

ADELAIDE BUSH WALKERS

Tandanya



www.adelaidebushwalkers.org

Volume 45 Number 3 Spring 2015



ABW Club information

The club meets at the North Adelaide Community Centre, 176 Tynite Street, North Adelaide on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm (February to November)

Annual subscription fees

Category	Normal	Student
Prospective Membership	\$60	\$30
Full Membership	\$60	\$30
Associate Membership	\$10	\$10

Family membership is no longer available for new members

Contact details

Email: info@adelaidebushwalkers.org

Web: www.adelaidebushwalkers.org

Post PO Box 434, North Adelaide, SA, 5006

Banking Details

Bank: Bank SA

BSB: 105900

Account: 950 866 540

Account name: Adelaide Bushwalkers Inc.

Membership queries

Contact the Membership Secretary Kate on 0410 660 562 or via email through info@adelaidebushwalkers.org

For privacy reasons, the names and contact details of other office bearers are no longer published in the magazine. Please use the contact details above

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“Lead, follow or get out of the way” – Duncan Chessell

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Logbooks on Peaks in the Flinders Ranges and Beyond

June 2015 Update

by John Bartlett

My previous article on this subject appeared in the Spring 2014 edition of *Tandanya*.

For the general benefit of members and those members who may be visiting any of the peaks listed below, I have recorded the current knowledge on logbooks on peaks in the Flinders Ranges and in areas north of there.

If you can contribute new information or correct information set out below please contact John Bartlett.

Table 1 - Logbooks held in the ABW Library and archived

The below logbooks have been scanned and published online as a way of archiving them and making them accessible. View these scanned logbooks at www.adelaidebushwalkers.org/logbooks

Pompey Pillar	8/6/86 - 15/9/01
Patawarta Hill	18/5/87 - 29/7/97
Patawarta Hill	14/6/99 - 15/7/09
Mt Brown	21/10/89 - 9/3/01
Mt Falkland	19/5/84 - 2/6/08
Mt Aleck	7/6/86 - 19/8/
Cleft Peak	July 1990 - 14/6/15

The Cleft Peak logbook was originally placed by the Adelaide University Mountain Club (AUMC) in 1980. It was removed in September 1989 by the Scientific Expedition Group (Jennifer Beer), pages copied, photocopied and inserted into a new book. We will make contact with them to see if they would like to keep the logbook.



Example of ABW logbook (Mt Hack)



7 Logbooks now held in the ABW library



Cleft Peak log book

Flinders Ranges Peaks Current Information.

Table 2 - Lower Flinders Ranges

Devils Peak	No logbook - too many visitors
Mt Brown	No known logbook there now - too many visitors.
	Old logbook archived - see above. However, there is a plaque that was placed there in 1986 by ABW as a SA 150 th Jubilee event to commemorate the first ascent of Mt Brown by botanist Robert Brown and a party from Matthew Flinders' <i>HMS Investigator</i> in 1802. 1986 was also ABW's 40th anniversary.
Mt Remarkable	No logbook - too many visitors

Table 3 - Aroona Valley & Parachilna Gorge area

Mt Barloo	No information
Mt Barbara	No information
Iralbo Peak	No information
Kankana Peak	ABW container placed 1987. Status of logbook unknown.
Mt Falkland	Old logbook archived - see above. Verified as present June 2015, by Trevor May.
Mt Elkington	No information
Mt Hayward	Helen Davies thinks Ian Seymour (deceased) placed a logbook there a long time ago (1980s?). She thinks Ian was the instigator of logbooks on peaks.

Table 4 - Wilpena Area

St Marys Peak	No logbook - too many visitors
Point Bonney	ABW metal container there - verified by Jeremy Carter 5/9/12
Mt Sawtooth (unofficial name)	No information
Mt Karrawarra	No logbook - verified by Jeremy Carter 14/9/12
Mt Abrupt	John Callinan walk 2013 found container with logbook (not full). Verified by Michael Dzintarnieks
Pompey Pillar	ABW metal container confirmed by Simon Cameron 27/7/13. Logbook verified by Mark Proctor's party 30/09/06. Previous logbook archived - see above
Mt Aleck	Logbook removed by Arkaba Station, and now archived.

The Manager of Arkaba Station stated that the Mt Aleck logbook had been removed "for safety reasons as we are conducting on-going feral animal culling and we can't have bushwalkers being at risk on the property". Logbook and container placed 7/6/86 by a party including John Bartlett. The logbook was returned to us

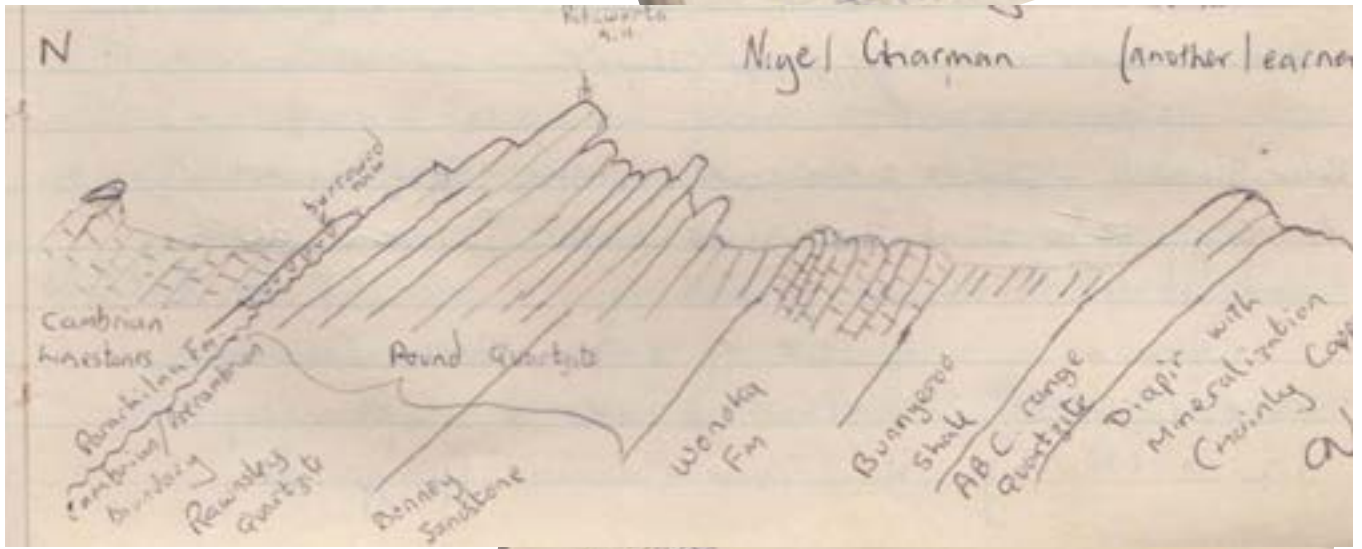
in May this year, but the whereabouts of the container is unknown

