



SURVEY
EX-SERVICEMEN'S
ASSOCIATION

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



NEWSLETTER No. 23
DECEMBER 1998

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Bendigo Reunion

Held on the weekend of 24th - 25th October this year. It was a late decision to attend the reunion, and not wishing to drive solo, I decided to go by bus leaving Adelaide about 9 a.m. on the Saturday morning, arriving in Bendigo late afternoon. I was surprised at how relaxing the trip was, being lucky enough to be on a bus with few passengers.

George Timmins had arrived earlier in Bendigo from Swan Hill, so was able to meet me at the bus station with his new Toyota four-wheel drive. We were booked into a motel only 200 m from the Botanic Hotel where the reunion was to start at 7 pm, a precaution against the possibility later into the night of being declared legally incapable by the local gendarmes.

Not as many turned up as I had expected, but a good sized and sociable crowd, and it did allow more time to catch up, in particular Gary Warnest Bob Roche, Doug Carswell, Bob Aulsebrook and Don Sweeney. Betty and Ian Lever were there from Wodonga.

The pub was fairly crowded and meal orders were very slow to be served, which didn't matter anyway. The occasion seemed to all too quickly and I'm sure everyone enjoyed themselves as I did.

Leaving the pub George suggested we buy a bottle of port wine, and not wishing to cause offence, I agreed. Back at the motel, coffee mugs of port helped us discuss numerous matters in-depth, until slumber time. George, if I snored please accept my apologies.

Midday on Sunday was mild and sunny for the reunion and barbecue lunch at Fortuna. A good crowd gathered under the trees outside the old OR's Canteen in pleasant conditions, and I was able to meet up again with several old acquaintances rarely seen. The canteen still trades under civilian management and was open for the day, so refreshments were close at hand, plus tables and chairs set out by the committee provided top facilities.

The lunch was first-class and better than I can remember at previous reunions. Well done.

I didn't attempt a complete list of those attending, but did see the following; Noel Ticehurst, George Timmins, Mick Davies, Peter Gale, John Hogan, Gordon Haswell, Evan Giri, Harry Wright, Brian Rogers, Brett van Leeuwen, Don Swiney, Bette and Ian Lever, Pat Drury, Dave King, Steve McConnachie, Phil Smalley, Joe Farrington, Ross Hyde, Barbara and Arthur Henson, Maureen and Stan Vote, Bob Aulsebrook, Don Ridge, Russell Williams, Gary Warnest, Peter Biorac, Bob Roche and Noel Coulthard.

The gardens at Fortuna were looking immaculate that weekend and the buildings seemed well maintained also, in fact the whole place looked better to me than it ever did

The party began breaking up about 4 pm, ending another successful reunion and I thought worth the effort to attend. My bus back left Bendigo at 11 am Monday morning, arriving in Adelaide just after 7 pm ending a relaxing weekend.

Christmas Get Together

Held at the Rob Roy Hotel in Halifax Street, city, on Friday 27th November at 7 p.m..

Over 50 attended, having drinks in the saloon bar for about 45 minutes before moving into the dining room.

The meal served was excellent and consisted of minestrone soup with a choice of roast turkey, beef wellington or barramundi for the main course followed by a dessert of chocolate mousse cake with wild berry coulis. To finish, coffee and fruit mince pies were served. Most agreed that the quality of food served was very reasonable, which went a long way to the success of the occasion.

Unfortunately for Margaret Dikkenberg, she felt slightly ill, and after the soup decided not to eat anything else, however, management kindly boxed her main course choice and later her dessert in proper take-away boxes. I hope you recovered quickly, Margaret. Bob Mills recounted that during his recent trip to America, he had noticed that most restaurants provided special take-away boxes for customers unable to finish off their meal, because normal serves were so large and mainly very expensive.

Since our last function at the Rob Roy, two large leather Chesterfields were added to the dining-room, providing a very comfortable retreat for the stayers who decided to finish on liqueurs, as midnight approached.

During the evening our new secretary T J Wicker read out the apologies followed by President Bob Cooper who welcomed everyone and wished them a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

It was a really pleasant occasion, and I hope augers well for future functions.

Those attending were: Dell and Tony Balkauskas from Stansbury on

Yorke Peninsula, Bob and Pam Ballard, Mayna Briggs, Janeen and Max Colletti, Bob Cooper, Margaret and Bob Dikkenberg, John Frith, Mark Bates from Bendigo, Barbara and Paul Frost, Jan and Bill Griggs, Barbara and Mick Hanson, Pam and John Harrison, Stevo Hinic and Pauline Mannix, Donna and Dave Irving, Jan and Brett Knuckey, Ken Jeffery and Pauline, Denis O'Bryne from Darwin, Elizabeth and Bill Love, Mary and Bob Mills, Joan and Alex Munro, Raeline and John Natham, Vicky and Angelo Pantelidis, Marge and George Ricketts, Joanne and John Scharber, Lincoln Smith, Bernie Watson, Lea and T J Wicker, Lesley and Peter Presser from Mildura, Vic, Joy and Denis Marshall from Victor Harbor. Brian Collins arrived during the dinner for a drink and stayed on.

