

**Angorichina Station – Easter (17<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> April 2014)**

**Angorichina Station - Report #1**

**Thursday 17 April 2014**

Darryll & Joan, Nick & Sarah and Sandra & Pete met at the Willaston Hotel at 7.30 am and headed off at 7.45 am bound for the Angorichina Station for the start of the Gawler 4WD Easter Trip.

It was a lovely morning, weather sunny with a slight haze and blue skies. Traffic was light as we headed north with the land showing a mantle of green after recent rains. Windmills on the distant hills were almost stationery in the light airs.

We headed up via Burra to Jamestown where we stopped at the local bakery for morning tea as Darryll was beginning to feel the effects of "Mr Nasty" coming on due to the need for a caffeine fix.

At 12.10 we stopped in Hawker for lunch and a fuel top up and were contacted by Nick, Kerrie and the children to say that they were only an hour behind us and asked if we would wait for their arrival before proceeding to Angorichina. Kerrie also told us that they wouldn't need to stop for lunch as they had had lunch in the car - only a quick fuel & comfort stop was necessary.

Our now 4-car group entered the Flinders Ranges National Park where signage informed us that park fees were necessary!!! We hadn't come across this before, so all the drivers got out of their cars only to discover that the fees applied to those people who were going to stop and sight-see along the way - driving straight through to Blinman didn't require a fee!!

We arrived at Angorichina Station around 3 pm and were met by Alice who directed us to the campsite. We set up camp, collected wood for the campfire and enjoyed an evening meal when the sun went down around 6 pm. Afterwards the campfire was lit and the camaraderie began complete with marshmallows provided by Sarah and Nick. Bliss!! We all decided to get an early night in readiness for the proposed trip on Friday.

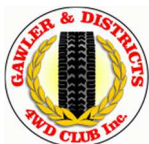
**Good Friday**

Pete and I forgot the hot cross buns for breakfast - unbelievable!!!

Left camp at 9 am and headed out to Carey Hill via the Oratunga Track. The track was variable, mainly easy with some interesting sections to stretch the capability of the drivers & vehicles, especially some of the creek crossings, of which there were many.

We stopped in a pretty creek bed to enjoy morning tea and then headed to Carey Hill some 716m above sea level. We enjoyed 360 degree views from the top of the hill and added a few more rocks to the cairn which was already quite large.





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After completing the track, Nick, Kerrie and the children and Darryll and Joan headed back to the campsite while Sarah, Nick, Pete and Sandra elected to have a pub lunch at the Blinman Pub - time for Pete to enjoy one of his favourites - another big Blinman Burger!!

On arriving back at the campsite, we were greeted by the rest of the group led by Quenton and Deb who were in the process of setting up camp.

**Easter Monday**

All except Pete & Sandra and Sarah and Nick were packing up to return home. We didn't really want to watch everyone leave so, after saying our "goodbyes," decided to go out for a drive and headed for the other end of the Oratunga track only to find a locked gate!!! Hmm, okay, time for plan number 2 which was to drive a PAR instead to the Moolooloo homestead. Whilst driving this track we came across 5 other vehicles coming in the opposite direction and had to pull off the track to let them go by. After going through a locked gate, we eventually got to the Artimore ruins and spent some time looking around them. From there we headed to Blinman for lunch (via the homestead) before driving back to a deserted campsite. We enjoyed a last campfire and some star gazing with no sign of the feral cats this time - our campsites obviously didn't appeal to them - before turning in for the night as it was our turn to pack up the next day and head home.

We eventually left camp at 9.45am and had a bite to eat in Hawker before driving straight through to Gawler. We did have to slow down around one bend in the road to let an echidna amble to safety.

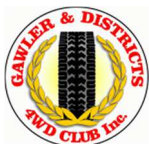
A great weekend with great company. Thank you to everyone and especially the generous Easter Bunnies who kept the chocolate fix coming.



**Artimore Ruins**

**[Sandra & Pete]**





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**Angorichina Station - Report #2**

**Friday 18th April-Day 1**

Waking to the childhood memories of Hot Cross Buns, copious amounts of Easter Eggs & morally being allowed to run around outside in your pyjamas without copping a clip behind the ears from your Mother, it was time to leave Adelaide and meet at the RV point at Tarlee @ 07:30. 7 vehicles comprised the group ready to depart (Marie, Peter & Mandy, Stephen with Guests Chris & Eliza, Ian & Clair, Martin & Martin) all ably lead by Quenton & Deb with Max & Lynne acting as "Tail End Charlie" in their "all new Ford Ranger" making its debut.

Surprisingly the morning traffic was quite light; it appears most people going away had obviously left the previous evening. Making good progress we took the Tarcowie Road for our morning tea break at a beautiful little spot called Appila Springs. Nestled among the hills was a creek system that certainly provided a picturesque setting for a "cuppa & bikkie."

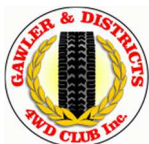


**Appila Springs**

Back to the road we went with the kilometres racking up, whilst enjoying the view of the countryside as we made good progress. With two majestic wedge tail eagles circling above we turned off the R M Williams Way onto the Hawker-Stirling North Road. The Flinders Ranges rose in the distance as we entered Hawker taking the opportunity to fill our tanks and stop for Lunch.



**Lunch stop at Hawker**



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Excitement built as we left on the final leg of our journey passing through Flinders Ranges National Park observing large numbers of emus & kangaroos and arriving at Angorichina Station at around 14:30. Waiting for us were Peter & Sandra, Nick, Kerrie, Caleb & Ally, Darryll & Joan and Nick & Sarah who had travelled up the day before.

