



Desert Sky News

"It's All About The Experience – Yours and Ours "



Volume 19 Issue 1

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April 2017

A busy but interesting March with trips to Wilson's Promontory and Mungo/Hattah Kulkyne National Parks.

Having four nights in Foster Vic, and using it as a "base" to explore the Promontory, Strzelecki Ranges and around Waratah Bay works well.

The Promontory Gate Motel was most welcoming and made sure we had a comfortable stay.

An additional night at Port Campbell allowed us to spend more time at the attractions along the Great Ocean Road, (including Cape Otway Lighthouse) and it was interesting to see the large number of overseas tourists in the area - busy with cameras, selfie sticks, mobile phones!

The warm weather did not stop us doing a number of "extended" walks!

The Mungo NP trip was based in Wentworth NSW and again the Two Rivers Motel provided comfortable accommodation.

Similar to the Wilson's Prom trip - unusually warm weather for a couple of days! With the closure of the Wentworth Services Club, our evening meals were at the nearby Coomealla Club.

You will see in the itinerary section of this newsletter details of our Longreach/Winton trip in July. An additional day has been added, making it a 12 day itinerary. The extra day allows more time to visit the Stockman's Hall of Fame, Qantas Museum etc.

The trip has a guaranteed departure, and I have a couple of seats available if you would like to join us. Full details will be forwarded upon request.

I thank you for your interest in Desert Sky Tours!

Stay safe and catch you next time!

Birdsville Bakery



The Birdsville Bakery, an iconic establishment in Queensland's most-remote town, is set to re-open under new ownership after it was sold for \$1.2 million on March 2.

Former bakery owner and co-founder Dusty Miller handed the keys over to Townsville tour operator Martin Josselyn after 12 years of operation. The bakery was the first for the town, which only has a regular population of 120 people.

It's set to be back up-and-running by Easter 2017, and Josselyn has confirmed the curried camel pies that have made it famous will be on the menu when doors open on April 1 (in fact, the recipe was included in the sale).



The new owners also plan open the bakery's licensed Hard Road Café in the evenings for camp oven and bistro-style dinners, with long-time friend, French-born chef Sebastian Badey at the helm.

According to The Courier, the sale represents the biggest investment in tourism in the area in a decade.



Hattah - Victoria

Hattah General Store sits on the Calder Highway about halfway between Mildura and Ouyen. It was bought to Hattah 60 years ago by the Lampard family, and it celebrated its 60th anniversary last year. It was originally an old farm house 17km south at Trinita

Owners Alex and Judy Dowsley ran the business for 17 years before retiring last year.

An offer to purchase was made by the Hattah Roadhouse. With youth and imagination on their side, the new owners turned a well-made tin shed about 20 metres from the original shop into a roadhouse with refrigeration, lined walls, the full outfit.

The original shop, with house at the back, will close.



Hattah Roadhouse with original store to left

Hattah has a grand population of 18 and is located close to the western entrance of the Hattah/Kulkyne National Park. When the shop first came here, there were more people and more shops.

It's not uncommon for 6000 trucks to come through here in a three-month period - semis and B-doubles going between Mildura and Melbourne.

MERRANG HOMESTEAD - 1830 Woolsthorpe-Hexham



The Woolsthorpe Road from Hexham Victoria, takes you past the heritage listed Merrang Homestead, built in the architectural style of the Victorian Period (1851-1901) Italianate, with impressive Ionic entrance portico.

The iron verandah, gatekeeper's lodge and station outbuildings were all erected in 1875 to a design by Warrnambool architect Andrew Kerr. A fire in 1917 reduced the large bluestone stables to a fraction of their former size.

Merrang was famous as a Lincoln sheep stud in the 1870s and renowned for its Polwarth stud which was started from the Merrang Lincolns in 1924.

The homestead, picturesque gatekeeper's lodge and outbuildings are notable elements of this early Western Victoria district Property. It is surrounded by about a hectare of park-like gardens and an elm grove, bordered by stone fences.

Owners David and Joy Hood put the property on the market last month after 156 years and four generations of family ownership because none of their four children were keen to continue the enterprise.

The property together with 550 hectares of land was sold in 2012 to co-owners of the nearby Te Mania beef operation, with the remaining 210 hectares sold to an undisclosed buyer from a nearby property.

