



# **JACKAROO 4WD CLUB**

**VICTORIA'S**

**ALL MAKE 4WD TOURING CLUB**

**NOVEMBER 2020**



# The Newsletter

I can feel some stirrings in the Club, now that restrictions are starting to be lifted. Hopefully, it won't be long before we are back in full swing again.

John Dudley has been quick off the mark and booked the Scout Camp at Riddells Creek for our annual Christmas Party. Details are on page 19. I look forward to catching up with you there.

This month's Newsletter in some ways could be called the "Ian Blainey Issue".

Previous issues have concentrated on our weekends in the Little Desert based at the Kiata campground. Since 2017, our base has been the Sports Ground at Serviceton.

Ian has submitted his report on the activities from the first weekend at the new venue. His report highlights the different options Serviceton provides.

And to get your travel juices moving, he has provided a report on a trip he and Anne did in 2008 to the area around Innamincka. My thanks to Ian.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

## Our Cover

The main feature of our Little Desert weekends has been seeking out some of Australia's diversified wildflowers.

Our cover is a sample of what can be found in the Little Desert.



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# President's Report



Well, here we are again. Yet another month has passed with frustratingly little activity to report. However, with the recent relaxation of restrictions, we are starting to move again.

Under the present regulations and, after approval was gained from the Bowls Club, we are able to conduct a Committee Meeting this week, the first since last June.

Among other things, we will be discussing and attempting to plan trips and activities to ease us back to normality. If you have any ideas, or suggestions, please let us know.

On the assumption there will be further easing later this month, John Dudley has confirmed our booking at Treetops Scout Park in Riddells Creek for our Christmas break up party on the last weekend in November. Check the details on page 19

See you soon.

Rod Tamblyn

## A Lesson in Mathematics

A lawyer wrote a letter to his wife:

*My Dear Janie,*

*You will surely understand I have certain needs that you, being 57 years old, can no longer satisfy. I am very happy with you and I value you as a good wife.*

*Therefore, after reading this letter, I hope you will not wrongly interpret the fact that I will be spending the evening with my 18 year old secretary at the Comfort Inn Hotel.*

*Please don't be upset. I will be home before midnight.*

When he came home that night, he found the following letter on the table:

*My "Dearest Husband",*

*I received your letter and thank you for your honesty about my being 57 years old. I would like to remind you that you are also 57 years old.*

*As a maths teacher at our local college, I would like to inform you that while you read this, I will be at the Hotel Fiesta with Michael, my tennis coach. He is young, virile and, like your secretary, 18 years old.*

*You have an excellent knowledge of maths, so will understand we are in the same situation, with one small difference. 18 goes into 57 a lot more times than 57 goes into 18.*



# Coping with Isolation



## Stages of Quarantine



NOW THAT I'VE LIVED THROUGH AN ACTUAL PLAGUE, I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND WHY ITALIAN RENAISSANCE PAINTINGS ARE FULL OF NAKED FAT PEOPLE LAYING ON COUCHES.

Travel plans in 2020 be like:

Expectations:



Reality:



# Little Desert Trip

## 28th September to 1st October 2017

*Ian Blainey reports:*

### Thursday 28th

We arrived at Serviceton late Wednesday afternoon and set up camp.

Thursday morning, we accompanied Alan on some pre-trip planning, which started with a coffee at a little bakery in Bordertown.

From there, we headed out to the Olivalle Estate Olive Farm at Telopea Downs to make arrangements for a guided tour.

After lunch, we started to work our way towards the Rocky Lamattina & Sons carrot farm, again to arrange a tour time.

Along the way, we checked out a couple of wildflower locations. Following a couple of weeks of rain, we found a good variety of native flowers, particularly native orchids.

These included Donkey, various Spider and a number of coloured Sun orchids.



Also we were lucky enough to see an echidna at fairly close quarters.

Before returning to Serviceton, we

called in to the Frances pub to ensure arrangements for Saturday afternoon were in place.

On arriving back at Serviceton, we found quite a few other people had arrived and set up.

Later that evening, one of the other travellers produced a couple of radio controlled models.

