



Desert Sky News

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



Volume 9 Issue 2

Telephone : 08 8356 1874

SEPTEMBER 2007

The good rains in the north earlier in the year seemed to inspire interest in outback travel—with all our Birdsville, Flinders Ranges and Gawler Ranges departures fully booked!

Julie from the Cooper Creek Homestay at Innamincka sent some photographs taken by Peter and Bronwynne



Barnes of Cordillo Downs Station. Parts of their property had over six inches of rain early in February, causing extensive damage to the Cordillo Road, which as many of you would know, is not the smoothest of roads at the best of times!

To get an idea of the depth of these washouts, the photo (right) shows Peter's ute parked on the roadwhich comes to an abrupt end!



The Diamantina Shire predicts a "bumper year" for wildflowers once the weather cools off, with all sorts of colours, contrasting beautifully with the red of the sand dunes—and that will be a sight to see. Already there's plenty of feed for the cattle, graziers saying it will do them for at least 18 months, and it is knee high and above already. The area is on the edge of the desert, but it's green as far as the eye can see, and it would be fair to say you'd think you were in the middle of England!

Most of the place names on the Birdsville Track are part of a big Aboriginal legend, up to Cannuwaukaninna.

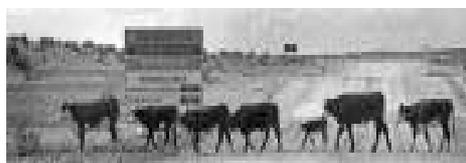
They deal with the search by a Moora (or tribal god) for two dogs that got away from him at Beltana. He followed them and got on their tracks at Dulkaninna, then on to Tidnacoodaninna, where he got bogged in the mud of the waterhole (tidna, "foot"; unda or coordna, "sticky mud"), the concluding word should be "ana", the local word for water.

The Moora then went on to Cannuwaukaninna, where he complained that his legs were too tired, and that is the meaning of Cannuwaukaninna.; then on to Ethaduna, which means "turn back". He was told here that the dogs had doubled back south east, so he followed on and found them at Kiltallie-oola ("two dogs") - but this is off the Birdsville Track.

Going north from Ethaduna, we come to Kopperamanna—(properly Koppara Murra—"root", "hand"). This was a great trading centre and all tracks led to it—as all the fingers come together in the root of the hand, so all tracks led to Kopparamurra.

Killapaninna was left away to the west; this got its name from an intrigue that the sun Moora had....and we must avoid scandal.

The only reference to Mungerannnie is the Aboriginal word meaning "ugly". Its school opened in 1914 and closed 1916.



Two bronze busts of legendary mailman Tom Kruse will be produced by highly regarded South Australian sculptor Ms Patricia Mosely.



The Visitor Information Centre at Birdsville and the National Motor Museum at Birdwood in the Adelaide Hills (the home of the 1936 Back of Beyond Leyland Badger) are the proposed locations for the two life sized busts.

The organising committees target is to raise \$12,000 over the next three months. The project has already attracted support from a number of organisations including the RFDS, the Diamantina Shire Council and the Australian Outback Development Consortium (AODC).

Tom Kruse celebrated his 93rd birthday on August 28th this year.

His mail run re-enactment in his fully restored 1936 Leyland Badger was the subject of an evocative, colourful and emotional documentary Last Mail from Birdsville the Story of Tom Kruse produced by Corrugated Air Productions in 1999. It's now available on DVD as part of The Back of Beyond Collection from the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Tom is travelling well at the moment and the organising committee is keen to have both Tom and his wife Valma participate in unveiling the busts.

The Governor General Major General Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC will be approached to officiate when the project has been completed.

History Repeats Itself !

Early July of this year 2007 I was fortunate in obtaining a seat on the Personalised 4 wheel drive Tour to Cooper Creek and Coongie Lakes.

Fortunate, in as much as it gave me the opportunity to visit the “Dig Tree” site on Nappa Merrie Station out of Innamincka.

You see, my father was a shearer and my early memories are of him being away from home for long periods of time, his many letters, tracing his path on road maps and eagerly waiting for his return home between shearing sheds.

Places and station names, such as Tarcoola, Kingoonya, Coondambo, Glendambo, Wilcannia, Cordillo Downs, Nappa Merrie quite often came up in conversation around the dinner table. Occasionally, photos of experiences on the road were pored over. This inspired in me a love of maps (I never travel without one) and an interest in the wonders of the Outback.