Apologies were received from Bob Griffin, Laurie Sutton, Ken Talbot-Smith, Harry Dunn, Jason Phillips, peter Elverd (sick), Kevin Boehm, Neville Stone, Noel Sproles, Colin van Senden, Marj Knight and Darcy Patrick.

A menu went the rounds for autographs and personal notes, to be forwarded to Ross Hyde by John Harrison.

First Friday each month

Don't forget the first Friday drinks after 5pm at the Queen's Arms Hotel in Wright Street. With most members on leave/holidays, give next January a miss, as the first Friday is New Years Day, but mark Friday 5 February 1999 on your calendar. This month's get together was the last for 1998, with only a small group of yours truly, Lincoln Smith, John Frith and Stevo Hinic, but enjoyable just the same.

Military Map Makers in Northern Australia 1943 - 45

Written by Jack Hunt, the book details the survey work done in the Top End by No 1 Section 6 Australia Army Topo Svy Coy and was based upon the field books and reports of members of the group. Keith Barber reckons that several members from 8 Sqn, ex PNG, also served with the section.

The book is available from Jack for around \$35.00 a copy. If interested, his phone number is 03 5237 6443 and the address is PO Box 58 Apollo Bay Vic 3233.

Thanks for the info Gary Warnest.

People News

Bob Griffin Now fully recovered after an operation to the water-works area down below. Bob is highly delighted with the outcome and was full of praise for the specialist surgeon involved, so if you're having trouble in that area give Bob a ring for some sound advice. He and Pam are presently on holidays somewhere west of Pt Lincoln.

Harry Mai Harry is now employed at ATSE, and for the sake of his family hopes the move to Bendigo will be the last.

Mark Bates Turned up at our Christmas function this year. On good authority from John Frith, Mark and all his possessions left Bendigo very early in December for South Australia, hoping to settle in Mt Barker. He was employed with the CFA in Victoria.

Sam Chambers Still residing in Bendigo in a two bedroom bat-pad, Sam has seen the error of his former loose-living lifestyle and now sun-tans and exercises regularly and doesn't smoke or drink alcoholic beverages. Well done Sam.

Bob Roche Still in Bendigo, Bob looked in pretty good condition at the reunion, and takes things fairly easy these days. Now in retirement, Bob reckons life was meant to be enjoyed.

Bernie Watson Has now full recovered from his treatment for cancer, and has been given the all-clear as tests have proved negative. Bernie hopes this will be the end of the cancer problem.

Gary Warnest When I lived around the corner from Garry, in Bendigo, his youngest son Matthew was hardly taller than my knees, but now at the age of 22 Matthew is presently on a 3 month study secondment at the Berlin University from Melbourne Uni, where he studies geomatics and science.

Andy Strachan Still in the police force and still operating from Hindley Street, Andy was keeping the peace during the Armistice Day Service at the State War Memorial, when I was able to have a short yarn with him. He expects a posting to the Glenelg area fairly soon.

Bob Mills Now with accounting and management consultants Ernst & Young, Bob is delighted with his new job and reckons it should have happened years ago. He has recently returned from a two week computer course run by the company in Cleveland, Ohio, USA. His new credentials will enable Bob to transfer for short terms to overseas branches of his firm, as the company work load changes on a global basis.

Keith Barber Not seen these days which is a pity. Keith rang recently to replace badges lost/misplaced from his fathers military service, hopefully available in Adelaide. He would like the hat badge, collar badges and shoulder titles issued during the reign of King George V, to the members of the Royal Aust Artillery, Royal Aust Garrison Artillery (CMF) and Royal Aust Engineers. Freebies are welcome, but Keith is willing to pay the going price. I hope someone can help, if so ring me on 8277 7074 or Keith on 03 5447 8979. Keith sticks pretty well to home, gardening etc, and is recovering from a virus / whatever that kept him in bed for 8 days not long back. During our conversation Joe Mazzarol's name cropped up, as being the owner in times long back of an ancient Lancia Tourer in need of a new canvas roof. Joe replaced the roof using linoleum. For Westlink readers I would like Joe's version of this story. Keith also mentioned Len Beadell. It appears Len rarely wore socks, but cut the foot section off, wearing the top half only for parade appearances, so any comments on that.

Steve McConnachie Steve underwent surgery in recent times to remove cancer growth in his jaw. Parts of the jaw bone were removed and replace with metal duplicates, and Steve's jaw was still swollen at the time of the reunion, but is getting better.

Brian and Margaret Rogers Both attended the Sunday reunion. They now live in Echuca and own/operate a business which ensures they have very little spare time of their own, but I can't remember what kind of business.

