



October Long Weekend 2017, Argadells

Thursday 28 September

It was decided that each party would make their own way to Argadells at a time best suited to them. Pete and Sandra left Gawler at approximately 9.30 am on Thursday to enjoy a leisurely drive to Argadells. The weather was overcast with rain and remained like that until just south of Pt Germein where we decided to stop for lunch. This was our first visit to this little town and we enjoyed lunch and a walk along what is believed to be the longest jetty in the southern hemisphere at a length of 1532m (since found out that



this jetty has been eclipsed by one in Busselton, WA at a length of almost 2 kms.) It was a little bit chilly "out there" with a wind blowing, the tide was out and there didn't appear to be a fish in sight!

After about an hour and a half, we took our leave of Pt Germein and headed to Quorn. By this time the sun was shining and the temperature had started to rise. After a short stop in Quorn we headed towards Argadells, passing wattles in bloom in profusion, cotton wool clouds in a blue sky and sunshine.

Arrived at Argadells around 3.30 pm, temperature a very pleasant 21C, checked in and headed towards the Noodles campsite where we discovered Martin already set up and emptying a load of wood from his ute for the campfire.

We chose and set up our campsite and when we had almost finished, Bob and Pauline arrived and proceeded to set up theirs. Once done, a welcome campfire was lit and we enjoyed some chat around that before heading to our respective campsites to prepare evening meals. After that, it was back to the roaring campfire and some camaraderie before retiring to bed as the temperature had started to plummet once the sun had set.

Friday 29 September

Blinman beckoned today as Pete wanted to check out the burgers at the Blinman pub. Unfortunately the weather was overcast but not raining as we followed different tracks across various properties. We left Argadells at 9 am and headed off via the Morelana scenic drive through Arkaba Station and Merna Mora.

We stopped at a ruin alongside one of the tracks. The house wasn't the classic outback cottage but at some time had been a very handsome building of larger proportions than average with four large main



rooms surrounded by a verandah. It had undergone renovations which included the addition of electricity and a bathroom complete with full sized bath. However, over the past couple of years, since we first visited this property, vandals have almost destroyed what was a complete bathroom, albeit minus the roof, by punching holes in walls, pulling off tiles and removing copper piping. What kind of individual thinks it's perfectly okay to destroy something that has stood for



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many years giving a glimpse into a life of bygone days? It really makes our blood boil that they can't leave things alone to be enjoyed by anyone who passes by!!

A welcome morning tea break was enjoyed in one of the many dry riverbeds under some shady trees before continuing on to Blinman where we arrived around 1 pm. Into the pub we went, but the well-known "Blinman burger" is a thing of the past since the re-opening of the pub. However, burgers were still on the menu alongside other pub fare so we placed orders and sat down.

Lunch enjoyed we went off to explore some other parts of town including the local store-cum-cafe and bought a quandong pie for later plus some ice creams! Then off to see where the mine was as Bob and Pauline had a special interest in one of the mine cottages which had once been occupied by a lady they knew. Photos taken, information read then it was back into the vehicles for the return trip to Argadells led by Martin, this time, through Alpana Station (another place of interest for Bob and Pauline) and Bunyeroo Gorge.

We arrived back at Argadells on dusk after another wonderful day travelling in the Flinders Ranges to discover that Jo and Pete had arrived and had set up camp in our absence. Only Lisa and Steven were to join us now.

Another roaring campfire was lit and we enjoyed each other's company well into the evening before retiring to bed - thanks to continued cloud cover the overnight temperature wasn't as cold as the night before.

[Sandra]

Saturday 30th September 2017

We set off at 9am heading towards Stevens Gorge. Weather was fair and a bit overcast not cold or windy.

Not far out of camp our trip leader, Peter, decided to take an unknown track that he hadn't taken before. It was an interesting descent for some of us as the trail was a bit rocky. Our first stop was Vera's Place. The views were amazing with the ranges stretching out in front of us with plenty of kangaroos, some of them jumped away as we drove by others just sat there and watched us. After pictures were taken we set off towards Steven's Gorge.



We arrived at Steven's Place for morning tea that was situated at a bottom of a gully next to a river bed. A large herd of goats could be seen climbing up the side of Steven's Gorge where we were to be heading. When it was time to leave to ascend to the top of Steven's Gorge, Sandra decided to stay at the bottom and look at the surroundings. I was undecided as to stay or go as the hill climb seemed to be steep and angled. I was assured by Pete it looks worse than it is. Sandra reassured me by saying "don't let me put you off." So off we

went. It was worth the anxiety. On the way up I radioed to Pauline letting her know of the kangaroos. I found out why there was a delay in her reply. She too was busy hanging onto the grab rails. When you are on the down side of a hill it does not seem that appealing at the time. The views at the top of Steve's Gorge were awesome with the kangaroos wandering around the yucca plants and the ranges in the background. The ranges were described as 'dinosaur backs' with the red and white rock formation on top





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of the ranges. Timeto do the downward track to pick Sandra up at the bottom.

We then headed west towards Mt Arden. The hill climbs were getting higher and rocky. Once along the top of the ranges the views were once again spectacular. It really is a beautiful place. Time for another picture stop then time to head back to Noodles camp for lunch. By this time, Steven and Lisa had arrived and set up camp.