In my retirement I now have the opportunity to explore the Outback and also visit places where my father travelled.

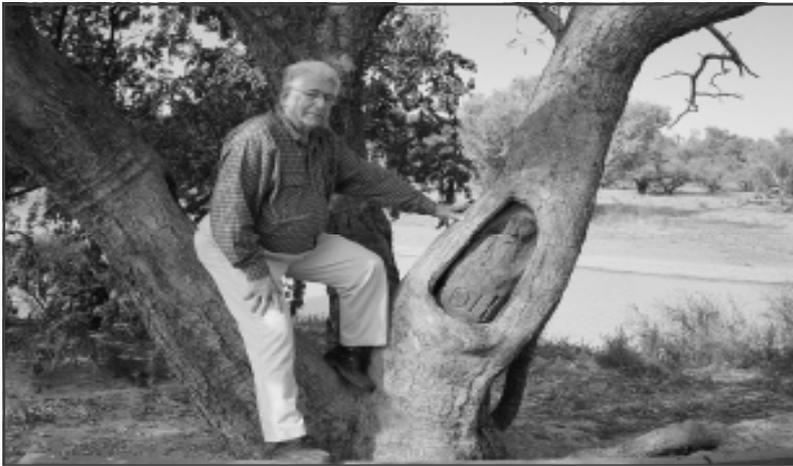
Among his collection of photos is one (*above*) taken approx. 1932 – 1935 showing my father reclining in the “Face Tree” at the “Dig Tree” site, a link with the history of the Burke and Wills Expedition.

My father is second from the left in the picture shown.

Now some seventy five years later I was given the opportunity to have my photo taken in the same tree knowing my father had visited here. This being a momentous chapter in my life.



Frank's Father— (with hand on tree)



Frank at the Face Tree—July 2007

Talk about coincidence, while sharing some of my father's collection of photos around the BBQ at our accommodation at Cooper Creek Homestay Innamincka, an exact print of a wagon drawn by a team of camels crossing the Cooper at Innamincka was also located in a local collection of photos brought out by our hosts.

Every trip has its own surprises.

Frank Mashado



Wagon and camels crossing Cooper Creek



Vehicle crossing Cooper Creek

State Dog Fence

Dog Fence Board Manager Michael Balharry and Far West representative Phillip Trowbridge have recently travelled the Fence from Parakylia through to the New South Wales border and report it to be in "good order". They also noted the efforts of the Central Local Board in putting in 11,000 new posts in the Fence from Parakylia back to Coober Pedy over the past 18 months.

The two local patrolmen there are Manfred Zeptner and Jeff Boland. Michael and Fence Supervisor Bill Sandow attended the Barrier Fence Administrators' National Conference in Newcastle, NSW, late last month. While they were there OneSteel hosted a catered tour of their mill where the 'looms' used to manufacture the netting used on the Fence operate.

Sir Sidney Kidman

Sir Sidney Kidman's 150th birthday celebrations (May 9th) were marked by the unveiling of a plaque at S Kidman and Co's North Adelaide office.

The plaque was unveiled by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Rory McEwen and the ceremony was followed by morning tea and other celebratory drinks.

Sir Sidney Kidman (1857-1935) was born in South Australia and left home at 13 to work as a sheep drover. He formed a business with his brother in droving and trading cattle and horses.

S Kidman and Co was founded in 1899 and is a family business owned by the descendents of Sir Sidney. The company now operates 12 stations in SA, Queensland, the NT and WA. These stations occupy 120,000 sq km and carry on average 197,000 cattle.

Lake Eyre Yacht Club



The Lake Eyre Yacht Club has purchased the UAM Ministries property at Marree for use as the new headquarters of the Club.

The property, comprising the old UAM Hall on 1 3/4 acres, is ideally situated on the Oodnadatta Track at the Lake Eyre end of Marree in the Afghan Quarter.

Lake Eyre North is 144km long and 77 km wide.

The lowest point is 15.2 metres below sea level and its deepest flood (20th century) was in 1947 at 5.7 metres. Lake Eyre South is 64km long and 24km wide and has a maximum depth of 3/7 metres.

The two lakes are joined by the 15km Goyder Channel through which water has flowed in recent history. Both lakes have a combined area of 9,690 square kms.