Denis O'Byrne Denis now lives in Darwin, but was able to attend our Christmas function, as he was in Adelaide on business at the time. He is now a freelance writer, with a regular column in a monthly magazine for 4WD enthusiasts, and also regularly updates a back-packers travel guide covering SA and the NT plus areas of the SW Pacific.

Fortuna History Funds

I should say the lack of funds really. Funding for the second year research and writing of the regiment history, which was expected from various sources, failed to eventuate anywhere near the amount required. Feelers are now out to raise funds through the large number of members who served at Fortuna or any anyone else for that matter, hoping that each will contribute whatever amount they can, to save the history going into limbo and dragging on.

So, if you can see you way clear to forward a contribution toward the Fortuna history funds, please do so. The amount required is about \$14,000, and although some significant contributions have been received, there is still a long way to go.

I suppose cheques can be endorsed to the ex-Fortuna survey association with a covering note, and sent to the following address

The Secretary
Ex Fortuna Survey Association
PO Box 1004
Bendigo Victoria 3550

New Gold Mine Venture in Bendigo

I had an interesting conversation with Dianne Aulsebrook at the Botanic Hotel reunion, when she gave me details of work which has started on the new gold mine in Bendigo. Dianne works in the Geology Department at the Bendigo Institute of Technology, so gave me details I couldn't fully comprehend, however, I did absorb the essential bits. It will be an incline mine, with the shaft opening in the Golden Square area, penetrating down at a fairly shallow angle I suppose, for about 4 km until it reaches the ore body. As the shaft opening is in a residential area, all work operations will be contained underground. The ore will be crushed underground and mixed with water to a sloppy sludge, which will be

pumped to the surface in a pipeline continuing out to the north of Eaglehawk, where the sludge will be processed and the gold extracted. A fairly massive project it seems, so the ore body must be very considerable.

Diane also told me the Bendigo TAFE conducts courses for apprentice miners, and use the old Central Deborah mine as a training venue.

Corps Memorial Plaque

The \$500 required to fund the siting of a small bronze plaque on Anzac Highway, to commemorate the Royal Australians Survey Corps, has been raised. Thanks are extended to association members who contributed to the project. The last few dollars needed were raised at a whip around organised by T. J. Wicker and I think Stevo Hinic, during a Christmas function at the Rob Roy, and again thanks to those who contributed particularly members doing so twice. Organised through a combined RSL/Adelaide Legacy scheme, the plaque can now be made and set in a concrete plinth at the base of a tree somewhere in the median strip being refurbished on Anzac Highway. More on this later.

Memorial at Fremantle

Talking to Ray Sargent by phone a few weeks ago, I learned that the association members in Western Australia have undertaken the erection of a sun dial and plaque to commemorate the Corps, in the grounds of the old Burt Street Artillery Barracks at Fremantle. The sun dial and stand came from Karrakatta Barracks where it had stood outside the former 5 Fd Svy Sqn building for many years. The barracks at Fremantle now houses a museum of military memorabilia and was also home base for 5 Sqn for many years.

LEN BEADELL MEMORIAL ART WORKS

The Salisbury Council hopes to raise about \$100,000 to fund the erection of four art works in Len's honour. The Advertiser article below covers the appeal. Four South Australian artists have been commissioned to design and produce the art works, and the entire project will be managed by the City of Salisbury Cultural Development Trust as their inaugural project. Donations are tax deductible and should be posted to the "City of Salisbury Cultural Development Trust, P.O. Box 8, Salisbury, S.A. 5108." Subscribers will receive a signed certificate of appreciation and invitations to civic events associated with the project.



OUTBACK legend Mr Len Beadell is to be honored with four pieces of public art.

Salisbury Council has launched a public appeal to raise up to \$100,000 for the project.

Salisbury mayor, Mr Tony Zappia, paid tribute to Mr Beadell, who lived in the northern suburbs for much of his life.

"He was a significant person in Australia's history - he was the last of the true pioneers," Mr Zappia said.

Mr Beadell, who died

in 1995 at the age of 72, mapped out 6000km of road across some of Australia's harshest country.

He surveyed the sites of Woomera's rocket ranges and the Emu and Maralinga atomic test sites in South Australia's North West.

Salisbury Council named a library after him. The public art, which will be centred around the library, includes a statue, sculptured mural, glass panel and stone marker.

- Brady Haran

STUART CREEK PLAQUE - UNVEILING CEREMONY

A bronze memorial plaque set into a stone cairn was unveiled during a brief ceremony at the Curdimurka railway siding on Friday 26 June 1998. The plaque was in honour of John McDouall Stuart, one of the greatest explorers of inland Australia.

Colin van Senden attended the ceremony, and passed on to me the hand - outs he had received about the event.