6/9/83
 ADELAIDE BUSHWALKING CLUB
 On 7 day walk walked up from Hellos Gap up Wilflaw and on middle and camp at Row. Peaks of Wilflaw of Gallo. Day walk up Brown, four weeks till a down street Ganga, plenty of work. Summer weather. Off to Ben Brown & Peter Hunt today. Tomorrow morning off on Mt Brown & Peter Hunt today. Wayne Potocky, Alan Peden, E. Shepherd (Sue) No. 211

Noonan family, first time snow, Mt Brown Logbook

1994 The NOONAN clan was here 22.7.94
 John Susan & Sarah Jane (for the 2nd time)
 30/6/94 snow on snow - To South in East approx 1km. First time seen in 11th hour!
 This is excellent snow! Snow! First time seen
 ←

ABW entry, Cleft Peak Logbook, September 1983



Geology diagram, Patawarta Logbook September 1991

10/00
 GLOSSOP HIGH SCHOOL "TREK 88"
 FROM GLOSSOP TO BRACHINA GORGE - STAGE 1
 Karen German
 Scarme Smith
 Brenton Hood
 Stefan Bert
 Hyndell Eckert
 Brenton Ferwick
 Andrew Whitton
 Adam Richter
 David O'Leary
 Sam Ingison
 Greg Knightley
 Mr Smith
 Mr Hillson

Trek 88, Glossop High School, Mount Falkland Logbook

Table 5 - Patawarta Hill - Mt Hack Area

Patawarta Hill	ABW container and logbook verified. Replaced on John Bartlett's trip June 1999 and now in the club Library. Current logbook verified by Bob Geary's party 20/5/14. Two old logbooks recovered and archived - see above.
Mt Hack	ABW container, logbook and small notebook placed by John Bartlett's party 17/5/87. Verified 21/8/14 by John Callinan's party.
Mt Tilley	Notebook started 3/9/84 in deteriorated lunchbox. Last visited 19/8/14 by John Callinan who put notebook in a plastic bag.

Table 6 - Northern Flinders and Beyond

McKinlay Bluff	ABW container placed in 1987. Not known if it has a logbook.
Mt McKinlay	No information
Cleft Peak	In June 2014, Cameron Roy (not an ABW member) advised ABW that the logbook is full and container is in good condition. During a visit in May 2015, Nino Fioretti's party confirmed the above. Logbook was replaced during John Bartlett's party visit in June 2015 and archived.
Freeling Heights	Visited by Jeremy Carter 17/4/12 - can't remember if there is a logbook or notes. Peter Woodlands believes a logbook intended for Freeling Heights was put on the wrong peak. This enigma may be linked with Edmunds Hill - see below.
Benbonyathe Hill	Verified by Jeremy Carter during visit 12/4/10 that there are canister and notes there.
The Armchair	Verified by Jeremy Carter during visit 7/4/11 that there are canister and notes there.
Mt Painter	Verified by Jeremy Carter during visit 8/4/11 that there is a book in a box there.
Gammon Hill	Visited by Jeremy Carter 14/4/10. He thinks there might be a metal canister there.
Edmunds Hill	Visited by Trevor May's party on a Mawson Plateau trip 9/7/14. Party found a logbook. It is believed that this logbook was destined for the east escarpment GR 5045 6665 but was erroneously placed here.
Mt Woodroffe (NW corner of SA)	Verified by Jeremy Carter during visit 18/5/13 that there is canister and 3 glass jars there.
Mt Hopeless (north of Flinders Ranges)	Visited by John Bartlett's party 1996. No knowledge of logbook. Others reported a logbook present at least since 2001. Visited by Jeremy Carter 2/4/11; cairn collapsed, logbook presumably buried.
Mt Babbage	Visited by John Bartlett party 1988. No knowledge of logbook. Visited by Jeremy Carter 3/4/11, cairn had collapsed.

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Cleft Peak - Recent Visits and New Logbook

by John Bartlett



As part of my on-going project of keeping track of logbooks which are on or were on peaks in the Flinders Ranges and beyond, I was advised that the logbook on Cleft Peak in the Gammon Ranges was full. So, I decided to organise a trip to put a new logbook and a replacement, ABW-designed metal container on Cleft Peak.

Prior to my trip on June 12 - 17, Nino Fioretti led a walk in the area which climbed Cleft Peak on 26 May. Nino duly reported to me some details of his trip, confirmed the state of the old logbook and sent me some photos.

My group of ten assembled at Balconoona shearers' quarters for the night of 12 June. The next day we drove 3km (past Grindell Hut), walked the next 3km and camped by Italowie Creek. To stretch our legs, that afternoon we climbed the nearby Red Hill.

The next day was Cleft Peak Day. This involved walking 5km up Italowie Creek and its south branch then a long steep climb up slopes and ridges to the summit. Of the ten in the party, five stayed at a point at 610m elevation while the other five completed the ascent, lodged the new logbook and container, and brought down the old one.

It being close to mid-winter and with sore knees and advancing years (mainly the former), five of us did not climb to the summit. As it was, we did not get back to camp until close to sunset on an afternoon of low cloud and light rain. However the mission was successful and that is what mattered.

Rain was coming so after a camp back at Italowie Creek, we spent the next night near Grindell Hut. On Tuesday 16 June we headed for Balcanoona in very heavy rain.