After lunch we all set off on the track to the top of Mt Arden and a climb it was. We left camp at 13:05h with blues skies and a temperature of 25 degrees. As we went past Billygoat camp we were travelling through river beds and pine trees. The terrain changes quickly through the ranges, from pine trees to salt bushes and yuccas. Pete pointed out an emu on the side of a hill. It took us some convincing that it was one as it was big and looked more like some sort of a tree with a stick poking out. However, when the head turns it's a dead giveaway. They blend in so well. Climbing along the top of the ridge we stopped for another photo opportunity. Some of us saw a goat that had second thoughts of taking on a large kangaroo. It dodged the roo at the last minute. The goat was also big.

We reached Mt Arden with views of 360° seeing as far as Wilpena Pound to Lake



Torrens. After the views were taken in, this was the only opportunity to take advantage of mobile phone service. Phones were pinging and dinging with access to the mobile network. Martin rang his wife to let her know he was still alive. Pauline and Bob rang through to Pichi Richi to book seats for Monday.

It was time to head off as there was a group of cars on their way up the hill. It was later noted that the other cars went up to Mt Arden to get reception for the AFL grand final between the Crows and Richmond. On that note I will say no more....

At the start of the descent there was a sign saying use 4wd low gear. Nothing like a challenge. With another stop to check out the steep descents we made it to flatter ground. However Pete neglected to tell us which hill was "Oh sh*t!!" Hill." It was only once we were at the bottom and looking up that he mentioned it. It was very steep, rocky and had a few ruts in the track with a few colourful words probably mentioned by some of us that weren't use to this sort of terrain. It's all part of the fun. We all survived with no casualties to any cars.

It was time to head back to camp. On the track back to camp a mob of emus were seen. Sandra thought she had counted about 10 as they were on the move. Martin decided to count their legs and then divide them by 2.... Not sure the outcome was the same with them moving about. Lisa wanted to know what a large number of emus were called. None of us were quick to answer other than Google it when we can. Google's answer was "mob." There was also a sighting of a brown snake on the edge of the track. Great weather for them.

We all made it back to camp after a great day was had by all.



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Sunday 1st October 2017

Set off towards Buckaringa Gorge at 9:40am with blue skies and a temperature of 13°C. With a short track winding past Woody's Place, Graham's Place and Steve's Gorge walking trail we reached Buckaringa Gorge at 10am. It was mentioned again how the ranges looked like the back of dinosaurs and how they became extinct with the ice-age and 2yrs of darkness. The question was asked as to what the hills may have represented in dream time. Serpent's maybe?

We decided it was too early for morning tea and that we would head off to South Gorge. We reached South Gorge at 10:53 and set off on foot for a walk along the river bed. Rock formations were like they were sliced vertically. You could also see where rocks had fallen and some that would fall in the near future. Our trek was close to an hour. On return to the cars we decided that rather than morning tea we would return to camp at Noodles and have lunch.

Another great day 4wd around the Argadells with great company.

[Jo & Pete]

Monday 2 October – Pichi Richi railway

After waking to a very cold but clear morning, we readied ourselves for the day ahead.

Some of us had never been on the Pichi Richi railway so that was our destination today in Quorn. The train was due to depart at 10.30 am and apart from Martin, everyone else had booked tickets so we decided to get to Quorn a bit earlier than expected in the hope of securing Martin a ticket.

Before leaving the campsite, Steven and Lisa packed up their camper trailer as they were returning home directly after the train journey. Jo and Pete were also going home so we said our "goodbyes" before heading off and left them to continue packing up.

On approaching the station in Quorn, it was evident that the train was going to be full and this was borne out when we approached the ticket office to find a sign "Train fully booked." Hmm, what to do now? Fortunately for Martin, there was a lady Richmond supporter with a spare ticket, and she generously offered it to Martin who accepted, so that worked out really well.



Once the engine arrived, we were allowed to board the train and take our seats which were located down each side of the carriage. Then we were off!! There was a conductor in each carriage and the gentleman in ours was very knowledgeable and answered our many questions. He has been a member of the Pichi Richi Railway Preservation Society for approximately 15 years and the 300 membership is drawn from all over Australia with one ex-member even from the UK!



We stopped at Woolshed Flat where toilets and refreshments were available during the 45 minute stopover to allow the engine to uncouple from the front of the train and re-position itself at the other end of the train to take it back to Quorn.

On returning to Quorn we decided to try our luck and have lunch in The Austral Hotel. We weren't the only ones with the same thought but did manage to secure a table for all of us to sit together. We



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enjoyed a leisurely lunch before Lisa and Steven took their leave to head home as both were working on Tuesday.

Pete filled up with diesel at one of the service stations and pumped up his tyres, then we headed back to Argadells. It had been a lovely warm day with a temperature in the mid twenties and we made the most of the weather sitting and relaxing back at the campsite.

Another campfire was lit and enjoyed by everyone. The wood that Martin had provided burnt well and proved to be enough for the weekend, so thank you Martin.

Tuesday was pack up day for the rest of us and it took Martin no time at all to pack his ute and head off. We left around 9 am, leaving Pauline & Bob to bring up the rear.

We had a great weekend with mainly sunny weather so thanks to Martin, Jo, Pete, Pauline, Bob, Lisa & Steven for their great company and many laughs over the weekend and for tackling the tracks so well.

[Sandra]



Going Up!



Coming Down!