Thanks Colin. The erection of the cairn and plaque was a joint project undertaken by the John McDouall Stuart Society, the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia and the Ghan Railway Preservation Society, and was unveiled by Tony Auld, a great - grandson of William Patrick Auld, a member of Stuart's expedition which crossed Australia from Adelaide to a point on the north coast just east of present - day Darwin, and returned during 1861 - 1862. Stuart's discovery of Chambers (Stuart) Creek in 1858 was the first permanent supply of water found in far north South Australia, however, the location was considered too isolated for a memorial so the plaque was placed about 40 kms to the north - east at Curdimurka Siding to give greater exposure to travellers along the Oodnadatta Track.

Stuart's explorations resulted in the WA/SA border being moved from 132 degrees east longitude to 129 degrees east, the geographical nature of the Centre was solved, and South Australia gained control of the Northern Territory. The Overland Telegraph Line from Adelaide to the new settlement of Palmerston (now Darwin), followed Stuart's route and similarly the original Central Australia Railway from Adelaide to Alice Springs, and in addition huge areas were opened up for pastoral and mineral development. A truly great explorer.

AS an explorer of Australia, John McDouall Stuart was not regarded as a five-star, bells-and-whistles news maker. He survived the most amazing expeditions without tragic failures or the front-page incidents that made explorers of his era the equivalent of movie stars.

Instead, Stuart concentrated on his skills of command and his unique bush sense, to carve a record that remains greatly undervalued in the volumes of early Australian life.

Peter Bowyer, of Rostrevor, is keen to promote the Stuart story. He regards him as a fitting member of *The Advertiser's* Top 100 Heroes list. Each week, an Australian hero is added, leading to the eve of 2000.

Mr Bowyer is a member of a small but vigorous society which celebrates John McDouall Stuart. Although Stuart was born in Scotland, he regarded South Australia as his "adopted country".

Stuart's taste for exploring was sharpened by his work with Captain Charles Sturt in 1844 as Sturt searched for the great inland sea that early geographers hoped would fill some of the vast middle ground of the Australian continent.

From 1858, Stuart was to lead six major expeditions of his own into the interior.

The first journey discovered, to European eyes, the creek which Stuart called Chambers Creek, in honor of his friend and future sponsor, James Chambers.



Famed explorer John McDouall Stuart.

*John
McDouall
Stuart was one
of our greatest
explorers,
solving the
mystery of what
lay in the heart
of Australia.
JEFF
TURNER
reports.*

The creek was later renamed by others as Stuart Creek. It was to become the staging post, as Mr Bowyer notes, for Stuart's future expeditions.

The next two concentrated on the Stuart Creek area, and the region west of Lake Eyre.

It was March, 1860, that saw the beginning of the most adventurous Stuart undertaking so far.

Accompanied by William Darton Kekwick and Benjamin Head, they travelled north with 13 horses, becoming the first Europeans to cross the now northern border of SA.

Mr Bowyer says this was Stuart's first glimpse of the Red Centre, the place of mystery that had drawn him thousands of miles from a career in the Scottish Navy as a civil engineer.

The party moved on, discovering Chambers Pillar and the MacDonnell Ranges.

On April 22, 1860, Stuart noted in his diary that he was camped in the "centre of Australia".

He had solved, as Mr Bowyer puts it, one of greatest geographical mysteries of the then known world - what was in the centre.

He named Mt Sturt after his old commander, then continued north, meeting hostile Aborigines near Tennant Creek.

"Realising he was outnumbered, and that his provisions were low, he reluctantly returned to Adelaide," Mr Bowyer writes.

But Stuart, as an explorer, had made a quiet name for himself. He was engaged by the SA government to find a route to the north coast for an overland telegraph line from Adelaide to Darwin, linking with an underwater line to London.

Victoria was also anxious to peg the south-north line, and had funded Robert O'Hara Burke for the job.

But Stuart found his horses were not up to the conditions. They were "town-bred", unable to stand the heat and low water rations. Stuart was forced to return to Adelaide. He had shown he could lead a large party, of 10 men, and he had come within striking distance of the northern coastline.

Stuart's most famous expedition left Stuart Creek in January, 1862. His party, including the trusted William Kekwick, made it to the northern shore at Chambers Bay, east of where Darwin now stands.

"The return journey of 3200km along the same route rates as one of the greatest feats of survival in Australian exploration," Mr Bowyer says.

Stuart's health failed. He was carried between two horses for hundreds of kilometres.

In Adelaide, Stuart led his men, dressed in the ragged bush clothing, down King William St. Here was a hero, in every sense.

As *The Advertiser* of the day noted: "Had Stuart never reached Van Diemen Gulf, he would still have been the greatest of explorers, in as much as he solved the terrible mystery of the interior, telling all other explorers that he had been there and they might go."