One was a truck prime mover and the other was a fully operational front end loader.



It was interesting to note that the loader was fully functional, including lights and hydraulics. A demonstration showed it could move earth.

### Friday 29th

On Friday morning, we initially headed into Bordertown for a caffeine and cake hit.

On leaving Bordertown, we headed east on the highway, then turned north on to the Serviceton - North Telopea Downs Road.

When we arrived at the Olivalle Estate Olive Farm, we were greeted by the





Manager, who gave us an excellent guided tour of the orchards and their processing plant.

This tour unfortunately dispelled any romantic notions I had of traditional olive farming methods.



The trees are planted in rows at precise distances apart. They are pruned to ensure automatic harvesting equipment can run up and down the rows to maximise the collection of olives.



This machinery is based on grape harvesting equipment and slightly modified by the Manager to suit the olive crop.

Our tour then took us to the mixing area where the underground water supply is treated to remove unwanted materials, especially salt. It is then enhanced with fertilisers and minerals.

Bulk chemicals are placed into mixing vats and then diluted to a usable concentration. It is then dosed into the water supply and fed to the trees as required.

After washing, the olives are pressed in bright shiny stainless steel tanks and then filtered.

The extra virgin oil is then stored in 20,000 litre tanks. The bulk of the oil is then on sold to larger companies, such as Cobram Estates.

They also bottle their oil for local sales outlets under the Olivale Estate label.

After lunch on a hill overlooking the estate, we headed south towards Kaniva. We crossed the highway and drove down the Kaniva - Edenhope Road to the Lamattina carrot farm.

This is one of two, 6,000 hectare properties, which supply major supermarkets, such as Woolworths.

The carrot seeds are imported from France and sown at the rate of one million seeds per hectare.

Rows are prepared using GPS and laser equipment and, prior to planting the seeds, grasses are grown in adjacent rows to reduce erosion by wind and to protect the carrot tops as they develop.



The seeds are sown using specialised equipment at a defined distance apart.

Carrots are grown in one out of every three years. In the other years, crops are grown which can be ploughed back to

replace nutrients and goodness to the soil.

One of the largest pest problems they encounter are feral deer.

Once the carrots are harvested, they are placed into trucks and transported to the company's processing plant.

Here they are cleaned then spray chilled before being packed and forwarded to the supermarket distribution centres.

They aim to have the carrots in these distribution centres within twenty four hours of picking.



At completion of the tour, we returned to camp for Happy Hour.

### Saturday 30th

On the previous days, we had established that, despite the recent cooler weather and rain, there had been enough sun to bring out a large variety of wildflowers and orchids.

In a number of places along some of the tracks, there were just carpets of colour. So today we were to check these out.

Some diehard football fans elected to stay at camp and head to the Frances Hotel later to watch the AFL Grand Final.

The remainder of the group headed to Kaniva for the usual morning dose of caffeine before heading into the Desert.

Suitably refreshed, we headed down

Yanipy Road, into Three Chain Road and on to Miram South Road. Along the way, we stopped to look at and photograph wildflowers along the roadside.

During this drive, we also found a couple of little spots where we could have a bit of fun in four wheel drive.

After lunch, a few more footy fans left the convoy and headed off to the Frances Hotel. The rest of us headed down Edenhope Road and on to East West Track.



Here we split into two groups, as some of us wanted to tackle the Mt Moffat Track. The others followed Alan out of the desert on an "easy short cut".



We knew this area would be a bit damp in places and were not disappointed. Several interesting bog holes were negotiated satisfactorily.

Greg found a very soft patch and needed to work a little harder to get back on to a sound surface.

A little further on, we appeared to run out of track, as it headed into the fringe of a swamp. Johan was kind enough to get





out, take his shoes and socks off and walk the track so we could satisfy ourselves it was okay to negotiate.

Two alarmed ducks managed to startle Johan, who moved faster than the ducks as they took off.



After a walk to Mt Moffat, we continued down Elliotts Track and found more wildflowers.



We negotiated a stretch of water around eighty metres long and up to fifty centimetres deep.

