



Christmas 2017 at Coobowie

Friday 24th November saw us embark on another 4WD Christmas get together and this year it was to be Coobowie on the Yorke Peninsula. Most of the members and families arrived on the Friday to a



rather blustery east wind but thankfully there was no sign of the muggy conditions we left behind in Gawler. We had all pre-booked for tea so when the last of us arrived at the park we meandered down to the pub. Great conversation and a few drinks were partaken and who should join us but "Keithy" aka John Mewett and Karen, it was great to see them after so long. Friday was a reasonably early night as Jo our trip leader wanted us up and ready at 9am for a day of sightseeing around the Yorke Peninsula.

Saturday was an overcast day but the sun soon shone and we were off to the Stansbury Markets, on the way Jo told us a bit about Coobowie. Coobowie was proclaimed in 1875 and the word



"Coobowie" comes from an Aboriginal

word meaning "wild fowl water."

At the 2011 census, Coobowie shared a population of 220 with other localities and the protected



area known as the Coobowie Aquatic Reserve is partly located within Coobowie with the remainder being located in the adjoining bay, Salt Creek Bay.

At the Stansbury markets we wandered around and looked at stalls that sold everything from oysters to garden ornaments and lots in between. Quenton, of course, went in search of coffee (no scones available) and recommended this to many tourists passing. Max bought oysters, Lyn turmeric and Will was seen with a few treats Pa bought for him!! We all left with something and continued on to the fish market and then on to Wool Bay.

Wool bay was originally called Pickering when it was established in 1872, the town is built on cliffs overlooking a protected bay. In 1882 a jetty was built which was wide enough to roll wool bales out to the ships, the locals came to know the jetty as Wool Bay jetty and by 1940, the name of the town had also changed to Wool Bay. For many years, the town functioned as a wool, grain and lime exporting port.



Christmas 2017 at Coobowie

Between 1900 and 1910, six lime kilns were built on top of, and along the base of, the rugged cliffs overlooking the bay.



Lime was burnt to create quicklime, an important ingredient in mortar and brick-making. Today, the ruins of only one kiln remain which is perched precariously on the side of the cliff, or so it seems when looking up from the jetty. This kiln was the cutting edge of wood-fired lime burning technology when it was built by Mr Miller from David Miller & Sons, and opened in 1910. Technological changes and a decrease in the demand for lime during the 1950s and 1960s led to the closure of the Wool Bay kilns. Most of the remaining kilns and supporting infrastructure were demolished in the 1970s.

The group wandered around and on top of the lime kiln marvelling on the engineering expertise of the round and arched walls. From then it was back to Coobowie to

refuel with lunch and then to continue south.

Jo and Peter took the group via Edithburgh to visit the tidal pool, jetty and wind farm.

Edithburgh was originally developed as a port for servicing the pastoralist pioneers. In the 1870s grain farming became a mainstay of the local economy, which it still is. At the turn of the 20th Century additional industries were established in the form of gypsum mining and salt refining. There are vast salt lakes in the area, from which salt was scraped and exported as far as Russia. Among those refineries was the Standard Salt Company, operated by CT McClew. The jetty became a busy hub for exporting these commodities, as well as unloading supplies.

Originally the tidal pool was on the southern side of the jetty to cater for the ladies as mixed bathing was not permitted in the 1880s. As time went by they decided to build another pool for men. The jetty was a very busy port so very often no one was able to swim in the area around it, so the pool provided a safe



alternative. The men's pool remains and continues to provide this today.

Nowadays the jetty is used mostly for recreational fishing and is a popular Scuba diving site. There is also a small



Christmas 2017 at Coobowie

fishing and prawning fleet based there. The town is now overshadowed by the 55 wind turbines of the Wattle Point Wind farm, located southwest of the town and opened in April 2005.

Whilst Eva and Will were swimming in the pool, some were busy checking out the sleeping snake while the rest were discussing Troubridge Island and its well



defined lighthouse. We were then on to the wind farm and although many of us had seen others up close on a previous 4WD trip, I had forgotten just how big and noisy they were.

The convoy then wound around the coastline and we were fortunate to see egrets sitting in tidal pools, dolphins frolicking in the ocean and the spectacular coastline. Troubridge Point Lighthouse, was built in 1980 as part of a project to downgrade the lighthouse on Troubridge Island to a relatively low-powered automatic operation (later decommissioned,) and build a full-powered light on the nearby Yorke Peninsula coastline. The tower was constructed from unpainted brickwork built of custom-made bricks. The brickwork construction system was selected as it reportedly offered wind and earthquake loading design benefits and as it is intended for automatic operation, the tower has no windows. The innovative

use of brickwork in the tower won its procurers an award from the South Australian Clay Brick Association.

These lighthouses were of course built because of the many lives lost when passenger and cargo ships hit the rocks below. One of these was the "SS Randle" and a memorial by the roadside pays tribute to those who lost their lives and to the people who tried to help them.

The beaches of course are pristine the further south you go and Jo led us to the perfect one which we accessed via a purpose built staircase, although the water was chilly, some of us dipped our toes in while of course Ava and Will went swimming. Mick tried his luck at fishing and Bronwyn found the only available shade on the beach and relaxed taking in the sights.

From there it was on to Ballywire Farm & Tea rooms and, yes, scones were available. While the adults and Clarantyne enjoyed the scones and coffee, Will, Keryn, Ava and Sandra took a bucket load of carrots and went out to feed the menagerie of animals. There were donkey's, sheep, cows, horses, chooks of every breed, turkeys, cockies , galahs and even a



peacock putting on a magnificent display. They then went on to play "putt putt" while the rest of us meandered home via



Christmas 2017 at Coobowie

the back roads to get ready for tea and a visit by Father Christmas.

We had arranged for Father Christmas to visit us early this year so about 5.30 pm we heard the familiar jingle of the sleigh and there he was in the usual red suit and big bushy beard. He gave out Christmas greetings to all and presents to Ava and Will. Sandra got to tell Santa what she wanted for Christmas and Jo and Lyn



stole a kiss on the cheek from the Merry Gentleman. After a barbeque and pooled salad tea we all gathered for what may become a tradition of opening "Secret Santa" presents.

Everyone's name went in a hat and when your name was pulled out, you got to choose a present and open it. The catch was you had a chance of swapping that with another present you liked. Some people gladly wanted to swap while others were hiding theirs. With much jocular and mockery the Crow, which was swapped 9 times, finally ended up in the possession of Lisa and the liquorice allsorts, which changed hands 4 times, were acquired with one of the last picks by Pauline. Although John's version of a recent statue in the news probably got the biggest response!

The night continued with everyone having the chance to chat and mingle with old friends and get to know the newer members of the club. A good time was had by all with a big thank you to Jo and Julie for organising the food and the evening's entertainment and for those who helped to cook the BBQ, set up and pack things away.

It was probably right to say that no one had a tremendous amount of energy when packing up on Sunday but it had to be done. While some went fishing the rest of us departed about 10.30, Chris & Julie were staying for another day and Bob and Pauline were off to Pt Hughes. A few of us stopped in for a coffee and light lunch at Pt Wakefield at the "Salt of the Earth" cafe and then onto home. Thank you, Jo, for being trip leader and for all the above commentary of the towns and places we visited and to Peter for your support.

[Deb Earl]