As a result of Stuart's work, the western border of SA was moved; the State gained control of the Northern Territory; the Overland Telegraph line was constructed along his route; the original Chan railway from Adelaide to Alice Springs followed a similar line.

And that's not all: as Mr Bowyer predicts, if the Adelaide-Darwin railway line is ever built, it will almost certainly follow the path explored by Stuart, the last of the great explorers. **W**

THE P. & J. HARRISON TREK

ADELAIDE - ALICE SPRINGS - BRISBANE - ADELAIDE

BEFORE THE TRIP!

Preparations for the trip, - especially the big one, - from Alice to Brisbane started some weeks prior to our departure. They included:-

General Vehicle Inspection: A thorough check under the Discovery, - tightening loose nuts, and a general visual inspection for oil leaks, (there were none!), etc. I did however find a huge rock lodged in the suspension which looked suspiciously like a piece of the Pilbara from 1997! A visit to Prestige Walkerville, - the Land/Range Rover specialists was well worth the effort to gain some insight into the location of various 'under-bonnet' components, etc. Advice on replacement of the new 'serpentine belt' was also most appreciated! They deserve a plug!

Wheels/Tyres: After the experience on a recent trip to Blinman where it was discovered that the wheels, - although interchangeable with the Trak-Shak camper-trailer, presented some problems in mounting on the Discovery, and/or Trak-Shak 'spare' wheel carrying positions. Also we were not altogether happy with the possibility of having torn pair tyres on 'mag' rims in the bush, - our Tyre Pliers(TM) not being the most gentle on rims, etc. Accordingly, it was decided that we should opt for steel rims all round, - Discovery, and Trak-Shak. John Murphy Tyres came to the party with some reasonably compatible partially-used tyres for the extra steel rims that came with the Discovery cost was an average of \$100 each, but with these ALL tyres/wheels were now interchangeable!

HF (RFDS) Radio: A plug for Peter Leonard, - of LENCOM AERIALS who, with his various pieces of equipment checked out the operation of the HF radio, and his company's multi-tap aerial free of cost/charge. Thanks Peter

UHF CB Transceiver: As expected, - the Range Rover Club's one is getting more difficult to lay our hands on, so bit the bullet, and arranged with TRANSCEIVER SERVICES, (another plug!), to supply and fit a GME TX4000R. Their cost, even when compared to what we could get in the trade, was most competitive, and the service most appreciated.



Lunch at Port Augusta. Note the 'foiled' windows, HF radio, and steel wheels all round!

Discovery Back Window: Been there, done that!, - and a broken back window on outback roads is most inconvenient! Had heard about beer cartons, however, we still like to see out the back. Scratched our heads and decided to prepare for fitting in The Alice some bubble-wrap on the rear window of the Discovery to complement the Trak-Shak stone guard.

Discovery - Other Window: For Centralian conditions there's too much glass, so fitted silver foil on therear 'safari' windows and the two 'woosie skylights'. Our experience in the Pilbara last year was that with these fitted the temperature in the rear area of the Discovery, where the Engel frig' was could be reduced considerably.

Food: Pamela's department!, - and she excelled!

Spare water/fuel: We carried three water, and four fuel jerries, in addition to our inside vacuum flasks, and the 4L water container. Cask grog also on board, - for medicinal purposes!

THE TRIP!

Day 1: Tue22Sep98 Adelaide-Glendambo + 3/4hr

Early start for some minor messages before travelling via Virginia, - it was our second son's birthday, then to Port Augusta and Glendambo. Some rain early in the day, - mainly in metro area. Headwind all day, and warnings of severe thunderstorms, however camp north of Glendambo was reasonably sheltered. Local flies very friendly though! Both of us with mild 'tummy wog' from suspect tinned ham, or cucumber lunch at Port Augusta. Both will have to be chucked when the next bin comes up!

Day 2: Wed23Sep98 Glendambo + 3/4hrs - Erldunda

Wild night! Thunderstorms, rain, wind - however on the bright side - the wind dried out the tent really well before our departure in the morning. Road verges noticeably wet, with some low lying land under water! Heard on the local station HF radio, (2020hz), that all roads in the Coober Pedy, William Creek, and Oodnadatta area are closed. Headwind has died away and now have a rear 1/4ly which helps tremendously. Good traveling and country is looking a treat. Both of us now over the 'wog' and able to take morning coffee with the Mines Department in Coober Pedy, lunch at Marla, and afternoon tea at Kulgera. The caravan park at Erldunda is a treat at only \$9pppn. Clean, spacious showers, toilets, etc.

Day 3: Thu24 Sep98 Erldunda - Alice Springs

Very quiet and peaceful night following the previous wild night in the bush north of Glendambo. The wild weather appears to have abated to the east! Slight delay in departure as there was a reasonably heavy dew, so had to 'sun' the tent before packing it away for the next week or so, seeing that we'll be ensconced in one of the suites at Lasseter's!

