



**Trip Report (Upalinna Station)**

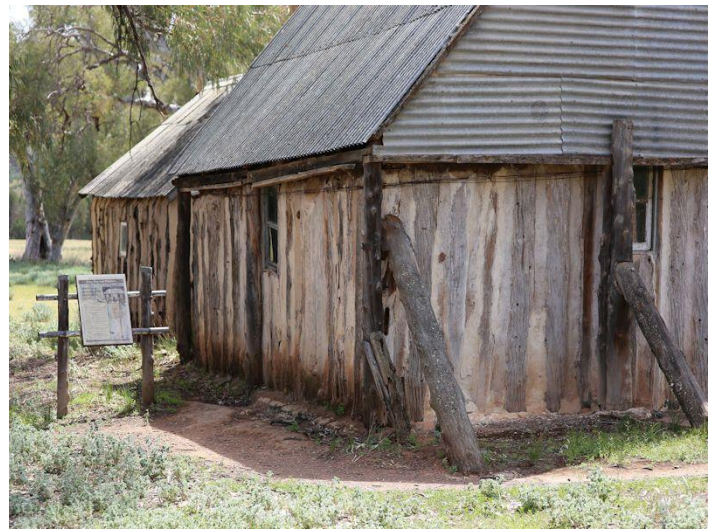
**Upalinna Station Flinders Ranges October Long Weekend 2018**

**Thursday 27 September**

We packed up the last minute things into the car stopped off and visited Matthew, Jesinta and Pippa before heading off. Traffic was pretty good. We stopped at Clare for some morning tea. Refuelled at Hawker before stopping in at Upalinna station, which is 9 kms from Wilpena. We paid our fees staying 5 nights at 15 dollars a night per vehicle. We had to go back out onto highway and head toward Blinman and turn off into camping area 100 metres up the road. We were given sites 3 and 4. We picked a relatively flat spot and started to set up. We were just putting up an awning when a red Nissan turned up and parked in site 4. We weren't expecting anyone else today so was working out how to let them know they were in wrong site. Thankfully Bronte and Norma got out of their vehicle. They unloaded a large load of wood before setting up. A lovely dinner and campfire before having a early night.

**Friday 28 September**

It was very cold this morning. We decided to go for a drive to Wilpena . We had some morning tea before having a look at the art exhibition. The art exhibition was held in the old shearing shed and entry was a gold coin donation, there was some great art work but all the ones that we liked were already sold. Then we had a walk around old Wilpena station. Went onto Stokes Hill lookout; it was rather overcast and very windy. Back to camp for lunch and sat around the campfire. Peter, Sandra and Martin arrived about 4 pm. Max, Lyn, Brenton, Keryn and Wil arrived after dark. Martin also arrived with plenty of wood. Another cold and windy night spent around the campfire.



**Saturday 29 September**

Up early as couldn't sleep; Bronte was already up and had the fire going. He had been up since 2 o'clock. Had breakfast and got ready for our drive, packed a thermos and some afternoon tea. At 10 o'clock we all headed towards Blinman. First stop was Wall of China and then Stokes Hill lookout. It was a lot clearer sky today but still very windy and cold which gave us a much better view of the ranges. Lunch at the Blinman Hotel before





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having a look at the Blinman art exhibition. From there we drove out to Artimore ruins on the public access route. A great drive taking in some beautiful scenery. We had a great view of Patawarta Hill from the ruins. After looking around the ruins we headed back to camp. Some of the tracks on the way back had some overhanging branches which Norma kindly held back to let the vehicles through. Back to camp for happy hour and tea before enjoying the campfire. Saw a shooting star and did some satellite searching before going to bed.