David Hood and his wife retired to the Bellarine Peninsula.



The Gatekeeper's Lodge at the Woolsthorpe Road entrance

Cooper Creek Homestay

Well done Chris and Ali at Cooper Creek Homestay! They have been very busy lately landscaping the front of the home with flower beds and even LAWN!!!



(No more jokes about Geoff having to mow the lawn ☺).



And YES!!..the Fire-pit is still there!!

We look forward to visiting on our Birdsville/Innaminka and Coongie Lakes trips!

From the Copley Pub.....



Coober Pedy News



In a town where homes, businesses, and all other structures are dug right out of the ground it takes a site as insane as Crocodile Harry's Underground Nest & Dugout to stand out with its collection of bones, primitive art, and messages from visitors.

As at 14 March 2017, the Chair of the South Australian Heritage Council formed the opinion that the property, being one of two nominated for the South Australian Heritage Register may meet one or more of the criteria for heritage significance' under the Heritage Places Act that the place should be protected while an assessment of its heritage significance is carried out.

Accordingly, it has been provisionally entered as a State Heritage Place in the Register.



Coober Pedy's \$37m Wind Solar energy project is just one of more than 20 major renewable energy projects that are already under construction or will start this year.

The new hybrid plant will supply roughly 70 percent of isolated town's energy from solar and wind.

The District Council of Coober Pedy has signed a 20-year power purchase agreement to develop the hybrid plant, with support from the South Australian government. It commence commercial operation in the first half of 2018.

Woomera News

Woomera is gearing up to celebrate the 70th anniversary of its iconic rocket range this Easter long weekend.



The town will celebrate 70 years since the Woomera Rocket Range was officially established on 1 April, 1947

The Eldo Hotel will have a special reunion menu for the evening and the RSL club will be open and host some events.

The Woomera Observatory will also be open throughout the weekend and a screening of the motion picture "The Infinite Man", which was filmed in Woomera, will also be held.

From our facebook pages...



Fun on the Perry Sandhills !!—Wentworth NSW

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2017 Itineraries



The Back O'Bourke
(9 days)
\$3850pp

Wednesday 3rd May

Broken Hill, Mutawintji NP, White Cliffs, Wilcannia, Tilpa, Louth, Bourke(accommodation Bourke Riverside Motel), Lightning Ridge, Gilgandra, Cobar, Balranald, Murrayville, Pinnaroo.



Coongie Lakes
(7 days)
\$2995pp

Friday 2nd June

Old Strzelecki Track, Innamincka, Coongie Lakes, Camp LXV, Cameron Corner, Sturt NP, Tibooburra, Broken Hill, Loch Lilly and Quandong Stations, Burra.



Kangaroo Island
(4 days)
\$2200pp

(Includes Sealink ferry!)

Saturday 4th November

Penneshaw, Antechamber Bay, Cape Willoughby, American River, Kingscote, Flinders Chase National Park, Cape Borda, Admirals Arch, Cape De Coudic, Seal Bay, Emu Bay, Stokes Bay, Snelling Beach, Western River Cove.



The Painted Desert
(9 days)
\$3850pp

Friday 19th May

Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, William Creek, Coober Pedy, The Breakaways, Painted Desert, Woomera, Roxby Downs, Andamooka, Port Augusta, Arid Lands Botanical Gardens, Horrocks's Pass to the Flinders Ranges, Orroroo and Burra.

2017 Itineraries



Legendary Longreach & Winton
(12 days)
\$4595pp

Saturday 8th July

Strzelecki Track, Innamincka, Windorah, Lark Quarry Dinosaur Trackway, Winton, Waltzing Matilda Centre, Longreach. Visit The Stockman's Hall of Fame, Qantas Founders Museum, Sunset Cruise on the Thomson River.

Barcaldine, The Tree Of Knowledge, Blackall Wool scour, Tambo, Charleville. Cunnamulla, Currawinya National Park, Hungerford, The Darling Track to Yantabulla, Fords Bridge and Bourke.

A day exploring Bourke visiting Mt Oxley and local attractions and a cruise aboard the Jandra paddle-steamer on the Darling River.