Camp sites chosen, it was time to set up & sit back and enjoy the rest of the afternoon. After dinner & time around the campfire, it was off to bed for an early night in preparation for the next day.

**Saturday 19th April –Day 2**

Saturday morning had the makings of a picture perfect day with a sunny sky & warm conditions as we set off on what was to be our longest activity for the trip. With an early start @ 08:00 we journeyed to the "Caernarvon Track" to be met at the gate by the guide to arrange access.



**Start of the Caernarvon Track**

The Caernarvon 4 Wheel Drive Track was established by the "Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby Preservation Association" in August 2013. The track winds through the "Bunkers Conservation Reserve" which is approximately 140 square kilometres in area and takes in some of the most rugged country of the Flinders Ranges.

Comprehensive & quite detailed trip notes were handed out by the guide & off we set! Not far into the journey & it was time to engage the 4WD. Hopefully we were up to the challenge ahead!





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**Yellow-footed Rock Wallaby**

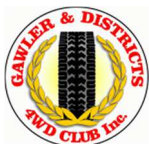
Taking in the points of interest along the way we stopped at Murray's Gully for morning tea. The continual upgrading of facilities was noted with the part construction of a drop toilet at that point still awaiting its official christening!

Back on the track with some challenging sections we arrived at the peak of Mount Caernarvon at 11:30. At a height of 920 metres we admired the 360 degree views afforded with a cloudless sky providing perfect conditions. Pictures taken in front of the stone cairn erected last century & details left in the Visitor's Book. It was time to continue our journey.



**View from Mount Caernarvon**





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After stopping for lunch at 12:45 we set off again arriving at the Southern Lookout. This was the most challenging part of the track with the summit only big enough for 5 vehicles at a time. The view at the top was magnificent & the short downhill section back to the track being a definite white knuckle ride!

From there the track became easier in nature, however, there were large sections of bulldust that required concentration & certainly ensured that there was a comfortable gap between vehicles. Arriving back at the start at 15:30 the consensus was that it was well worth the journey and certainly a privilege to take in the grandeur of the mountain ranges.

Another treat was in store as we set off for Brachina Gorge to arrive at the perfect time at dusk to watch the Yellow footed Rock Wallabies cavorting at play. The location was the perfect place for drinks & nibbles & with photos taken it was time to head back to camp for dinner and another drink around the campfire.

**Sunday 20th April-Day 3**

Awaking Sunday morning it was evident that the Easter Bunny had been busy!! No sooner was your back turned when the pile of Easter eggs appeared to be growing at an alarming rate.

After a leisurely breakfast we were free to explore at our own pace. Some took the opportunity to drive out & explore more tracks while others chose to stay at camp & relax.

In the afternoon we made the short trip into Blinman to complete the guided tour of the Blinman Mine.

The mine was the largest producer of copper and longest operating mine in the Flinders Ranges.



**Blinman Mine**

There were four main periods of mining activity between 1862 and 1907, which resulted in a total production of 10,000 tonnes of copper metal from 200,000 tonnes of ore.







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With a well-informed Guide it was hard to believe the conditions that they toiled under and the will and intestinal fortitude of these miners & pioneers cannot be ignored.



After hanging up the hard safety hat it was back to camp for the evening activities.

As daylight turned to dusk the local wildlife lined the hills, seeking the best vantage spot, in eager anticipation of the main event of the weekend, the "Great Eastern Steeplechase" ...oops, sorry the "Great Easter Lamb Campfire Cook-off".

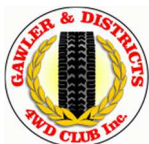
A full field greeted the starter and with the cry of "hot coals away" the race was on! The early runners jostling for the prime cooking positions with the usual suspects making a concerted effort to generate as much heat as possible to gain any advantage.

**Blinman Cemetery**

As with any marathon event the pace ebbed & flowed with a 2/8 unknown long shot filly Mandy taking the lead temporarily with a precooked special.



**Something smells good!!**



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However, it was the seasoned favourites Quenton, Peter, Stephen & Marie who rounded the corner & headed for the line at break neck pace. Hang on..... who is this? It's Max coming around the outside of the pack with a frantic sprint who gets up to salute the Judge by a short half bread loaf!!!!



**Ladies & Gentleman**

***What a finish!***

Prominent Bookmaker Tom Waterhouse was later quoted as saying:

*“I could see an upset in the making. I kept lowering my odds as fast as Max’s bread was rising in the oven. The Punters were the winners on the day however with the Daily Double of Max’s Bread & Peter’s Full Course Gourmet Table Served Silver Service with all the trimmings paying a respectable \$56-25.”*

In the true spirit of John Singleton shouting the bar after another Group 1 Winner the cooking pots were thrown open & all & sundry settled down to enjoy the communal feast that followed.

No sooner had this finished when the Easter Bunny made yet another appearance & the chocolate egg marathon continued with Turkish delight being the main choice of the fillies.

As the campfire coals slowly lost their glow & the Milky Way appeared to shine even brighter, the sense of camaraderie & friendship was evident. A truly fitting end to a wonderful day.

P.S. A big thank you to both Martins for going out of their way to collect the firewood to make it all happen.

**Monday April 21-Day 4**

We awoke again Monday to another picture perfect day. Mother Nature had certainly come to the party over Easter with the most ideal conditions available. After a leisurely breakfast it was time to pack up (apart from the lucky ones staying on an extra day) & re-join the rat race heading back to the big smoke. We set off individually from the camp site to make the most of the travelling conditions.

A big thank you to EVERYONE for such an enjoyable Easter break & to Quenton & Deb for another well organised trip!!

In closing it was very pleasing to see very little rubbish on the sides of the road but the lack of bird life certainly confirmed the feral cat problem in this area.

***[Peter Greatwich]***