From here it was an easy drive into Frances to watch the end of the footy, before sitting down to a nice dinner at the hotel.

### Sunday 1st October

Sunday morning we headed down Serviceton South Road and on to Mt Moffat Track looking at wildflowers.



While we were here, we were lucky enough to have a pair of Red Tail Black Cockatoos fly overhead.

A short stop at Moree Reserve on the Tallegeira Track followed, after which we drove back to camp.

Some had started to pack up and head home, while others were able to have a quiet afternoon before departure on Monday morning.

Many thanks to Alan for sharing his extensive knowledge of this area and again making for a very enjoyable Little Desert long weekend.







## Orchids of the Little Desert







## Wildflowers of the Little Desert





# For Wine Buffs

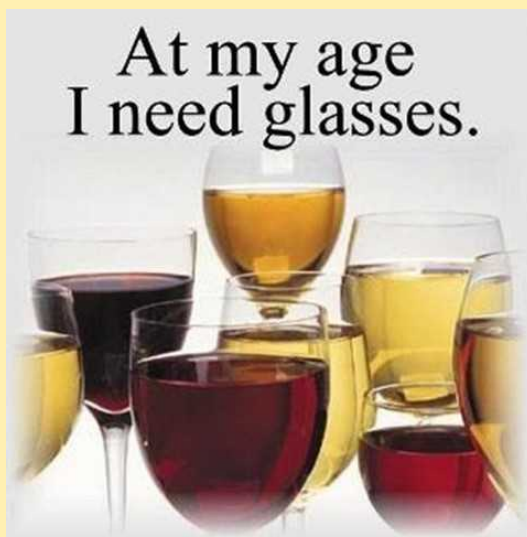


The secret of enjoying  
a good wine:

1. Open the bottle to allow it to breathe.



2. If it does not look like it's breathing give it mouth-to-mouth.



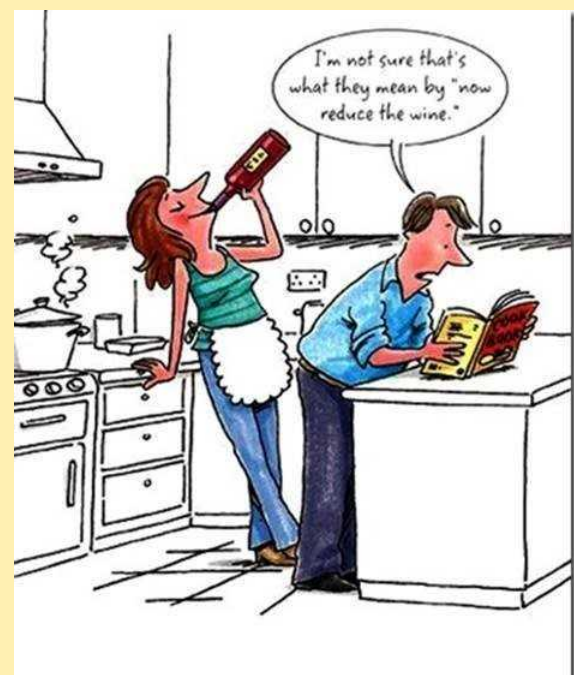
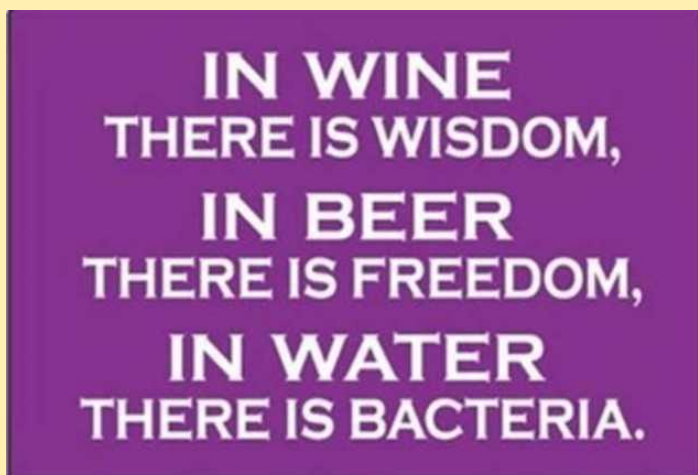
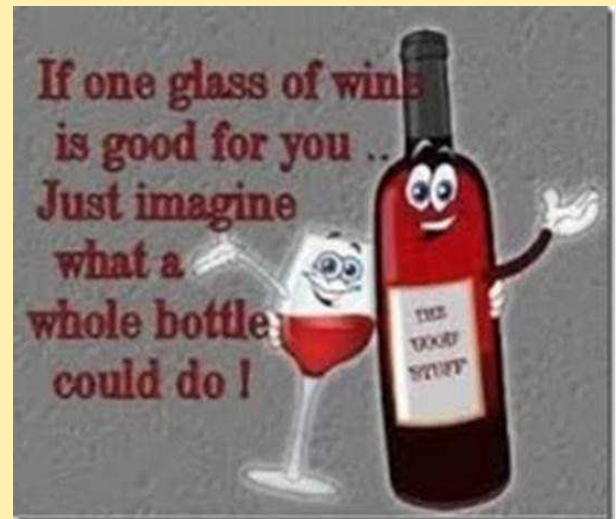
People say that drinking milk  
makes you stronger.