One of the aims of the Club is to collect and disseminate accurate information about the Lake, and the website:- www.lakeeyreyc.com contains some interesting

information—including background of naming of various locations around the Lake.

Just for Interest!

After leaving Taillem Bend, and heading towards Pinnaroo, there is a property on the southern corner of the intersection Dukes Highway and the Mallee Highway which has cyclone fencing extending a number of kilometres.

An enquiry to the Mallee District Council has established this is the Mitsubishi vehicle testing track.

Mitsubishi announced in 2003 it would invest a total of \$12 million in upgrading and extending the Track facilities to include a new \$10 million high-speed test track, making it one of the largest facilities of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, allowing testing of cars beyond 200 km/h.

Birdsville Races 2007

Crowds at the annual Birdsville Races were down by half, but organisers were delighted with the strong turnout.

Among 4,000 people who travelled to the remote far western Queensland community, many arrived in the 75 light aircraft that were parked at the airport.

Almost \$30,000 was raised for charity at the phantom race meeting on Saturday that was attended by 1,500 people.

"I had a ball at the Birdsville (no) Races in 2007", T Shirts proclaimed.

Mt Gee—Arkaroola

Mount Gee is one of South Australia's natural geological wonders, and is part of the very heartland of the Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary, in the spectacular northern Flinders Ranges, 660km north of Adelaide. A Uranium mine here would be in total contradiction with the principles of the Sanctuary, and would undermine the 40 yrs of Conservation work to protect over 600 sq kms of this wild and beautiful arid mountain range property.

Visitors and friends can help save Arkaroola from the threat of mining, by writing to State and Federal politicians. A list of names and email addresses can be found on the Arkaroola website at :

<http://www.arkaroola.com.au/breakingnews.php>

A selection of our trips!

Wilson's Promontory

Following the success of our two trips this year, we again offer this 9 day trip in 2008.

The itinerary combines the beautiful Grampians National Park (with overnight stay at the Kookaburra Motel Halls Gap), continuing through the National Park to Dunkeld and the interesting towns of Mortlake and Camperdown to Colac.

The Queenscliff Ferry across the Mornington Peninsula to Sorrento makes it a pleasant drive to Fish Creek—The Gateway to Wilson's Promontory and our base for 4 nights, while we explore the Promontory National Park.

For walkers, there is opportunity to take several tracks including Loo – Ern Track, Whisky Beach, Squeaky Beach and Picnic Point.

The peaks and Islands of The Prom dominate the horizon at Walkerville, an idyllic coastal settlement formerly known as Waratah and one of the places we visit next day around the Cape Liptrap Coastal Park.

A scenic drive through Tarwin Lower to Venus Bay and Inverloch takes us through the Bunurong Marine Park with great views to Cape Patterson. A short journey inland to Leongatha provides a change of interest as we visit the Coal Creek Heritage Village.

The Strzelecki Ranges, with the Agnes River Waterfalls, and beautiful fern-filled gullies fascinate as we venture to the Tarra Bulga National Park, and Corrigan's Suspension Bridge, returning along the Grand Ridge Road to Welshpool and Toora.

One of the great features of this trip is the return home via the full length of The Great Ocean Road! - visiting Lorne, Skenes Creek, Port Campbell to Portland and Mt Gambier.

What more fitting way could there be than to travel the Coorong to Adelaide!



A Rumba in Tumba!



This Christmas we are off to Tumbly Bay, on Eyre Peninsula!

The 5 day trip which departs on 23rd December, includes a crossing from Wallaroo to Lucky Bay on the new SeaSA ferry!

Accommodation is at the Tumbly Bay Marina Motel, which will be our base for 4 nights.

The itinerary includes Trinity Haven Scenic Drive to Port Lincoln, and the lower Eyre Peninsula including Sleaford Bay, Lincoln National Park, Coffin Bay, and Cummins.

Oh! - did I mention Christmas Lunch? Well, we have booked the new Port Lincoln Hotel, and General Manager Gareth Dunne has put together a fantastic menu for their first Christmas.

We have 3 seats only available on this trip. The package fare is \$775 t/s with single supplement \$150.

Kangaroo Island



Our last trip before Christmas this year! Four **full** days touring this most scenic Island- and excellent accommodation at the Wisteria Lodge motel, overlooking Nepean Bay.