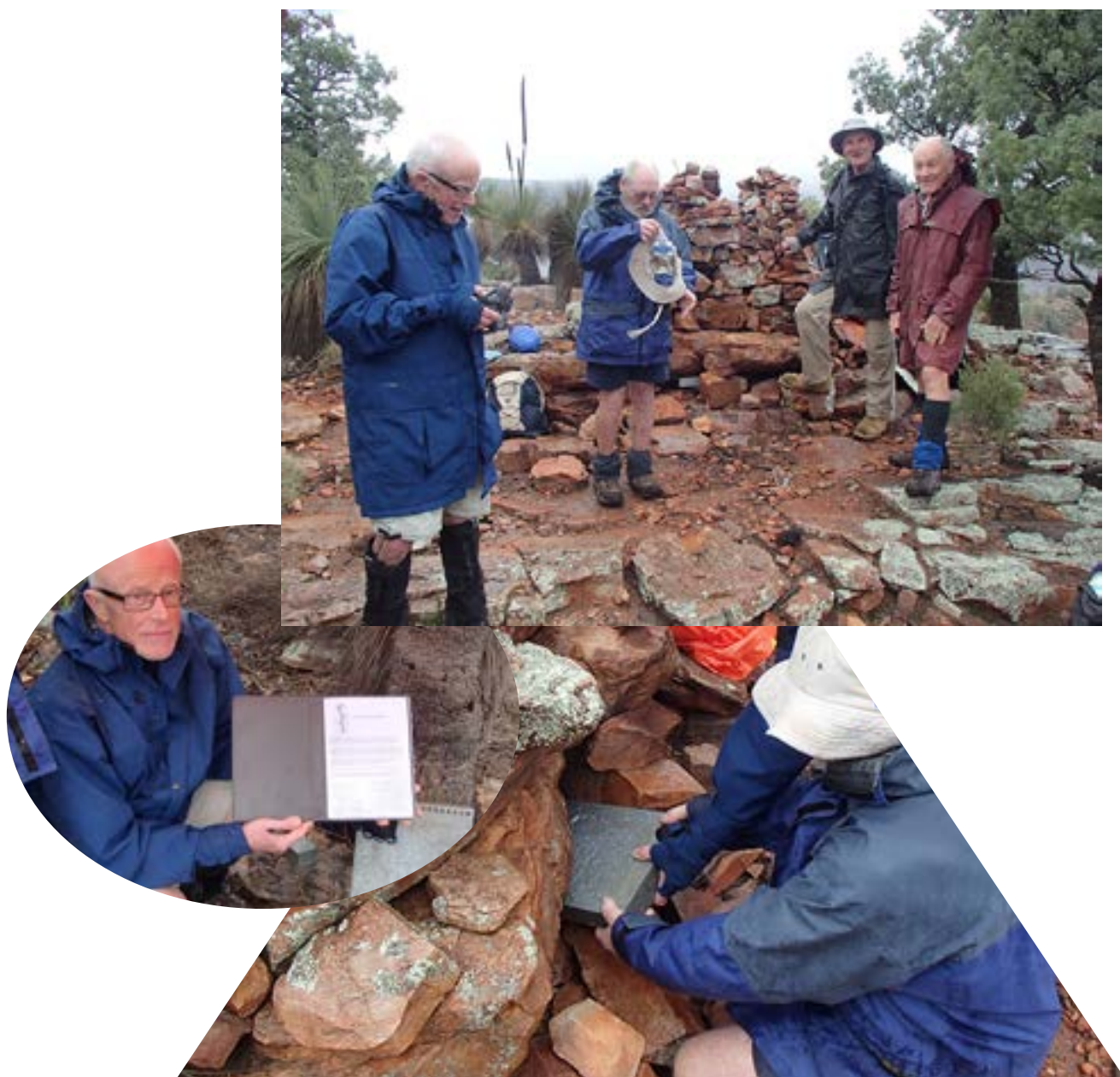
The trip plan was to visit Chambers Gorge, spend the night there and do some walking. However the road south of Balcanoona became impassable, so we went on to Hawker via Copley for a night in the caravan park, thus shortening the trip by a day. Wednesday 17 June was an uneventful drive home.

Between Copley and Hawker, two creeks were in flood across the road and we were delayed for a couple of hours until the creeks dropped to a level safe for our five 4WDs.

Those in the party were John Bartlett, Roger Kempson, Peter Woodlands, David Evans, Helen Davies, Ian and Sheila Dickinson, Mal Kirkham and Arthur and Ann Ward.

The original logbook on Cleft Peak was placed there in March 1990 by a member of the Scientific Expedition Group. It remains to be seen whether we will retain it in our library, but an archive copy is now available for anyone to view at www.adelaidebushwalkers.org/logbooks

I suggest that readers have a look at my main article on logbooks in this edition of *Tandanya* and as said in that article, let me have any further information.



Roger Kempson, Malcolm Kirkham, Peter Woodlands and Arthur Ward install a new logbook at Cleft Peak. Photo: Ian Dickinson

An Outback Odyssey by Bicycle

by Trevor May



Bunyeroo Valley

ABW has opened lots of doors for me since joining 16 years ago to get back into my long lost interest of bushwalking. As well as walking and kayaking, ABW also offered bike riding activities, especially in the warmer months. These range from social day rides to extended touring and camping rides in the Flinders Ranges and elsewhere. Like a few other members I now enjoy the full range of bike riding from mountain bike to road riding.

Most walkers know about the Heysen Trail and a few Club members have walked its full length. While walking the Heysen you will often see trail markers for the Mawson Trail, a cycling alternative, which shares the same route in quite a few places.

I'd become increasingly interested in the Mawson Trail which runs from Adelaide, Gorge Rd, to Blinman at the front bar of the pub. This year I was offered two opportunities to ride it, a private, self-supported, bike touring ride and a fully-supported, organised ride with 200 other enthusiasts.

As much as I enjoy travelling and camping in remote areas and being away from the 'mob' I have also developed a liking for extended, organised and supported bike rides such as

the Great Victorian Bike Ride which can have around 4000 people of all ages, shapes and sizes participating.

These rides can be a bit crowded sometimes, however everyone spreads out over time and distance wise, and these rides also have a lot to offer. Firstly, and possibly foremost, is the opportunity to ride and, for once, dominate some roads with likeminded people most of whom you get on with very well. Being supported and fully catered for makes life easy so you just have to ride and put up your tent. Having routes planned and signed and marshalled, where required, allow you to just ride and enjoy the countryside and the places you pass through. All very relaxing and enjoyable while getting some moderate exercise.

So I opted to do the 'Outback Odyssey', the fully supported ride along the Mawson Trail organised bi-annually by Bike SA. As it turned out it was a good decision. I very much enjoyed the camaraderie of the approximately 200 other participants and I particularly appreciated the organisation, support and catering without which I don't think I'd have managed the ride, especially not in 15 days.