Wilcannia via The Darling River Run through Louth, Tilpa and on to Broken Hill. Old Pastoral route to Burra, Adelaide



Birdsville & Innamincka
(9 days)
\$3850 pp

Friday 16th June

Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, Mungerannie, Birdsville, Innamincka, Camp LXV (the Dig Tree), Cameron Corner, Sturt National Park, Tibooburra, Broken Hill, Old Pastoral Route via Loch Lilly Station to Burra, Adelaide



Birdsville & Windorah
(9 days)
\$3850 pp

Saturday 8th July

Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, Mungerannie, Birdsville, Betootea, Windorah, Quilpie, Toompine, Thargomindah, Cunnamulla, Bourke, The Darling River Run, Louth, Tilpa, Wilcannia, Broken Hill. Old Pastoral Route via Loch Lilly Station to Burra, Adelaide.

2017 Itineraries



Head of Bight & The Eyre Peninsula
(9 days)
\$3700pp

Wednesday 16th August

Cowell, Tumb Bay, Pt Lincoln, and Whalers Way. Coffin Bay, Talia and Woolshed Caves, Streaky Bay, Murphy's Haystacks. Ceduna, Yalata, Head Of Bight (whale watching) and Bunda Cliffs. Return via Minnipa, Gawler Ranges, Kimba, Pt Augusta and Flinders Ranges to Adelaide.



Flinders Ranges & Skytrek
(4 days)
\$1800 pp

Friday 1st September

Rawnsley Park, Wilpena Pound, Willow Springs Station, "Skytrek", Bunyeroo Valley, Brachina Gorge, Blinman, Parachilna Gorge, Moralana Scenic Drive, Melrose, The Bridle Track, Port Germein, Laura, Orroroo, Burra, Eudunda and Kapunda.



Flinders Ranges & Arkaroola
(5 days)
\$2375 pp

Saturday 9th September

Rawnsley Park, Wilpena Pound, Bunyeroo Valley, Brachina Gorge, Blinman, **Arkaroola, Ridgetop Tour**, Bolla Bollana, Arkaroola Waterhole, Gammon Ranges, Moralana Scenic Drive.



The Gawler Ranges
(5 days)
\$1995 pp

Saturday 23rd September

Port Wakefield, Port Germein, Port Augusta, Iron Knob, Corunna, Siam, Nonning, Mt Ive, Lake Gairdner, Yardea, Hiltaba, Paney Station, The Organ Pipes, Pildappa Rock, Tcharkuldu Hill, Minnipa, Wudinna, Kimba, Wilmington, Melrose, Gladstone, The Clare Valley.

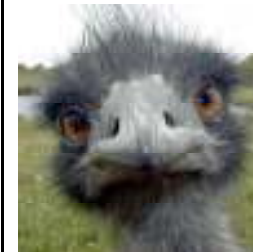
2017 Itineraries



Tumby Bay & Eyre Peninsula
(5 days)
\$1800 pp

Saturday 21st October

Port Germein, Arno Bay, Port Neill, Trinity Haven Scenic Drive, Poonindie, Port Lincoln, Sleaford Bay, Tod Reservoir, Cummins, Mt Hope, Point Drummond, Greenly Beach, Dutton Bay, Coffin Bay National Park to Golden Island and Price Island. Explore Whalers Way and visit the Koppio Museum. Return is via Kimba, Iron Knob, Port Augusta and Horrocks Pass to the Flinders Ranges, Orroroo and Burra.



Dares Hill Circuit
(2 days)
\$700 pp

Departure by demand

Gilbert Valley, Terowie, Peterborough (overnight and we visit **Steamtown's Laser Light Show**), Franklyn, Ketchowla, Dares Hill, Mt Bryan.



Lake Eyre
(3 days)
\$1625 pp
Includes Plane flight

Departure by demand

Clare Valley, Leigh Creek, Marree, One and a half hour plane flight over Lake Eyre, Farina Ruins, Ochre Cliffs, Hawker, Orroroo, Terowie, Bun, Clare Valley.



Flinders Ranges & Outback
(8 days)
\$3995pp

Departure by demand

Rawnsley Park, Wilpena Pound, Bunyeroo Valley, Brachina Gorge, Blinman, Arkaroola, Ridgetop Tour, Arkaroola Waterhole, Gammon Ranges, Moralana Scenic Drive. Marree, The Oodnadatta Track, William Creek, Coober Pedy, The Painted Desert, Woomera, Roxby Downs