### **Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September**

Another crisp morning, it was 4 degrees at 6 o'clock. It was a beautiful morning apart from the cold. We all headed into Wilpena, everyone else went and had a look at the art exhibition and Lisa went and bought a few more tickets in their raffle for a lovely painting. Then into the office/souvenir shop to get our passes for the drive through the park. There were plenty of people around. We went into Sacred Canyon. After morning tea we went for a walk up the canyon where there were plenty of aboriginal carvings to look at. From there it was on to Bunyerroo Gorge where we stopped for lunch. There seemed to be a little more traffic on the road than yesterday. I don't think you ever get over how beautiful the Flinders Ranges are and it would have to be one of my favourites spots in our beautiful country. We made our way on to Brachina Gorge and there were plenty of kangaroos around and even spotted a couple of yellow footed rock wallabies.



Back to camp and had roast beef and vegies for tea before enjoying the company of everyone around the campfire. Later that evening we heard a loud noise that we thought might have been thunder but got really loud and continued. It was followed by the ground trembling. Poor Norma was in the long drop at the time. When she got out walked around to check no one was rattling on it. When we got home checked there had been an earthquake at Wilpena that registered 2.8 on the Richter scale. A little excitement for the evening.

### **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> of October**

It wasn't as cold overnight but a little cloudy this morning. Martin was up and packing up and was gone about 7 am. Peter went into Wilpena to put some fuel in as we were going for a drive. Max and Lyn were also packing up. After breakfast we headed off with Peter and Sandra while everyone stayed back at camp for a day of relaxation. Stopped off at the Blinman bakery for some treats mainly for the Quondong pies then stopped in Glasses Gorge for some morning tea before making our way to Nuccaleena Mine. On our way into the mine 3 vehicles were coming out, one was being towed. Further on we found an oil trail followed by a puddle of oil - we assumed they were on their way in and had to turn around.





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Then another group of 4 were coming out. We had a look around the mine site before finding a lunch spot in a creek on our way out. Back to camp via Moolooloo, Patawarta and Artimore ruins. Stopped at Wilpena on the way back to camp where Peter and Sandra



purchased a painting from the art exhibition. We had another great day. We enjoyed some apple and pear crumble and ice cream around the campfire before going to bed.

### **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> of October**

A little drizzle overnight but still very warm. Got up early and went for a drive to Hucks Hill lookout for sunrise but it was too cloudy to get the red glow from the ranges. Back to camp for breakfast.

Brenton, Keryn and Wil were packing up and getting ready to go. Everyone else had gone by 9 am but we decided to stay and go around lunchtime. We were packed up and were gone by 11am. Went into Hawker for lunch and ran into Bronte and Norma. A bearing had gone in their trailer and Peter had helped him fix it. Wasn't anything around for lunch so we went on to Cradock and had a counter meal of beef schnitzels then homeward bound. Got home around 4.30pm and unpacked.

We would like to thank everyone who was there for their company and friendship and also Peter and Sandra for a terrific weekend.

[Lisa]

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### **Friday 28 September 2018**

We left home to meet up with Martin at Tarlee at 8.30 am. Bronte, Norma, Lisa & Stephen had travelled up the day before and Max, Lyn, Brent, Keryn and Wil would follow later on in the day.

After a bit of a discussion, we decided to follow Martin along some of the backroads (pretty route) to Hawker. It was less likely to be busy and we'd see some different countryside. We followed the bitumen as far as Clare and turned off towards Spalding making a comfort stop along the way. Once outside Spalding the bitumen turned into dirt and off we went.

We traversed dirt roads which sometimes turned into tracks as we crossed various properties, over hills and back onto the flat. Along the way we were accompanied by kangaroos and wallabies running alongside the track - some jumping or getting caught up in fences as they tried to escape the





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vehicles. We also saw the odd emu as well as hawks.

Martin needed a coffee so he led us to an abandoned farm near Weira Creek where we stopped and walked around. The house, which still had most of its roof on apart from one piece of iron, was constructed of stone. On closer inspection, the floor boards looked rotten in places so we didn't attempt to enter the building and part of the roof lining had fallen down. It was also the final resting place of a desiccated kangaroo. There were the remains of an old cart and what looked like a vehicle as well as masses of barbed wire lying around. There was also the ruin of an out building close by as well as the remains of a shed of some description.