The Outback Odyssey provides you with a full set of maps and additional signage where needed along the trail, three meals a day plus snacks at morning and afternoon rest breaks. Accommodation is in your own tent which, with your other gear, is transported in a truck between campsites. For an extra fee you can have a tent erected for you at each campsite. Catering is done in the towns along the route by the local communities in their local halls, clubrooms or in a large marquee that travels with the ride. Portable toilets and showers are available at each camp site. Volunteers man the rest stops and assist with the ride logistics and there is medical support, a mobile bike mechanic, marshals on bicycles to assist if required and a sag wagon if you or your bike can't finish a day's ride.

The catering was excellent, wholesome and plentiful country style food of a good standard washed down in the evenings with beer and local wines of your preference. After a long, hard, wet, cold and muddy day all was well again when you joined your new friends in a warm hall for a chat, a laugh and plenty of wine and food. We even had cooked breakfasts on four or five days. At the end of the ride there were buses to take people, gear and bikes back to Adelaide. There were options of doing just one or two sections of the ride, each approximately a third of the total distance. The cost of the full ride was around \$2100 plus any bike repairs and spares, coffee stops, beverages and incidentals.

Most days, if you made an early 7.30am start when the route opened, an average rider, barring incidents and not too many punctures or beer stops, could be in the next campsite by lunchtime or mid-afternoon, leaving plenty of time to make camp, have a shower, a coffee or a beer and a nanna nap or a walk around the town before dinner at 6pm.

The demographic on this last ride was a little surprising to me. Around 50% of riders were from interstate with a few from overseas as the Outback Odyssey develops a reputation amongst mountain bike enthusiasts. The average age of riders was 55 with around 15% being 70 or over. The level of fitness and skill

of some of the older men and ladies was quite remarkable given the rough and strenuous nature of mountain bike riding. They are a tough, capable bunch. I'd done some mountain bike touring and camping previously but was not quite ready for the rigours and challenges of this ride and had to work hard to get to the bar at the Blinman Pub!

The intention of the Mawson Trail is to provide an interesting, mostly off-bitumen ride for mountain bikes. Some of it, like the Heysen Trail, is a bit plain and through farm land on dirt roads. In quite a few places it is a more challenging 'single track', that is a rough, off road route for bikes or walkers only, through creeks, forest, scrub and quite rough country some of which, when wet, is unrideable and almost unwalkable. There are a lot of spectacular views and pleasant countryside to ride through but you have to keep your eyes on the track! A few sections of the single track were challenging for even the stronger and experienced riders and on many of those steeper, rougher sections I joined many others in walking our bikes up, down, through or around these obstacles.

There were a few sections where, in my opinion, the Mawson Trail goes too far out of the way onto tedious farm back roads for no reason other than to avoid a stretch of bitumen. A few slower riders did take bitumen short cuts but most stayed on the track.

I resorted to the bitumen once due to a mechanical failure when a broken cable left me with only three gears instead of 27 to limp to camp with and also when the organisers directed us away from some muddy sections a couple of times. The 'young guns' and some fit older riders rode those sections anyway and covered themselves in glory and lots of mud.

The ride started in Victoria Square at 9am on 9th May and we were escorted down King William St and across the Torrens to get onto the Linear Park bike track to ride to Gorge Rd. Then came the first sign of things to come - a very steep climb (walk) on a soggy track on our way towards that night's camp on the Lobethal oval. That night we were hit by the quite

severe storm which went through the State and brought with it rain and strong, cold wind which dogged us for the next three days. The wind was actually blowing me off the track in places.

After Lobethal the stops were at Tanunda, Riverton, Burra, Hallett, Spalding, Laura, Melrose, Quorn, Hawker, Rawnsley Park, Wilpena, Blinman (Alpana Station). There were much welcomed rest days at Burra and Melrose also used for washing, bike cleaning and repairs.

It was, for me, an interesting and challenging ride from which I learnt a lot about mountain bike riding. If I was going to do it again and get into this type of riding I'd be investing in a better, more capable bike although my old 'truck' got me through and didn't let me down except for the cable breakage under extreme conditions. I'd also get some lessons in dealing with the rough terrain. You will always get through, even by walking, but having the right bike and some skills and experience can make it much easier and more fun.

The best parts of the ride were the last two thirds and especially the final sector from Melrose and through the Flinders Ranges notwithstanding some quite exciting track sections and some really long, frustrating, corrugated dirt roads.

One feature that most people don't see is the large water channel network and the impressive viaduct, all now unused, near Spalding. It is an amazing piece of local engineering history and now part of the Heysen and Mawson Trails. Riding through the Wirrabara forests was fun and challenging and I also enjoyed seeing Herbert Wilkin's restored childhood home near Mt Bryan for the first time. Everyone should know about 'our' Herbert but many don't.

The rest day at Melrose was very enjoyable and provided time to take in the history of the town, the old jail and police station being a must-see. The locals catered very well for us and there is also a really great bike shop in Melrose that provides bikes and gear for the many mountain bike trails in the area. They do a great coffee as well and the shop is well worth a visit. A few hardy (silly) souls used their day off to explore



Morilana Drive looking up at Wilpena Pound

these local riding trails.

Riding through the Flinders was great but not always easy due to steep, sharp climbs in places and some rough sections. You've also got to keep your eyes on the road but there was a lot of 'ooing and aahing' coming from the interstate and overseas visitors enjoying the scenery for the first time.

The Mawson Trail is marked but some signs are easily missed. I went my own way a couple of times but only to a minor extent. You are occasionally riding alone so having the maps handy is essential.

In attempting to put into practice what I'd been told by the 'experts' about negotiating rough sections of track, ie 'just keep going and charge through it' I came off a few times, albeit and luckily, with only a bruised ego, so I tended to let discretion be the better part of valour and let my feet do the walking. Maybe with a better bike and more 'balls' and maybe 20 years ago I'd do better.

As far as I know there was only one significant accident/fall during the ride causing a broken collar bone. There was also a fractured wrist but that guy kept riding with his splint. There was some serious damage to bike gears, especially in the muddy sections so the mechanic was kept busy.

Our longest day was 112kms (Quorn to



The rolling hills of the mid north

Hawker) which was a very long day but through relatively easy and flat terrain and mostly on reasonable unsealed road. The average day was 70km however some of the harder days were shorter on tougher terrain and roads.

We had a short day from Rawnsley to Wilpena, virtually a rest day, but I'd picked up a head cold by then so didn't mind at all having a quiet afternoon at Wilpena while some interstate visitors climbed St Mary Peak.