From Penneshaw and rugged Cape Willoughby, to the grandeur of Remarkable Rocks and Admirals Arch, to the beautiful and quiet Bays—Pennington, Vivonne, Emu, this tour covers all popular destinations—and more.! We have seats available on this trip departing Tuesday 13th November.

The Painted Desert

A favourite outback destination, this itinerary combines a number of experiences.

There is **adventure** and remoteness through travelling the Oodnadatta Track to William Creek, (situated on Anna Creek Station -Australia's largest cattle station).

There is **intrigue** at the opal fields of Coober Pedy, (with underground accommodation) and **wonder** in the natural beauty and colours of the Arkaringa Hills, which form the Painted Desert.



In contrast, our 2 night stay in Woomera provides insight to space travel, **amazement** at the fast growing Roxby Downs, and **awe** (sorry!) at the Olympic Dam Mining development.



It is truly a trip of varied and interesting experiences!

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A little more about our personalised trips!

Coongie Lakes & The Cooper

Two trips this year and we had a great time on each.

Travel is via the Strzelecki Track from Lyndhurst, past Blanchewater Station ruins and Monte Collina Bore to a point just south of Moomba,, crossing at Merty Merty Station, to follow the old Strzelecki Track to Innamincka.

The old Track enables us to visit a couple of the old waterholes such as Toolachie, and Nappacoongie, It is an interesting diversion, dotted with many gas drilling sites.



Within the Innamincka Regional Reserve lies the world heritage listed region of Coongie Lakes. Our day is through Scrubby Camp waterhole which provides some excellent views of the north-west branch of the Cooper Creek, and further along is Kudriemitchie Outstation. Birds are plentiful!

The Coongie Lakes system has been recognised for its importance in providing a unique environment for plants and animals of the desert.. The peace and remoteness of this area is breathtaking !

The Cooper Creek is one of outback Australia's greatest treasures, and is pivotal to the story of the Burke and Wills expedition. We visit Camp LXV, Burke's Marker, and have a sunset cruise -Birds are plentiful!

The return journey is through Cameron Corner to Tibooburra and Broken Hill.

I thank Norm, on our earlier trip this year for pointing out a former pastoral route from Broken Hill to Burra. The road is unsealed but graded, and passes through the stations of Harriedale, Loch Lilly, Oakvale, Quondong, Sturt Vale to Burra.

It is certainly more interesting than the Barrier Highway, and a few kilometres shorter, although travelling time is about the same as there are station gates to open, and speed is reduced on the unsealed road.

Toward a Bridle Path

During the year I had the pleasure of taking a group from New Zealand on a tour of Yorke Peninsula and the Southern Flinders Ranges.

We visited the pretty coastal towns of Price, Ardrossan, Pine Point and Port Vincent, then headed down the picturesque coastal road to Wool Bay, and Coobowie to Edithburgh—our base for 2 nights.

The wind farm at Wattle Point is interesting, and we passed among the turbine towers next day on a trip past Troubridge Point to Marion Bay. The first section of the road follows the coast and there are some magnificent views to Investigator Strait and the Southern Ocean.

On the southern tip of Yorke Peninsula, Innes National Park encompasses spectacular coastal landscapes. The forces of wind and wave action over thousands of years have sculptured rocky headlands, wavecut platforms and sandy beaches. Here the history of ship wrecks, farming, and gypsum mining are preserved, with the ruins of the township of Inneston bearing testament to a boom phase when 500 people lived in the town.

From the foot of Yorke Peninsula to Wallaroo, and a great overnight stay in the Sonbern Lodge Motel—whose dining room recaptures the spirit of a bygone era, and is somewhat at odds to the new Copper Coast Marina development which we pass next day on our way to Colably Hill Road, Beetaloo Valley and the Southern Flinders.

Our overnight stop at the North Star Hotel Melrose allows us to explore places such as Alligator Gorge, Spring Creek Mine, Mt Remarkable—but it also provides opportunity next day to take the 4wd **Bridle track** to Port Germein. This is one of the most outstanding scenic routes around—with unrestricted views to Spencer Gulf.

