Streaky Bay, Murphys Haystacks. Ceduna, Yalata, Head Of Bight (whale watching) and Bunda Cliffs. Return via Minnipa, Gawler Ranges, Kimba, Pt Augusta and Flinders Ranges to Adelaide.



**Flinders Ranges
& Skytrek**
(4 days)
\$1695 pp

Wednesday 9th September

Rawnsley Park, Wilpena Pound, Willow Springs Station, "Skytrek", Bunyeroo Valley, Brachina Gorge, Blinman, Parachilna Gorge, Moralana Scenic Drive, Melrose, The Bridle Track, Port Germein, Laura, Orroroo, Burra, Eudunda and Kapunda.



**Flinders Ranges
& Arkaroola**
(5 days)
\$2300 pp

Saturday 19th September

Rawnsley Park, Wilpena Pound, Bunyeroo Valley, Brachina Gorge, Blinman, **Arkaroola, Ridgetop Tour**, Bolla Bollana, Arkaroola Waterhole, Gammon Ranges, Moralana Scenic Drive.



**The Gawler
Ranges**
(5 days)
\$1875 pp

Monday 12th October

Port Wakefield, Port Germein, Port Augusta, Iron Knob, Corunna, Siam, Nonning, Mt Ive, Lake Gairdner, Yardea, Hiltaba, Paney Station, The Organ Pipes, Pildappa Rock, Tcharkuldu Hill, Minnipa, Wudinna, Kimba, Wilmington, Melrose, Gladstone, The Clare Valley.

2015 Itineraries



**Tumby Bay
&
Eyre Peninsula**
(5 days)
\$1675 pp

Saturday 24th October

Port Germein, Arno Bay, Port Neill, Trinity Haven Scenic Drive, Poonindie, Port Lincoln, Sleaford Bay, Tod Reservoir, Cummins, Mt Hope, Point Drummond, Greenly Beach, Dutton Bay, Coffin Bay National Park to Golden Island and Price Island. Explore Whalers Way and visit the Koppio Museum. Return is via Kimba, Iron Knob, Port Augusta and Horrocks' Pass to the Flinders Ranges, Orroroo and Burra.



Dares Hill Circuit
(2 days)
\$700 pp

Departure by demand

Gilbert Valley, Terowie, Peterborough (overnight and we visit **Steamtown's Laser Light Show**), Franklyn, Ketchowla, Dares Hill, Mt Bryan.



Lake Eyre
(3 days)
\$1380 pp
Includes Plane flight

Departure by demand

Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, One and a half hour plane flight over Lake Eyre, Farina Ruins, Ochre Cliffs, Hawker, Orroroo, Terowie, Bun, Clare Valley.



**Flinders Ranges
& Outback**
(8 days)
\$3950pp

Departure by demand

Rawnsley Park, Wilpena Pound, Bunyeroo Valley, Brachina Gorge, Blinman, Arkaroola, Ridgetop Tour, Arkaroola Waterhole, Gammon Ranges, Moralana Scenic Drive. Marree, The Oodnadatta Track, William Creek, Coober Pedy, The Painted Desert, Woomera, Roxby Downs