With our trips for this year now almost complete, we have set about planning our program for 2014. Details can be found on Pages 3 and 4 of this newsletter under the heading "Trip Itineraries 2014".

In the last couple of months we have taken trips to:
- Birdsville and the Channel Country,
- Head of The Bight (and saw the whales!)
- Gawler Ranges
- Tumby Bay and Eyre Peninsula.
- Yorke Peninsula

Each trip has gone well, despite experiencing a mini cyclone on the west coast of Eyre Peninsula during the Tumby Bay trip!

As this will be our final newsletter for the year, Jenny and I would like to wish you a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

We appreciate your continued interest in Desert Sky tours! I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter!

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**Sand Dust & Gibbers**

Three pieces of unique public art have been unveiled in outback Queensland as part of an effort to tell women's Dreamtime stories from the region.

The Diamantina Shire Council has coordinated the 'Sand, Dust and Gibbers' project, which has seen sculptures designed and built in Bedourie, Betoota and Birdsville.

Council chief executive officer Scott Mason says they are an important first step to preserve, share and promote the Dreamtime serpent stories and cultural heritage of local traditional owners.

"The aim of the project was to create these public artworks to tell women's Dreamtime stories of the Mithika, Wangkamadla and Wangkangurru people," he said. "It is quite amazing country this Channel Country, but this public art - it forces you to think more about the environment and I think they will take away a greater appreciation."

"This is one way of doing that - it sort of encapsulates some of those stories and preserves them."

*Picture above: Dreamtime Serpent on a hill near Betoota*

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**Sailing to Birdsville!**

It’s not often you see a yacht in Birdsville, much less one that has sailed here. Yet, Max Tunbridge, Brenton Curran and Theo Kuiters docked their boat outside the Birdsville Hotel after a four-day 'sailing' voyage on the Birdsville Track from Marree.

When the three sailors were told they were not allowed to sail on Lake Eyre, they thought of alternatives that would combine their love for sailing with the Lake Eyre and Birdsville Region.

It took then a year to develop and test their “land yacht” and they are hoping to make the voyage an annual event, attracting land yachters from all over Australia to raise money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

"Land yachts are going to come up the Birdsville Track next year by the thousands” joked Max. “I used to sail a lot, but I’m too old for that and now I’m a land yachter”.

With two four wheel drive vehicles to carry their gear, the tree men took it in turns in the boat. Accidentally, they chose to travel during a characteristically windy month and the land yacht often reached speeds of 50kph, which apparently feels like flying!

........Continued
Repayments to banks for business and housing loans collapsed, and one observer summed-up Adelaide as "a ghost town resembling the cities of Southern Europe during siesta."

It was then that Commissioner Tolmer had a brilliant idea. Why not provide a gold escort service to safely bring back to South Australia the gold that miners were winning from the ground in Victoria, so that instead of it going into the banks of Victoria, it would revitalise the South Australian economy?

Governor Sir Henry Young enthusiastically agreed, and a month later Tolmer and a party of mounted troopers set off with a sturdy spring-cart for the near-600km journey to the diggings at Mt Alexander outside Bendigo, arriving there just ten days later.

Within a day of setting up camp, Tolmer and his party had accepted gold from a near-300 South Australian miners, and when after several more days they felt their spring-cart could carry no more, they departed for Adelaide with 5,200 ounces of gold worth an estimated 18,356 pounds ($36,712,) a then-precious fortune.

And over the next two years a total of eighteen "gold escorts" brought an amazing 28,502 ounces, or almost ten tons, of gold from Bendigo back to Adelaide. It was valued at the time at 1,182,000 pounds ($2,364,000) and was enough to avert both the threat of Adelaide's bankruptcy and the abandonment of the entire fledgling colony of South Australia - prospects already in consideration in the highest quarters.

But while Commissioner Tolmer's ingenious scheme had saved Adelaide and South Australia, his absences leading the first few gold escorts had seen management of the Police Force collapse into disarray. Enemies, and he had plenty with his renowned short-fused temper, plotted against him, and were joined by those from Adelaide society's Old Boys' Network miffed at the up-start Tolmer's appointment as Police Commissioner in the first place.