The road, and traveling into The Alice was very pleasant and reasonable fuel economy, - arriving in town on our fuel 'reserve' since last filling at Coober Pedy. After three years we're still trying to confirm the 'useful capacity' of the long-range tank! Weather is still a treat!, and the 'locals' seem to have diminished somewhat.

Booked into our suite at Lasseter's for our Surveying Conference and after unpacking our perishables from the trailer, chained it to a post at the rear of the complex. Will continue on our 'log' when we depart in about a week or so! Bill Black, Ex-RASvy is also a Conference Delegate so I guess there'll be a lot of reminiscing!

The day of the great HoT dawned bright, - and not a hint of wet so the HoT was assured of going ahead! A couple of years ago it had to be canceled due to the bed of the Todd River being TOO WET!! Fair dinkum!, - if you've never been to the HoT, then you must make the effort to be there at least once in a lifetime! The first Sunday in October every year, and the cost at only \$6ph is very reasonable! Food and drink stalls in abundance so no-one should go hungry/dry! Races commenced at about ten in the morning, or thereabouts, and went most of the day culminating in the 'battle of the boats', - which are severely modified 4x4's, or 6x6's, - it's very hard to tell! Anyway these monsters are set up as ships, man o' wars, etc. and complete with water cannons, mortars, and sawdust bombs it's a battle to the bitter finish. Naturally being squibs-we were on everyone's side/s, - failing that one would be subjected to the wrath of the various teams. Nothing like a bit of brown- nosing! Events varied from surfing on wheel-mounted surfboards on steel rails, sand shoveling, to the ultra-lightweight 'yachts'. Rules?

There were none that we could see and it generally depended on whatever took your fancy, although the judges did rule out 'tacking duels' Australia took out the America's Cup from the Yanks from Pine Gap who had it last year! Nothing like sharing it around!

Our team from Lasseter's did themselves, and us, proud but room service was notably lacking for the remainder of the day!



HENLEY-ON-TODD REGATTA - Sunday 04th October, 1998

One of the battle-ships BEFORE the battle.

Day 4: Mon05Oct98 Alice Springs - Gemtree

Good to be back on the track again after a ten-day Conference and associated Meetings at Lasseter's Hotel/Casino! By all accounts it worked out OK, - however on the downside is that the both of us now have the Conference Wog! After banking the remainder of the Conference moneys, topped up with fuel and traveled via the Stuart, and Plenty Highways to Gemtree.

Bitumen all the way, two-lane, then one-lane, and we arrived at the Gemtree shortly before lunch. Full facilities at the 'van park. Bought the obligatory barrow load of 'gem-bearing' gravel and spent a leisurely couple of hours sifting out the crown jewels! They do also have tag-along tours to the zircon, and garnet leases however these usually take a whole day, - usually departing early in the morning/s. Pleasant surprise to find another Trak-Shak next to us in the park that evening! Fitted the bubble-wrap rear window protection, and checked all tyres for damage, pressure, etc. as we had been warned that the road, (??), from here on was "not the best, and plenty of spares are needed"

Day 5: Tue06Oct98 Gemtree - Tobermory

After a brilliant full moon, - morning dawned cool and cloudy, however we had already planned on an early start to avoid the 'locals', - flies! The narrow bitumen on the Plenty ran out after a couple of km and now a very rocky track which was not comfortable, - however this soon changed to a wide sandy track giving a very pleasant ride.

Traffic was very light and we were not unduly fazed by an excess of tourists! The country varied from open Savannah to wide gibber plains, and most of it was very interesting. Some large termite mounds now evident in the grassy plains.

The route of the Plenty Highway in this area differs from that shown on my topo map, however, it appeared to be going our way so stuck with it! Made it to the Tobermory HS close to the NT/Qld Border which has a very pleasant camp area at only \$14 a night, - with well grassed camp area, and some shade. The only unpleasant aspect was the high winds which had sprung up early in the afternoon giving us a moderately strong head wind to contend with. Another family were there getting some tyre repairs before departing for Boulia which gave us some doubts as to the condition of the rest of the track/road, and the adequacy of our treads however to date no problems!

Day 6: Wed07Oct98 Tobermory - Winton

Day dawned cloudy with threatening rain! According to the map we were now on the Donohue Highway, - mostly clay but notwithstanding not the sort of country that we would like to be in if the heavens open up! Spurred on by our desire to be "outa there", - we were away by 0715hrs EST with spotty rain but not enough to wet the track! Had a good run and were at Bouliia by late morning. Not a lot to see at Bouliia, however we took in the local museum which was very interesting. They have a very good fossil collection housed in an immaculate purpose-built building which is well worth a visit! Topped up with some fuel and were pleasantly surprised to find that the road east to Winton is now sealed, but only one lane, - better than nothing though! Lunch on the banks of the Burke Creek before tackling the Kennedy Development Road. The country Bouliia-Winton is very picturesque passing through the McCartney and Carters Ranges, especially the ranges around Middleton where the panoramic view from the well constructed rest stop at the top of a driveable hill there is a must!