After following Martin down more tracks our tummies were starting to rumble so once we came across the bitumen stayed on it and followed it into Hawker where we had lunch in one of the picnic areas.

Sated, we headed off to Upalinna and checked in with Mija at the homestead. From there, it was back onto the main road which we followed for about 100m to a gate on the right hand side of the road. Once inside we found our campsites and discovered Bronte & Norma and Lisa & Stephen sitting around the campfire. Martin pulled up in his ute and offloaded a heap of wood then we set up camp.

[Sandra]

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### **Saturday 29 September**

In our brand new Mazda BT 50 Ute towing our camp trailer we arrived with welcoming smiles, cup of tea and camp fire ready for a great weekend.

After an interesting night of unusual bird calls next to Wil's bed and the trailer falling off the jockey wheel we set off for the day. It was windy and freezing cold on Stokes lookout with just a touch of green from recent rain amidst an otherwise very dry but stunning landscape of rock formations, native pines and great vistas. After getting wonderful views of "The Great Wall of China" we travelled to Blinman pub for lunch and topped it off with Quandong Pie from the bakery. As we walked about town we saw an impressive Kibble Bucket sculpture made from recycled copper.

The afternoon became an adventure of river gum lined creek beds, rugged ridges of rocks and craggy bluffs. Lots of kangaroos and a few sleepy lizards, emus, kites and eagles. While tyre pressures were reduced, Wil and Nanny walked the track, heading towards Narrina.

We checked out the Artimore ruins then followed a track towards Patawarta Hill.

This challenging 4WD track definitely christened our new vehicle.....! It was rough, knarly, rugged, some tight squeezes, with gutters and holes. A few new squeaks and scratches.







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We made our way back to Blinman then south spotting hundreds of roos feeding on the road side, to our camp for happy hour and a relaxing evening to end a fantastic day in the Flinders.

Thank you Peter and Sandra.

[Keryn]

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#### **Sunday 30 September**

Departed camp at 9.15 am and arrived at the Wilpena Woolshed for the Art Exhibition. What a surprise, this exhibition was totally different to yesterday's in Blinman. People are so talented! We spoke with some of the artists who were very interesting to listen to in their chosen medium.

Next we went to get our Parks passes and then onto Sacred Canyon for morning tea. After a quick cuppa and a snack, it was off down the 200m track for a look at the Aboriginal Art. The walk was good and there was some quite big rocks to climb over.

Then off to Bunyeroo Gorge with a quick stop over at Bunyeroo Gorge lookout where Keryn and Wil did a quick jog to the top of the hill after which we found some shady trees for a lunch stop.

Tummies full, it was onto Brachina Gorge for lots of wanderings and photos. That is a really beautiful gorge! Our country has some really gorgeous scenery, rocks, etc.

Peter wanted to be back at camp by 4.00 pm for "happy hour" and we made it back just 2 minutes late!!!

While sitting around the campfire we heard a rumble - sounded like a few trucks on the move!! Then the ground started to shake! Well, what do you know, there was an earth tremor which reached 2.8 on the Richter Scale. A little bit of excitement to round off the day.

It was another really great day enjoyed by all.

Thanks heaps Peter and Sandra.

[Norma]

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#### **Monday 1 October**

Pete drove to Wilpena to pick up petrol for today's wanderings.

We left the campsite at 9.30 am with Lisa and Stephen having said "goodbye" to Martin earlier in the morning who'd left before 7 am and also said "farewells" to Lyn and Max who were returning home and were in the throes of packing up when we left. Norma, Bronte, Keryn, Brent & Wil decided to enjoy a relaxing day back at camp today to read or stroll around the property.

We headed up towards Blinman and purchased some delicious goodies from the bakery as well as a nice crusty loaf of bread. As we were quite early, we literally had the pick of the display cabinet and between us purchased a bit of a feast - Quandong pies, strawberry cheesecake, wattle seed scones, quiches, the biggest chocolate muffin I've ever seen and a Quandong cake - yummy!!!