Drink 5 glasses of milk and try  
to move a wall.  
Can't?

Now drink 5 glasses of wine.  
The wall moves all by itself!



# For Wine Buffs who don't know when they have had enough





# Innamincka 2008

*Ian Blainey reports:*

Well, the holiday we'd been planning finally arrived. We'd changed our planned destination a number of times, but, as we had both read *The Dig Tree* by Sarah Murgatroyd, we settled on a trip to Innamincka.

As we knew that the actual tree itself was still alive, we were keen to see both it and the other significant historical sites.

The dogs were sent to their holiday home ... well, a boarding kennel. The daily rate for two dogs is higher than a powered site at a caravan park!

As usual we over packed, but headed off nevertheless. After a quick lunch at Donald, we settled in for the night at Mildura.

The next day, we travelled to Broken Hill and set up in the Broken Hill City Caravan Park. It was there we received our first affirmation that we might have made the right choice of destination.

Originally, we had planned to visit Kangaroo Island, but weren't too sure of the weather in late August. The couple camped next to us, told us they were residents of Kangaroo Island and had not spent a winter there in the last seven years!



After unhitching the van, we headed out just past Silverton to the lookout over the Mundi Mundi Plain.



Here we nibbled on cheese and biscuits, washed down with a nice New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc as we watched a beautiful sunset.

The next day, with the caravan travelling along nicely behind us, we headed north to the Mutawinji National Park.

As we left the highway towards the park, we encountered our first dirt road which took us to the campground.

We selected a very nice site and unhitched and levelled the van. Then we saw a sign which stated that certain numbered camping spots were reserved for coaches.

You guessed it ... we had chosen one of these reserved spots. We decided to take our chances on being asked to move. Of course, we had also managed to choose a spot which was the furthest away from the toilets and solar showers.

A three night stopover gave us the opportunity to go on a couple of walks, one of which was a guided aboriginal heritage tour in an area which had links to the explorer Ernest Giles.



The walks covered a variety of terrain, including open range, small gorges and cool, colourful waterholes.

Red rump parrots, corellas, emus and kangaroos were easy to see. Unfortunately, most common of all were feral goats.



There is also evidence of William Wright's passage through the area. Wright was the person appointed by Robert O'Hara Burke to return to Menindee and bring the remainder of his expedition towards Cooper Creek. He failed to do so.

After our sojourn, we left Mutawinji and headed north towards Tibooburra. We rejoined the Silver City Highway just south of Cobham Lake and headed in to Tibooburra.

Fuel at Tibooburra was \$2.30 per litre for diesel, but we filled up nevertheless.

As there was still plenty of daylight left, we pushed on to Cameron Corner and set up there for the night.

The Corner store called us in for some refreshing liquid and we ended up staying for dinner. A great night was had with the locals and other travellers.