Itinerary for 2008



Back O'Bourke (9 days) ~ \$1950 pp	April 12
Saturday	
Birdsville/Innamincka (9 days) ~ \$1950 pp	July 15
Tuesday	August 13
Wednesday	
Cooper Creek/Innamincka (7 days) ~ \$1525 pp	July 3
Thursday	
Explore Mungo National Pk (5days) ~ \$895 pp	April 2
Wednesday	
Flinders Ranges/Arkaroola (5 days) ~ \$995 pp Including "Ridgetop Tour"	September 9
Tuesday	September 23
Tuesday	October 12
Sunday	
Gawler Ranges (5 days) ~ \$830 pp	August 30
Saturday	
Kangaroo Island (4 days) ~ \$875 pp	February 26
Tuesday	November 13
Thursday	
Skenes Creek/Great Ocean Rd (5 days) ~ \$925 pp	May 11
Sunday	
William Creek & The Painted Desert (9 days) ~ \$1745 pp	April 27
Sunday	
Wilson's Promontory (9 days) ~ \$1725 pp	March 4
Tuesday	
Yorke Peninsula & Innes National Park (4 days) ~ \$620 pp	October 25
Saturday	

Personalised 4WD Tours

Coongie Lakes & The Cooper (7 days) ~ \$1925 pp	June 1
Sunday	
Sky-trek & The Flinders (5 days) ~ \$975 pp	June 14
Saturday	
Yorke Peninsula & Southern Flinders (5 days) ~ \$975 pp	October 2
Thursday	
Other personalised tours in 4WD vehicle can be arranged by request	

The Women Of The West

They left the vine-wreathed cottage and the mansion on the hill,
The houses in the busy streets where life is never still,
The pleasures of the city, and the friends they cherished best:
For love they faced the wilderness—the Women of the West.

The roar, and rush, and fever of the city died away,
And the old time joys and faces—they were gone for many a day;
In their place the lurching coach-wheel, or the creaking bullock chains,
O'er the everlasting sameness of the never-ending plains.

In the slab-built, zinc-roofed homestead of some lately-taken run,
In the tent beside the bankment of a railway just begun,
In the huts on new selections, in the camps of man's unrest,
On the frontiers of the Nation, live the Women of the West.

*The red sun robs their beauty and, in weariness and pain,
The slow years steal the nameless grace that never comes again;
And there are hours men cannot soothe, and words men cannot say -
The nearest woman's face may be a hundred miles away.*

The wide bush holds the secrets of their longing and desires,
When the white stars in reverence light their holy altar fires,
And silence, like the touch of God, sinks deep into the breast-
Perchance He hears and understands the Women of the West.

For them no trumpet sounds the call, no poet plies his arts -
They only hear the beating of their gallant, loving hearts,
But they have sung with silent lives the song all songs above-
The holiness of sacrifice, the dignity of love.

Well have we held our fathers' creed. No call has passed us by,
We faced and fought the wilderness, we sent our sons to die.
And we have hearts to do and dare, and yet, o'er all the rest,
The heats that made the Nation were the Women of the West.

George Essex Evans
1863-1909

News from Mt Ive Station



A new Naval vessel has been launched at Mt Ive in the Gawler Ranges!
The excellent conversion of an old water tank has resulted in what must
be the most distant submarine from water!

Photo: courtesy Joan Matthews

Birdsville 14th August trip

Bump, rattle, shake, crawl
Birdsville to Innaminka
Lunch in old wool shed

Afternoon sun shines
Two sticks flash on Big Red dune
Dashing Eric climbs up

Attentive Lily
Assists at catering times
Anticipating needs

Youthful Alan walks
Over gibber, creek and dune
Seeking antlion holes

He leaves the driver's seat
A few words about where we are
Howard's history talks

Brilliant hostess, Jen
Mistress of tour, meals and beds
Then an accordion

Recipe for a wonderful Desert Sky Tour

Take

One woman from Georgetown
Two Lilies
Three hundred creek beds
Four dead explorers
Five walking sticks
Six different beds
Seven hundred sand dunes
Eight seats with a view
Nine picnic lunches
Tens of waterbirds
Thousands of wild flowers
Mix all together with two amazing Humbies
Put in a six wheel bus for 9 days,
travel over 3,000 kilometres and
Turn out still enjoying each other's company.

©Estelle & Don Gobbett

From our shop! -

- **Copies of our DVD "Celebrating 10 years" are available at \$10 each.**
- **Desert Sky Tawny Port \$8 bottle**
- **Set of 6 Desert Sky place-mats \$20**
- **Quality engraved pens \$5**