Within months they had him demoted and then dismissed, accused of neglect of duty.

Tolmer subsequently dabbled in several other government appointments, and even unsuccessfully tried his hand on the land. He died of kidney disease aged 74, and was buried in a pauper's grave at South Australia's Mitcham Anglican Cemetery.

123 years after his death, Alexander Tolmer's grand achievements are recognised today in this Penley Estate Tolmer Cabernet Sauvignon.
2014 Itineraries

The Painted Desert
(9 days)
$3750pp

Friday 9th May
Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, William Creek, Coober Pedy, The Breakaways, Painted Desert, Woomera, Roxby Downs, Andamooka, Port Augusta, Arid Lands Botanical Gardens, Horrock's Pass to the Flinders Ranges, Orroroo and Burra.

Mungo and Hattah Kulkyne National Parks
(5 days)
$1875pp

Tuesday 8th April

The Sapphire Coast
(8 days)
$3500pp

Saturday 15th February
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

Dares Hill Circuit
(2 days)
$700pp

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

Yorke Peninsula & The Southern Flinders Ranges
(5 days)
$1575pp

Saturday 25th October
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 Yorke town. Moonta, Kadina and Wallaroo. Southern Flinders Ranges, Alligator Gorge, Melrose. Bridle Track to Port Germein.

Wilson's Promontory
(9 days)
$3750pp

Saturday 1st March
Grampians NP, Halls Gap, Penshurst, Mortlake, Colac, Queenscliffe Ferry, Sorrento, Meeniyan, Tidal River, Waratah Bay, Walkerville, Agnes Falls, Strzelecki Ranges, Tara Bulga NP, Grand Ridge Road, Skene Creek, The Great Ocean Road, Mt Gambier, The Coorong.

The Back O'Bourke
(9 days)
$3750pp

Saturday 22nd March
Broken Hill, Mutawintji NP, White Cliffs, Wilcannia, Tilpa, Louth, Bourke (accommodation Bourke Riverside Motel), Lightning Ridge, Gilgandra, Cobar, Balranald, Murrayville, Pinnaroo.

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Please tick box(es) and return to:
Desert Sky Tours
PO Box 883
GLENELG SA 5045
### 2014 Itineraries

#### Monday June 2 & Monday June 16
Old Strzelecki Track, Innamincka, Coongie Lakes, Cmp LXV, Cameron Corner, Sturt NP, Tibooburra, Broken Hill, Loch Lilly and Quandong Stations, Burra.

**Monday July 21**
Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, Mungerannie, Birdsville, Innamincka, Cameron Corner, Sturt National Park, Tibooburra, Broken Hill, Old Pastoral Route to Burra, Adelaide.

**Monday August 11**
Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, Mungerannie, Birdsville, Betoota, Windorah, Quilpie, Toompine, Thargomindah, Cunnamulla, Bourke, Cobar, Broken Hill, Old Pastoral Route to Burra, Adelaide.

**Wednesday August 27**
Splendid views which include Mt Samuel, Mt Samuel Proper, Lake Torrens, Nilpena Sandhills, Mt Buggery, Mt Deception and Patawarta Hill!!
Picnic lunch Green well Creek before continuing to Valley Bore where it is common to see kangaroos, emus, feral goats.
The Parachina Gorge Road takes us past Angorichina Station and back to Blinman.

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**Flinders Ranges & Skytrek (4 days)**
Wednesday September 17

**Flinders Ranges & Arkaroola (5 days)**
Wednesday September 24
Rawnsley Park, Wilpena Pound, Bunyeroo Valley, Brachina Gorge, Blinman, Arkaroola, Ridgetop Tour,
Bolla Bollana, Arkaroola Waterhole, Gammon Ranges, Moralana Scenic Drive

**Head of Bight & The Eyre Peninsula (8 days)**
Friday September 5

**Tumby Bay & Eyre Peninsula (5 days)**
Friday November 14
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.

**Lake Eyre (3 days)**
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, Burra.

**Kangaroo Island (4 days)**
Wednesday March 12
Departure by demand
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.