The very last leg of the ride was 20km uphill on the bitumen to Blinman. I'd ridden that morning's picturesque, mostly off road section with tired legs and a runny nose hoping I could get to the bitumen and the last lunch stop without incident and I was extremely pleased when I did. Then after lunch, it was off on the gentle, but uphill, slog to the Blinman Pub. I was so very pleased to join the happy, noisy throng gathering and celebrating at the pub before the 5km ride back along the bitumen to Alpana for the night. I had a pic taken, went to the Pub bar, ordered a double whiskey on the rocks and a coffee and quietly and gratefully sat and enjoyed my achievement.

After erecting my tent at Alpana, having a shower, a Panadol and a nanna nap I was ready for an enjoyable evening of celebration in the dining marquee with fellow riders and that's what it turned out to be with music, end-of-ride presentations and banter. The bus left for Adelaide at 9am the next morning after a lovely cooked breakfast.

I can thoroughly recommend the Mawson Trail ride to any bushwalking bike riders who'd like a different challenge and to see the countryside from a different aspect. I can also recommend the 'Outback Odyssey' event as a great way to do it if that suits you.

I would definitely recommend having a good mountain bike, having some serious practice at mountain bike track riding and being bike fit. Having said that, you could still get a lot out of it by taking bitumen short cuts if, and where, required if that suited you - you would not be entirely alone.

Willis's Walkabouts

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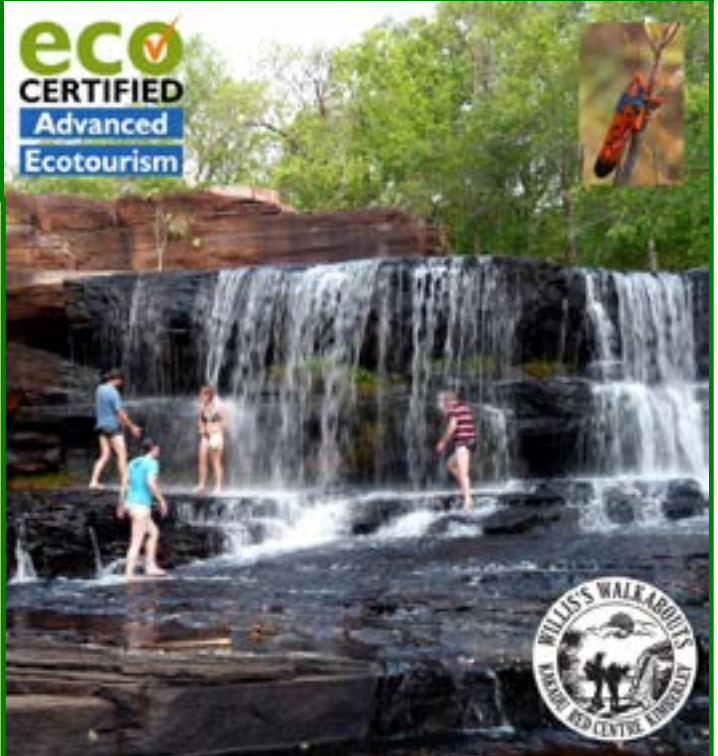
Our water is warm! Southern Australia has nothing like our tropical seasons. We can't do them justice here. **Check out** our Build Up and Wet season pages and see why.

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Willis's Walkabouts

Willis's Walkabouts Newsletter 80

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Newsletter

I put out a free email newsletter 6-8 times a year. The contents list of the latest one is at right. It's a mix of all sorts of things I find interesting. There is usually something of interest to bushwalkers, even those who may never do a walk in the areas where we operate.

Check it out on our website,

www.bushwalkingholidays.com.au/newsletter.shtml

You'll almost certainly find something that interests you. If you like what you see, ask to go onto our list.

After 30 years, major changes are coming to Willis's Walkabouts. The first item in the contents hints at what's to come. Click the link and see what's in store.

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Wendover Circular Walk

Chiltern Hills, Buckinghamshire, UK

by Lee Marling



Norman style church
in Chiltern village

I had the chance to go to London with the family for 10 days and I was determined to get a country walk or two in during this time. I began my internet research and quickly found the website of the Saturday Walkers Club. I highly recommend it if you find yourself looking for an easy way of getting out of London and enjoying a walk in the countryside. Their website, www.walkingclub.org.uk describes themselves:

The Saturday Walkers Club (SWC) is a London and South East England based walking and hiking club. The club:

- *Organises train friendly walks in Southeast England. The walks are free to join - new members welcome, especially visitors to London*
- *Publishes 300+ free-to-print-and-use walks, with OS maps and GPS data, mainly in the South-east, but a few in the Southwest, South Wales, East Anglia and France.*
- *Writes and maintains the two Time Out Books of Country Walks - besides photos, updates and feedback for the walks, there are many new options*

The walks:

- *are public transport friendly - they start and finish at train stations about an hour from London*

- *pass through glorious countryside, with historic sites and fine views.*
- *stop at country pubs for lunch and finish at places for tea or a drink afterwards.*

Most of the walks contain very detailed walking instructions (no OS Map required!). However, all the walks have OS Explorer (1:25,000) mapping which you can print for free, and many have GPS files for your smart-phone or sat-nav.

With around three hundred walks the main problem is choosing one. I arbitrarily chose the 'Wendover Circular via The Lee and Swan Bottom.' There were frequent trains along the line to Oxford, it was about 20km through woods, historic villages, farmland and I got to visit a place called The Lee. I downloaded the walk notes and bought the topo map online and was ready to go on arriving in London. I didn't go on one of their organized walks, I did this one by myself and found the trail well marked and easy to follow. I really didn't need to use my GPS at all.

The walk starts at Wendover Railway Station about an hour out of London. I did the walk in reverse to their notes so I could time lunch at the pub in The Lee. You quickly climb up to Coombe Hill, part of the Ridgeway where a Boer War monument overlooks the valley

with its farms and woods. You then follow the well-marked trail into the woods which were damp and green with many plants in flower. Being a weekday I saw very few other people. Coming out the woods I passed old farmhouses with fields of ripening corn and red poppies everywhere. This really was the nature of the whole walk, quite dense woods of birch or beech perhaps, lots of birds and flowers interspersed with farmland. There were occasional stone age/bronze age earthen work fortifications. There were great views as you topped the ridges of the Chiltern Hills.