Next morning, Anne decided to try out the showers. The ladies ablution block had a distinct lean to the left - most evident when one sat on the loo.

The shower looked like it hadn't been used for days. It had a thick layer of red dust on the floor, but Anne braved it nonetheless. However, she was out pretty quickly when a huge Huntsman spider climbed up the shower curtain.

Following the advice of an extremely helpful road train driver, we headed out to Merty Merty. From there, we followed the Old Strzelecki Track to Innamincka. The Coromal was put through its first serious dirt road test. Although not rated as an "off road van", it is dirt road rated.

The condition of the track was extremely variable, with some smooth sailing, but plenty of bulldust and corrugations in other sections.



We were both surprised by the large number of oil wells operating along this road and we reached Innamincka in the afternoon.

Following David Dobson's advice, we





headed out to camp by the Cullyamurra Waterhole. What a gorgeous place.

There were plenty of sites in the camping area and we selected one right next to the water and within easy walking distance of virtually new long drop toilets. Our nearest neighbour was at least 300 metres away.



The birdlife in this area is fantastic and up to this point, the weather had been terrific.

Next day we decided to go to the races, the Innamincka Cup to be exact. We had some concerns it might be very



crowded like the Birdsville races. The locals assured us it would be nowhere near as busy, so off we went.

The first thing we discovered was that there could only be a maximum of three horses per race, because there were only three jockeys!

One lady trainer, who rode her own horses, seemed to take the whole thing very seriously.

She won the first two races on two different horses, then won the third on the horse which won the first race. In the Cup, she produced a third horse which naturally won.

The next race was a Ladies Invitational. But there were only two lady riders and it looked like a male rider would need to complete the field.

A young woman visitor to Innamincka said she rode trackwork in Melbourne. She accepted the invitation to ride the other horse and duly won the race.

When we left, they announced there would be a delay of ten minutes for the next race, as they had not yet received any entries!

Rain that night caused some concerns about how much driving we would be able to do the next day. However, the combination of sun and a fairly stiff breeze, dried out most of the roads. They were all driveable, albeit a bit muddy and slippery in places.

Over the next few days we visited all the



major historic sites associated with the ill fated Burke and Wills expedition.

These included the Dig Tree and the two separate locations on Cooper Creek where Burke and Wills had passed away.



There were plenty of sightings of outback wildlife and birds. After a walk around the area, we had a picnic lunch in the car. The overwhelming number of flies forced us "indoors".

After lunch we followed a sandy track around the lake and saw some great bush camping areas on the edge of the water.

On the return journey to Innamincka, we saw one of the largest feral domestic dog/ dingo crosses we have ever seen. From a distance, we thought it was a calf. When we got closer, we realised it was a huge dog.



Also the area where the one surviving member of the expedition, John King, was found near death by Howitt's search party, three months after Burke had succumbed.

As well as taking in the history of the area, we visited several other sites, including the Innamincka

Choke, where there are some interesting aboriginal rock carvings.

Our drive out to Coongie Lakes was interesting. While the drive was quite easy, there were a number of sand dunes to negotiate and one was left hoping any vehicle coming the other way was using a sand flag like us.



Three days into our stay at Cullymurra, we started to experience problems with the power supply to the van. We were running out of battery power.

Thank goodness for the mechanic at Innamincka, even though he was only open between 8 and 9am. You had to be pretty quick off the mark if your vehicle needed attention.

We now know that the Toyota dealership



had not wired our caravan connections correctly. This, combined with the fact the caravan battery charger had succumbed to the harsh corrugations, caused the problem.

On our last night at Innamincka, we decided to eat at the pub which, in the last twelve months, had added a large new dining area. The 350 gram steak was one of the largest pieces of meat we had seen in a long time - way in excess of the stated weight.

The meal was accompanied by an extremely generous serving of chips and vegetables. The only way we could sample a dessert was by sharing one.



Before leaving Innamincka, we had to pick up our battery at the garage. While there, we saw a caravan with a broken suspension, a Pajero on the back of a tray truck with a rear wheel at a very peculiar angle and a gentleman with a 200 series Landcruiser looking to replace a tyre - the third in a week.