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With this feast in tow, we headed out on the Parachilna road north of Blinman towards Nuccaleena Mine. It wasn't long before we stopped for a morning tea break to enjoy some of the "feast." Once mobile again, we followed the single vehicle track and came upon three vehicles coming in the opposite direction. After letting Stephen know there were oncoming vehicles, Pete pulled over and we realised that the middle of the three was under tow. Further along the track it was evident that the towed vehicle had somehow lost its oil as there was a trail followed by a puddle! Not good news and it must have been a slow haul back to Blinman. Shortly afterwards we came upon 4 more vehicles heading towards Blinman so pulled over to let them pass.

At Nuccaleena Mine everyone wandered around taking photos and looking at the remains of buildings and the mine. By this time it was getting quite warm and there was nowhere near the mine shady enough to stop for lunch so we carried on until we came across some trees in a creek bed where we stopped and enjoyed lunch.

Back on the tracks once more where we re-traced some of the tracks from Saturday, past the Artimore Ruins again following the PAR route back to the bitumen.

We were all heading towards Wipena again, Pete and I to visit the Woolshed where we purchased a painting we'd admired from Saturday and which hadn't been sold, and Lisa & Stephen headed to the souvenir shop. This was the final day of the exhibition, which is held annually and finishes on the Monday of the October long weekend, so we were able to take the painting with us, well packed up, instead of waiting for it to be sent home COD.

Back at camp and more relaxing with a later than usual "happy hour." Norma had been busy and had made some mango beer damper which was delicious served with a generous helping of butter.

After evening meals had been consumed, we enjoyed more camaraderie around the campfire. It was a very warm night so we didn't feel the need to "rug up" as we had on previous night's which was very pleasant indeed but it didn't stop us burning a heap of wood on the campfire!!!!

#### **Monday 2 October**

Hmm, woke up during the night to rain falling on the tent. Wasn't a good sound to hear as we were packing up in the morning to head home and didn't want a wet tent! As luck would have it, come the morning after a very warm night, the tent was dry. There was still a bit of rain around - odd spots - but nothing to really worry about.

After breakfast, we started the process of packing up. Keryn, Brent and Wil were first off leaving the campsite around the 8 am mark - they were very well organised!

We left the campsite at the same time as Bronte and Norma just leaving Lisa and Stephen behind as they planned to leave a bit later.

As we followed Bronte & Norma, Pete mentioned that the left hand wheel of the trailer didn't look right. About 4 kms out of Hawker, Bronte pulled off the road onto the dirt and mentioned that they'd heard a noise and didn't know what it was. On further investigation, the left hand wheel bearing had collapsed and totally disintegrated meaning that they weren't going anywhere in a hurry. The temperature was around 31C with a strong, warm wind blowing.



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Fortunately with Hawker being a short distance away, Norma and Pete headed to a mechanic's shop there and were able to get just the things they needed to facilitate a repair. Norma said the mechanic was very helpful and put together a kit of everything they needed to get the trailer back on the road. Back to the trailer and after some pulling and pushing, the wheel was repaired and Bronte and Norma were back on the road again.

It was disappointing to note that of all the vehicle combinations that passed us, and there were many, not one person stopped to find out if Bronte needed assistance.

We followed them into Hawker which is where we parted company after checking that they'd be okay.

We went onto Orroroo for lunch and as we were driving in, there were pink ribbons everywhere. This little town is to be commended for getting behind the Breast Cancer Awareness week - they did it with gusto! Well done Orroroo!!!!

We arrived home around 4 pm and started the unpacking process. We received a very welcome call from Norma shortly thereafter to say that they'd arrived home safely without further incident. Great news.

It was a terrific weekend with great company. Thank you to everyone who came along - we thoroughly enjoyed your company and look forward to the next time.

[Sandra]

[author]