I arrived at The Lee in time for lunch and this turned out to be an interesting old village built around an oval shaped green. It had many old homes and a very old church that was interesting to walk around. The pub had a great lunch and turned out to brew a few of its own ales. It had a great view overlooking the village green.

Up until then the weather had just been cloudy with occasional bursts of sunshine but it began

to drizzle steadily after lunch. Fortunately the remaining 9km passed by three village pubs and I was in no hurry to get back to the station as trains were frequent.

Overall it was a lovely walk despite the afternoon weather and easily achievable with the info supplied by the Saturday Walkers Club.

below: Woodland path in Chiltern hills



above: The Lee pub

below: Beautiful meadow in flower



The Mawson Trail – Bushwalking on Steroids

by Richard Bowey



Brian and Adam out of Kapunda

Armed with a borrowed mountain bike and trailer, I set off on May 1 to do the Mawson Trail. I had allowed 15 days. Two others were with me - Brian Slater, the only ABW member who joined this ride, and purely by chance Adam Taylor; a young man who was riding from Melbourne to Darwin via the Oodnadatta Track.

Prior to our departure, Brian and I had our bikes checked by my son Adam, himself a bike mechanic par excellence, who indicated some work Brian's bike needed and gave us a lesson in basic bike mechanics in case we got into trouble on the trail. We were unsupported except for a SPOT tracker device.

We knew bad weather was coming so we decided to leave a day earlier than planned. It was a fine day when we set off from the new footbridge next to the Festival Theatre in central Adelaide.

Adam Taylor had already ridden some 1500 kilometres with his panniers to get to Adelaide but for Brian and me, getting used to the weight

of panniers in his case and a single wheeled trailer in mine, took some time. When we reached the end of the Torrens Linear Park and the start of the Mawson Trail, we at least knew we could steer our bikes and remain upright!

After a couple of kilometres up Gorge Road we turned right onto a dirt track which marked the beginning of the mischief. So steep and rough was this road that our back tyres spun on the dirt requiring us to dismount and push the bikes most of the way up the slopes. But at least it was dry and the sun was shining.

I was half way to Lobethal in the middle of an impenetrable forest when a vertical axle broke on my trailer. Was this the end of my ride? Out of nowhere a forest ranger appeared and offered to take my trailer into Lobethal where I managed to fix it that afternoon. Was it my lucky or unlucky day? That night we camped outside the Lobethal Horse Riding Clubrooms and scored a good meal at the sports ground

where the manager offered us free hot showers the next morning.

Next day we were off in near perfect conditions; destination Tanunda. The ride, predominantly on unsealed roads and vehicular tracks, took us through some beautiful country although we lost the official Mawson Trail a few times due to poor signage / inattention. Weighed down with our stuff, about 35 kg each with water, camping kit, clothes and food, it was harder going than we thought, and we had to call it a day at Rowland Flat where we camped in less than ideal conditions on a council reserve.

Next morning we were off again at 8 am heading for Riverton. An hour in Tanunda where we bought supplies from the local IGA and had breakfast at the local bakery meant that we did not reach Riverton but we found a great camp, courtesy of a kind farmer who directed us to his own private bush camping spot. We were weary but happy. The day's ride had been excellent despite a strong warm northerly head wind.

We knew rain was expected later the next day so we set out early with the wind in our faces. While I was pleased it was not raining, I was not sure which was worse - rain or a headwind. Our heavy rigs were difficult enough to pedal anyway without a very strong wind in our faces. We reached Riverton at about 10 am and headed on towards Clare via the Riesling Trail where we wanted to spend the evening safe from the elements on my property at Maggies Farm. It was tough going, especially the Riverton to Auburn section which was not on the relatively easy Rattler Trail but rough unsealed roads and tracks. We were starting to get the idea that the Mawson Trail had been designed by some mountain bike deviant who would happily send riders way out of the way just to find a hill or a rough track. No wonder it was 890 kms when the bitumen road from Adelaide to Blinman (the end point) was only 511 kms!

After a tough day, we bought some real food in Clare and headed for Maggies Farm where we enjoyed a hot shower, a great meal and real beds. It rained and blew something ferocious

that night but we didn't care in the least.

We set off about 8:30 the next morning and had almost gotten to Clare township when the skies began to open again. We headed for the local library where we spent an hour or so waiting for the rain to abate. Once it did, we headed off for Burra. Earlier on in our ride we had seen the red earth tracks so much feared by riders of the Mawson Trail which turn into virtually impassable mud when wet so rather than chance it we stayed on the bitumen.

The wind was still blowing a gale but this time it was at our backs. At one point on our dash for Burra and going downhill, Brian clocked our speed at 64 km/h! And it was here I came close to finishing my ride. My trailer, which had no brakes, starting to move from side to side causing the bike itself to snake back and forth at a frantic pace. As I wrestled with the steering at close to 60 km/h, I was sure the bike was going to spear into the road and throw me over the handlebars. Someone was looking after me, however, and I managed to save myself and my rig. It was a lesson learnt though. Trailers can be dangerous things!

We reached Burra, had a shower and a meal at the local pub. It was here than Brian left us.

Next day Adam and I bid Brian goodbye and headed to Hallett on what was going to be a long day. It was cold and a strong westerly was blowing. Some way into this ride, along the usual unsealed roads, Adam told me he was spent and needed a day off. He had been riding for almost two weeks with hardly a break so we abandoned the rest of the day's ride and headed for the Heysen Trail's Railway Station Hut in Hallett.

Next day, I set off alone agreeing to meet Adam at Laura two days later. I followed the trail encountering my first red mud. Not good. Like glue it stuck to the tyres and was soon all over the frame of the bike and my trailer. Fortunately, I was out of it before it could do much damage but I vowed to avoid it at any cost. The ride to Spalding, through the Bundaleer Forest and on to Laura, was interesting but not spectacular.



Call that a road

I met up with Adam as planned and the following day we set off for Melrose via the Mawson. Again it was cold and, as had been the case for the last four or so days, an increasingly strong head wind was blowing. At one point the freewheel on the back wheel seized but we were able to fix it. We enjoyed the Wirrabara Forest and our approach into beautiful Melrose standing in the shadow of Mt Remarkable. We were now out of the North Mount Lofty Ranges and into the Southern Flinders Ranges.