We had our own little drama. One of the guys at the garage commented on a broken window in the caravan. We had not noticed it before.

Anne had not latched it properly prior to departure from the Cullymurra Water-hole. A piece of cardboard, anchored by a large amount of gaffer tape, was sufficient to see out the rest of the trip.

On advice from locals, we started our

trip home down the Strzelecki Track via Moomba. The trip down was easy going as the road had been graded recently.



It was quite a surprise to come over a rise and see the huge Moomba oil and gas processing plant in the middle of the desert.

From here, the track deteriorated dramatically, with huge corrugations caused by the heavy transports servicing the oilfields.



This continued all the way to Lyndhurst, although it did improve after crossing Strzelecki Creek.

While driving through the Strzelecki Desert, our minds wandered back to Burke and Wills.

We wondered how on earth they thought they might have had a chance of following Gregory's route down to Mount Hopeless with limited water and in obvious poor health.

We certainly rejoiced at getting back on the black stuff at Lyndhurst and continued to an overnight stop at Copley.

The caravan park is quite a nice little park, run by very friendly and hospitable people. The historic Leigh Creek Hotel in Copley is a short walk from the park and serves a mean mixed grill. It leaves just enough room for some quandong pie.

After a lazy start the next day, we called in to the Copley Bakery for a coffee and Anzac biscuit. Anne managed to break a tooth on her biscuit.

Following the purchase of a couple of quandong pies, we headed south down the western side of the Flinders Ranges.



Lunch was at the Prairie Hotel in Parachilna, where the “Road Kill Antipasto” filled the spot nicely.

On our way down to Port Augusta, we saw one of the coal trains which exceeded 2.5 kilometres in length.

After a brief fuel stop at Quorn, where diesel was \$1.67 per litre (10 cents cheaper than Melbourne at the time), we continued on to Port Augusta for an overnight stop.

Next morning we visited the Wadlata Outback Centre and found that an hour is just not enough time to do the place justice.

That night we stopped at Renmark in a caravan park on the river. What better way to end the day than sitting by the Murray River with a glass of wine in hand watching the sun set over the river as the water birds settled down for the night.

The following day we had an easy drive across to Swan Hill. Just as we had finished setting up, the occupants of the camper next to us pulled up in their nice clean Pajero.

He took one look at the very dirty and dusty Prado and said “I’m glad to see somebody else uses their 4WD for what it is intended for”.

Fred Farrugia of the Pajero Club had just come back from washing his car, now that he was on the bitumen. He had just completed an extended trip so we arranged to meet in our van after dinner to swap notes.

We can highly recommend the fish and chip shop in Swan Hill. They were some of the nicest we’ve had.

A knock on the door announced the arrival of Fred and his wife. Fred had brought his espresso machine and we spent the last night of our holiday with a glass, or two, of wine and a delicious cup of coffee expertly prepared by Fred.

A convivial evening was enjoyed as we swapped our travel stories.

The trip home was uneventful trip. Settling back, we realised we had seen some fantastic parts of this great country, met friendly and helpful locals and fellow travellers, seen a lot of wildlife and visited some sites significant to Australian history.

It also gave us an insight into how tough, courageous and sometimes downright stubborn, some of our early explorers were.





# Christmas Party at Riddells Creek

Friday 27th November to Sunday 29th November

Once again, the Scout Camp at Riddells Creek is the venue for our end of year festive celebrations.

**Meeting Place & Time:** Treetops Scout Camp Riddells Creek from Friday morning

**Convoy Limit:** No limit

**Fuel:** Full tank ex Melbourne.

**Trip Standard if Dry:** Easy **If Wet:** Easy. Medium for local off road trips

**Trip Leader:** John Dudley [rjdudley@bigpond.com](mailto:rjdudley@bigpond.com) or 0412 948 361

**Special Requirements:** Suitable for all types of trailers and caravans. Bring whatever you need for a festive weekend. More details to follow.

**Currently registered:**

# Tail End ...

Please read the signs ...