Caravan park at Winton has seen better days, and to find that we were adjacent to the railway didn't help a lot either! Still!, - the company was very pleasant!

Day 7: Thu08Oct98 Winton - Longreach

Another wet start to the day!, but as we were only planning on a short day, - no drama as the packed wet tent could be dried out while we were looking around the Stockman's Hall of Fame at Longreach! Now back on a dual-lane road, -the Landsborough Highway, which saved us a lot of heartache getting off the road onto the gravelly shoulders!

The Gunnadoo park at Longreach although 'tight' was very comfortable, - and after all it's only a place to put your head down after a day rubber-necking! The 'Hall of Fame is still very good value at \$12 'senior's rate'

Day 8: Fri09Oct98 Longreach - Emerald

Threatening rain again! Bit of rain on the tent as we were packing but not enough to worry! Now on the Capricorn Highway, and the country has changed to mainly pastoral, and after the outback it's a bit boring! Charming little towns along the way now, and lunch at Alpha was an eye-opener! Hard to believe that less than two years ago this place was under a couple of metres of floodwaters!

Highlight of the day was watching the cattle train grinding its way up the Drummond Range to collect cattle from out Longreach way! Made it to Emerald by early afternoon and were invited to spend the night at friends which was most appreciated as the rain was very threatening! Soon after the heavens opened up and it was very nice to be in a house under a solid roof! Dinner at the Emerald Bowls Club that night most appreciated! Despite the rain, - the usual Friday-night social bowls went off OK, - all very social!

Day 9: Sat10Oct98 Emerald - Rockhampton

Quite a bit of water laying about the place after the storm, - and the night in our friends back bedroom mucho appreciated! Had planned to call into the South Blackwater Coal Mine to check out the GPS-controlled machinery guidance system, however would not like to pass on the Conference Wog which has freshened up!

So onto Rockie! Had reasonable run on good roads however the country has turned from an interesting outback to boring pastoral! Refueled at Rockie, - being well down on the reserve again! Caught up with Brian/June Wilson, an ex-RASvy friend from PNG in 1965, - both Brian and myself had been attached to the 'Regiment for their PNG Aerodist (TM) programme.

He hasn't changed a lot, - and we spent quite a few hours, ... "do you remember Wally Mooney?", etc. Overnight in a bed under a solid roof was hard to resist, - again! If you're interested I've got their contact details!

Day 10: Sun11Oct98 Rockhampton - Hervey Bay

The invitation was there and would've liked to stay over, - chew the fat, etc., however Brian's time was limited.

With his own survey company Brian now specializes in providing services to the coal industry, particularly under-ground, and when you're wanted, you're wanted!, - or lose the client! Spur-of-the-moment decision to get under way, and so after breakfast were on our way again down the coast. We're now on the Bruce Highway, and into strip development and it's not very pretty! Getting hard to tell where one town starts/finishes, and all very commercial! Give me South Aussie any day! Hervey Bay is intensely commercial, and makes me wonder why on earth one would want to buy a house in the suburbs of Hervey Bay.

Beach, - if there is one?, somewhere in the distance, somewhat akin to living on Brighton Road with twice the traffic!

Found a van park,- eventually, and put up the tent and made battle with the sand-flies! Both of us now not very bright, - the dreaded 'flu appears to have caught up with us!

Day 11: Mon12Oct98 Hervey Bay - Mount Mellum

Scenic route, - if ever there is one over here, - down the coast! Arrived at Steve Rose and Una's home at Mount Mellum where we spent the evening with them.

Since retiring, both have moved down from Darwin and now have a lovely house on the slopes of Mount Mellum, - overlooking the Glasshouse Mountains. Again, - another night "remember when....." Pamela was all ears at some of the stories, and risks we all took, - just to get the job done! Wouldn't do nowadays with the increased emphasis on OHS&W!! What's beyond us both is why on earth would Steve and Una want to move from Darwin to Mount Mellum!, however comfortable as the downstairs bedroom is it's their decision! The overnight stay under cover was mucho apreciated Steve/Una!

Day 12: Tue13Oct98 Mount Mellum - Browns Plains Weather forecast for Brisbane - thunderstorms, and not-very-nice weather, however, there's no avoiding it! Once you're within sight/sound of Brisbane then you're stuck on freeways, toll roads, and at the whim of road designers. Not a lot to see, - follow the car in front, and hope/pray that they're going to the same place! A few days with family will probably be more than enough, - and we'll be glad to be under way again!

Arrived at eldest son Mark and Diahnne's house early afternoon and despite the threatening weather set up the Trak-Shak at the back of their house. Had we known the intensity of the forecast storms we would most likely not have done this however, - ignorance is bliss! We did get some heavy rain, thunder, lightning, etc. and the backyard was under water! Heard on the media that evening of damage in our area of \$A45m, so we were very lucky!