It was at Melrose that Adam decided not to continue on the Mawson but to stick to the bitumen – he did not want to risk damage to his bike which might jeopardise his ride to Darwin. As had been the case for the last two days, I would take the Mawson and he the bitumen and we would meet up in the towns. It rained that night and I delayed my departure until the gentle rain stopped the next morning. Because of the rains and the prospect of wet red earth, I decided to take the rail trail to Wilmington in lieu of the Mawson but it was in such bad condition I left the trail and jumped on the bitumen half way there. Again at Wilmington and with a side wind, cold conditions and the adjoining hills bathed in mist, I rode the

bitumen all the way to Quorn.

Although I was tired at the end of each day's riding, I still felt I had something left in my legs, but by the time I reached Quorn I could feel the effects of accumulated fatigue. I needed a rest. Adam and I both decided to have a day off in picturesque Quorn.

Two days later I headed off again on the Mawson and found myself on a pretty good road in the very beautiful valley behind the Ragless Range. The scenery was stunning, the weather fair and the wind mild. This was one of the most beautiful sections of the ride. Given the time I had been riding, the distance I had travelled and the scenery I had enjoyed, I felt as if riding was like bushwalking on steroids. I was covering so much distance and seeing so much country it would have taken weeks to do the same distance on foot. I was starting to actually enjoy it. I had long given up measuring the kilometres (as road riders do) and instead counted the hours in the saddle!

The next day I left Hawker and set out for Rawnsley Park just outside Wilpena Pound. It was cool and a south easterly wind was blowing. But the tracks were awful, barely

Up - near the end. Hard work with a trailer



Willochra Creek.

passable, and I had to do a lot of pushing as I headed north emerging on the bitumen road to Parachilna. After a spin along the bitumen, I turned east to ride through the Moralana Gorge. The same strong wind which had pushed me along the bitumen was now in my face. Despite the rest day, my legs were very tired. It was now a mind game. Part of me was hoping I would have a serious mechanical breakdown so I could go home but my pride still intact, while the other was willing me forward. Pushing through the 28 kilometres of the Gorge were the hardest of the whole trip.

It is hard to describe the elation a rider feels when re-joining the bitumen after a tough ride

on dirt. It arises out of sheer relief. So it was for me. Although I was knackered, the hard part was now under my belt and my evening camp lay only 20 km away. I pedalled, one kilometre at a time, eventually reaching a surprisingly picturesque caravan park in Rawnsley Station overlooking Rawnsley Bluff on Wilpena Pound. And they had a well-stocked shop. As I had done everywhere else, I raided the store in search of carbohydrates and sugar. I simply could not get enough to eat.

The next day I set off for Wilpena Pound, just 25 km away. The track out of Rawnsley was tough, especially with my trailer, and I had to push my rig through most of the eroded but fortunately



Me and my rig - only one is upright at this stage

dry creek crossings. I was fading fast. I met my mate, Adam, in Wilpena and rested for the rest of the day.

The last day sapped me of any remaining strength. It was not a particularly hard day although there were certainly some challenging sections. The daunting hills and savage inclines of the Bunyeroo Circuit were a particular heart breaker and I had to push my rig up those slopes from the Bunyeroo Gorge. Other sections of fine shale made my trailer feel like an anchor. I chose to walk over some of these tracks trying to save my legs for the afternoon finish. Onwards now on the last leg, a very pretty section with a surprising variety of topography and vegetation, before exiting onto the bitumen 20 km out of Blinman. It was nearly over.

I threw down a couple of Mars bars as I fought the gusting and sometime headwind and the climb to Blinman. On the last hill of the bitumen I had to dismount and push the bike up the slope. I had nothing left in my legs at all. At 3pm I arrived at the Blinman pub. I had finished - and was finished.

I swore at Blinman that I would never attempt the Mawson Trail again but now, some weeks

later, I reckon I could do it again - sometime in the future. But I would allow at least three and possibly four weeks, I would ride shorter daily distances, have more days off and spend more time exploring the attractions along the way. And I would not ride in bad weather. I would leave the completion date flexible so I could enjoy it and not feel as if I was always racing against the clock.

Is the Mawson Trail hard? Yes. Do you need to be bike fit? Certainly. Is it worth doing? Yes. Will I do it again? Hum. Maybe - but not for a while!

Gear Tips



Saving Weight and Bulk

by Tim Krieger, Scout Outdoor Centre

We all know that person - the one whose pack seems to be a lot lighter than everyone else's. And they don't seem to be wet, cold or uncomfortable. How is it that they're carrying all the same essentials with a lot less weight and bulk? Well we might have had a hand in that! So here are a few new ideas from the Scout Outdoor Centre to help you reduce your load. A good spot to start with weight saving is the bulky essential items. Sleeping bag, bed roll, shelter and cooking gear. Get the weight of these down and you're off to a good start.

Sleeping bags have come a long way in the last few years. The development of lighter fabrics and better quality down fill has helped shed grams without sacrificing warmth. If your priority is reducing weight and bulk look at the Sea to Summit Spark series bags. I've been using a Spark 2, rated down to 2°C and it only weighs 474 grams. Teamed up with a liner and some thermals it's gotten me through winter nicely. A super popular summer option has been the Sea to Summit Traveller. At only 10°C rating it's definitely for warmer conditions but at only 389 grams it is miniature. It also has the ability to open up fully to be used as a down blanket. Or if you're looking for something a bit warmer with a bit more flexibility take a look at One Planet's Cocoon series bags. A -2°C rated Cocoon weighs as little as 680 grams and still has a full length zipper for ventilation in warmer climates. We're starting to make that old 1kg bag sound a little heavy hey?

If you're still using a self-inflating mat chances

SeaToSummit *Comfort Light*
sleeping mat

are you're carrying more mat than you need to. The last few years have seen a resurgence of the old air bed. Throw in some neat technology to stop the cold seeping through and you have something like a Thermarest Neo Air. As light as 350 grams with more than enough insulation for general conditions they're a winner in all respects. You'll need to hide the credit card statement from your other half though. If you're looking to get as much bang for your buck as you can, we'd recommend the new Sea to Summit mats. Loads of options from the insanely small to the luxuriously warm there's something in their range to suit everyone's needs and budgets. Their focus was on finding a compromise between comfort, weight and price and we think they've done that nicely.

Shelter is another area you can shed some serious weight. 2.5 kgs for a tent is so 1999! Once again there are some options for those that want to count every gram but still want a shelter with some living space. Our new favourite would have to be the Sierra Designs Lightning 2 FL. With a minimum weight of 1.28kgs and more than enough room for 2 people this thing is a seriously well thought out piece of kit. If all you want is something to keep you dry at night consider an ultralight shelter or bivvy bag. Once again Sierra Designs have won us over with their Backcountry Bivvy. Only 368 grams for a well thought out bivvy with an entrance that's nice and easy to get in and out of. Or suss out the Sea to Summit range of Specialist tents and Escapist Tarps. Using their new lightweight 15D fabrics, at 350 grams for a 3mx3m tarp, these are

the tarps you carry when you don't really want to carry a tarp!

Finally there is cooking gear. The ultralight purist will leave all of this behind and eat dry food. But then.....what about coffee? What about dinner? I for one can't leave the stove at home. To help with this we've sourced a great value brand of titanium cookware from the US called Vargo. Why titanium? It's light, strong, easy to clean and non-reactive meaning no metallic taste. These guys have some clever designs like the 1L Bot, a half pot but with a screw on lid so it can be used as a water bottle during the day. Or what about doing away with fuel instead? Have a look at our Silverfire biofuel stove. No more kerosene or gas canisters in your pack. Just pick up some twigs when you get to camp and you're ready to cook. Obviously there's going to be issues with this in fire ban season but most trails are closed then anyway.



Sierra Designs *Lightning 2* tent

So there are a few ideas to get you thinking about how to save weight. One trick I have used is to actually weigh all my gear and record it on a spreadsheet. Sounds pedantic, but it's a great way to visualise where the weight is and where you could shed some. Come in and see us sometime. We love the gear we sell, we love you guys because you're a very active club and we love helping you achieve your goals in the outdoors!



One Planet *Cocoon* -2° sleeping bag



Vargo *Tilite* 0.9 liter pot



Vargo *Triad* stove

Images supplied by the relevant product manufacturers

Night Skies for bushwalkers this spring

by Dr. Ian Musgrave



Spring nights are getting shorter and warmer, so you are less likely to get hypothermia when viewing our splendid spring stars. You will still need to rug up when you walk away from the campfire to catch our spring gems. This spring, most of the bright planet action is in the morning skies, so you have to be prepared to get up early.

The nights of the spring Full Moons are Monday September 28, Tuesday October 27 and Thursday November 26. Nights on and around the full Moon make moving around camp easy, but the bright Moon washes out the glorious stars.

Of the three bright planets that graced the winter skies, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn, Venus and Jupiter are visible now in the morning sky in early spring, joined by Mars. Mars and Jupiter come very close together in mid October. Bright Venus is easily recognisable as the brightest object in the eastern morning during twilight in early September. Venus then climbs into darker skies in the early morning. On September 11 the crescent Moon is between Venus and Mars. Venus is reasonably high in the sky from mid

October to November. In October and November Venus, Mars and Jupiter form a line in the morning skies

On Friday October 9 the crescent Moon is close to Venus and the pair forms a line with Jupiter and Mars. In fact the Moon covers (occults) Venus at this time. Venus goes behind the bright crescent at 4:55 am ACDST, although the pair will be close to the horizon and hard to see, then reappears from behind the dark side of the Moon at 6:08 ACDST. While Venus exits the Moon in twilight, it will be easily seen,

On October 10, the Crescent Moon, Mars and Jupiter form a triangle in the early morning sky with Venus above them. On the 18th Jupiter and Mars are at their closest. After this Jupiter approaches Venus, and the two are closest on the 26th. Venus then approaches Mars, and the two are closest on November 3. There after the three draw out into a line which is visited by the crescent moon on November 7 (close to Jupiter) and November 8 (close to Venus).

Jupiter is lost in the twilight until late September, then it is visible in the morning above the

north-eastern horizon not far from Venus for the rest of spring. Jupiter is easily recognisable by its brightness and its warm yellow colour. This contrasts with the dazzling white of Venus. During October the pair come closer, and are closest on October 26. If you have binoculars with you, Jupiter's Moons are easily seen in even small binoculars.

Although Mars has entered the morning sky before spring, it is quite low in the twilight and quite dim. It will be late September when it will be high enough and out of the late twilight to be easily visible. For most of spring its distinctive red colour (more orangey really) and proximity to Jupiter and Venus.

Swift Mercury is at its best in September, it is easily visible in the late twilight to early evening as the brightest object above the western horizon, below the bright white star Spica. On September 15 the thin crescent Moon is to the right of Mercury, and on the 16th it is to the right of Spica. By the end of September Mercury is lost to sight, and will be too close to either the Sun or the horizon to see for the rest of Spring.

At the start of spring, the distinctive curled question mark of Scorpius the scorpion is high in the western sky, but it gets progressively gets lower, disappearing at the end of November. Facing west, the head of Scorpius is defined by three bright stars a bright red star in the body of the question mark (Antares). Underneath and slightly to the right of the head is a brightish "star". This is the planet Saturn. During spring Saturn moves towards the head of the scorpion, and finally enters the head in late October. The Moon is close to Saturn on September 19, October 16 and November 13. The latter event is close to the horizon in the twilight.

Another obvious constellation is Sagittarius, the archer. Or rather, for Australians it is the distinctive grouping of stars below the curl of Scorpio's tail we call the "teapot". The teapot is upside down, with the lid facing the horizon, and the spout pointing towards the tail of the Scorpion. The centre of our Galaxy is here, between the spout and the Scorpions tail. At the start of spring, the Milky Way arches across the sky, however as the months go on it lowers

towards the western horizon, and is lost to view in late November. The Milky Ways glowing star-clouds and dark dusty lanes are still excellent for most of Spring though.. If you have a pair of binoculars on you, hunting around the tail of the Scorpion will show a wealth of open clusters and nebula.

The eastern horizon, in contrast, is devoid of bright and interesting constellations for most of spring. By the end of November, Taurus, Orion and the bright star Sirius can be seen gracing the eastern horizon around 10pm. In the north, the only readily distinguishable star is bright white Altair. Flanked by two dimmer stars, this is the heart of the constellation of Aquila, the eagle.

Looking south, at the beginning of Spring the Southern Cross and the two pointers are obvious, with the axis of the cross almost parallel to the horizon at around 10 pm. As spring wears on, the Southern Cross rotates towards the Southern horizon. By mid spring the cross will be upside down, grazing the Southern horizon, and difficult to see without a clear level horizon.

Happy night sky watching.