Day 13: Sun18Oct98 Browns Plains - Narrabri

Both of us unable to shake off the Conference Wog, so have decided to head home. Will have to catch up with the rest of the planned tour some other time! Has hoped to catch up with Fi' and Geoff Larkin in Canberra, Ross MacMillan in Albury, Arthur and Barbara Henson at Echuca, etc.

Eventually managed to find the right road out of Brissie and were on our way! Believe us, there is no short cut Brisbane to Adelaide. Head west as far as Goondiwindi, then onto the Newell Highway to as far south as is necessary, then west to Broken Hill, and Adelaide! The Newell' carries a lot of transports so, if you're planning a trip this way, - be prepared! After the drag up Main Range just east of Warwick it's fair sailing, and the scenery is quite refreshing! We made Narrabri by early evening and booked into the local Council Park on the banks of the Narrabri River. Good value at only \$13 a double for a powered site, and the staff are very friendly! The park is only just getting back into shape after recent floods and it took some time to find power for lights and the 'fridge!

Day 14: Mon19Oct98 Narrabri - McCullocks Range Evidence of roadside flooding all around, and rain has set in!, however the Discovery needs a good wash! We kept to the Newell' to as far as Gilgandra, then onto the Oxley' which was somewhat degraded when compared to the Newell', however when we got onto the Mitchell Highway at Nevertire things started to look up again. Still raining and lunch at Nyngan at the Lions Park, - in the rain was not our most memorable meal together!

Heard on the radio that all roads into, and out of Bourke, Brewarrina, Walgett, etc were closed due to flooding so guess we made the right decision in sticking to the bitumen! Discussion/decision to be made as to overnight stop!

Wilcannia not a desirable location, and anything west just too far in a day, so after consulting our book on 'Rest Stops Across Australia' opted for a described rest stop about 54km east of Wilcannia, which was "off the highway, with good shade, and some toilet facilities, etc."

Calculated that we would get there on reserve fuel and at about the right time to set up the Trak-Shak for the night. Praying for a break in the rain we set off, and arrived at the spot just as the rain front passed over allowing us the luxury of selecting a spot close to the shelter to set up in clear weather. Bad news was that the freebie public gas BBQ was not working so a wet-wood fire was eventually lit for our planned BBQ meal. Before retiring 'jerried' the Discovery to get us through Broken Hill and into South Aussie! Rain held off most of the night, but the noise of passing, and stopping transport was not very welcome!

Day 15: Tue20Oct98 McCulloch Range - Adelaide

Our last day dawned clear, - and COLD! Light breeze has the tent dried which was a Godsend! Met up with some less fortunate than ourselves, - an elderly couple having breakfast at the remains of our evening BBQ, - who were touring from Port Hedland, and through fire had 'lost' their motor home, life-savings, etc. somewhere on the Nullabor. All they had managed to save was the diminutive trailer-mounted Suzuki and roof-mounted 'tinnie' complete with outboard, etc.

The front of the 'Suzzie' had suffered some fire damage, and prized mounted fishing rods, etc. were also lost in the fire. From their insurance they had, however, managed to buy a small trailer at Port Augusta in which they had stored what had survived the fire, and they were continuing on their planned circumnavigation of Australia, - GUTS!!, - made us feel like wooses! With the Darling in full flood, floodwaters were well up at Wilcannia with some fresh levies evident around the town!

I guess the caravan park was well under water so the overnight option considered yesterday was not in the equation after all!

Near-head wind again, and with little roadside vegetation, etc. we were copping the full effect which modified our anticipated fuel range, etc.

Broken Hill, as expected high in fuel costs, and nice to pass through quickly, with Adelaide in our sights for the day! Took on some 'insurance fuel' at Olary to get us to Yunta for some additional fuel. The road between Yunta and Oodla Wirra was covered in 'hoppers, and the Discovery and Trak-Skak bore the full brunt of them. As fast as we had come across them they stopped, and then it was onto Adelaide. As planned, arrived Adelaide at 1630hrs, and home is really home! Nice to be away, but when you're not on top of the world home is much nicer!

Kindest regards, - and keep touring!

Pamela @ John Harrison

LATE PRESS

Colin van Senden. Colin underwent heart surgery at Wakefield St. Hospital early this month, and although feeling a bit sore and sorry is recovering fairly well.

We all hope a full return to health is not that far off.

VALE

Lindsay Brandon. With regret I report the passing of Lindsay in early November at the age of 80 years. He was a member of 2/1 Topo Svy Coy during W.W.2. I'm sure all Association members will join in passing their condolences to Lindsay's family.

Thanks go to Bob Love for the information.

Season's greetings
and warmest wishes
for the
year ahead.