

ADELAIDE BUSH WALKERS

Tandanya



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“Creativity is contagious, pass it on” – Albert Einstein

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Lunch overlooking Aosta valley

Walking the Via Francigena in Switzerland and Italy

by Nino Fioretta

Over six weeks, from late September to early November 2016, my wife Phillipa, and I, walked a large chunk of the ancient pilgrim trail, the Via Francigena. The original route, from Canterbury to Rome, was walked by Sigeric the Serious, ordained Archbishop of Canterbury in 990 CE. He kept travel diaries and these are considered the most authoritative source for the direction of the route. The trail starts at the Canterbury Cathedral, runs through Northern France, Switzerland, down Italy and onto Rome. In the 12th century this pilgrim route was as popular as the Camino Santiago de Compostela in Spain is now. I've heard that more than 5000 people a day start the Spanish Camino these days, so the Via Francigena (20 people a day) would have been a very well trodden route in

the past. In subsequent centuries making a pilgrimage fell from fashion and the routes and paths of the Via Francigena became overgrown and only used by local traffic.

In 2006, while on a visit to Italy, we heard that an ancient pilgrim route running the length of Italy to Rome was being revitalised due to the popularity of the Spanish Camino. Turns out this was the VF. The Vatican urged church congregations along the old route to help rebuild the paths and set up pilgrimage hostels along the way, and the Pope declared 2015 the Year of the Pilgrim, which just happened to coincide with our plans.

We walked the Via Francigena for adventure, not for religious reasons, although

we followed the pilgrim protocols and enjoyed the hospitality and kindness of ordinary parishioners, lay workers, nuns and monks along the way. Long distance walking is not hiking. And it's not adventure travel in the sense of delivering big adrenalin thrills. It's a slow travel pastime, one which allows the walker a close up experience of the land and culture they are walking through. Which suited us perfectly.

At times it was hard physically and emotionally, and at times it was boring, fascinating, frustrating, humorous, spiritual and exhausting. By the end we felt we had travelled through time as well as space, traversing a land that had been occupied, invaded, occupied, and fought over dozens of times since humans came to Europe just after the Ice Age. Like reading a book from a previous century, it was hard at first, challenging in its pace, but ultimately a unique experience, one where the simple day after day walking routine eventually added up to a profound whole.

A trip like this, as with most walks, requires preparation. It is an easier prospect for Europeans who might walk the whole route over a number of years in their summer holidays, but for Australians, we have to factor in a long haul, expensive flight and a language barrier which can be quite pronounced in the rural and regional areas. Our experience of the Via Francigena was definitely made easier because I speak Italian, however many, many people walk the Via Francigena without it and manage really well. But whatever your language skills it pays to be prepared.

We read some of the guides, of which there are several, followed the blogs of those who have walked and were blogging while they walked, and used the Facebook public group Via Francigena. Armed with an overview we



Ancient Roman road



Early morning typical view

studied the route and decided which parts we wanted to cover in the time we had available. The VF is not as popular as the Spanish Camino, that may change, however the route is not full of cheap hostels like the Spanish Camino and just turning up somewhere and hoping for the best can prove unpredictable.

Starting at Canterbury Cathedral in England, walking across France and then crossing the Swiss Alps and walking down through Italy is a route of approximately 2000 kms. We had five weeks. Naturally we disagreed about where to start and where to finish, but after a conversation over many

weeks involving flat refusals, shrewd bargaining and shameless bribery we ultimately brokered a deal we could both accept.

The walk through the Swiss Alps provides some of the most scenic parts of the whole Via Francigena, so the plan was to start the walk in Lausanne, a medium sized Swiss city on the shores of Lake Geneva. We flew Qatar Airways from Sydney to Doha and from Doha to Rome. We should have flown in to Geneva but bought early bird fares before fine tuning our route. This gave us the opportunity however to sample the delights of the cut price Spanish airline, Vueling, from Rome to Geneva.



From Geneva we caught a train to Lausanne and there we rested for a day before setting out.

We carried everything we needed in two small packs, lightweight travel clothes, wet weather gear, toiletries, Kindle, phones and chargers, a jet boil burner for making cups of tea - Phillipa declared she could not cross the Swiss Alps without a cup of tea, and Italians don't do tea very well - plastic mugs and powdered milk. We bought a knife and purchased bread, cold meats, cheese fruits, pasty and so on, to make our own lunches. Each pack weighed between six and seven kilos. Plus we each carried walking poles and

water bottles.

Although we were not strictly pilgrims in a religious sense we did get our pilgrim credential which was required for some of the accommodation. We had it stamped in all the accredited pilgrim accommodation and if we had continued onto Rome this credential would have certified our pilgrim status and allowed us to receive the Pilgrim Testimonium and a private audience with the Pope, along with five hundred others.

We had booked our accommodation for the first week in advance and then thereafter it was left to me to ring and book our next night's accommodation each evening. I had lists of possible hostels and hotels for each town we were scheduled to overnight in. I calculated the day's walking distances factoring in rest days and attractions we wanted to see along the way.

From Lausanne we walked alongside Lake Geneva, through French speaking Switzerland, sampling their outstanding bread, pastries and chocolates, enjoying the views of the lake, the vineyards and the Swiss people. The aim of the first week was to make it to Saint Bernards Pass, the Alps crossing point into Italy used by Napoleon, Hannibal and thousands before them, before the snows came and the pass closed. So in the first week we had no rest days, a few tears and the looming Alps always above us. But we did take an afternoon out to visit a famous castle on the shore of the Lake Geneva, Chateau de Chillon, a fascinating medieval castle, home to the Savoyes who ruled the Lake Geneva territory and controlled access to the pass.

The routes and towns we stayed in were Lausanne, Vevey, Aigle, Martigny, St Maurice, Orsieres, Bourg St Pierre. The early autumnal



Room with a view

Alps were beautiful, full of fat cows arrayed in noisy cowbells and crystalline water and air. The final assault on the Swiss side of the Alps ended with a hot chocolate, apple flan and exhaustion at the cafe attached to the thousand year old Hospice du Grand Saint Bernard, a very grand pilgrim hostel run by an Augustinian monastic order. We stayed overnight and ate in the communal dining room and met other travellers.

The next day we crossed the border into Italy and made it to Etrouble. We walked through endless medieval stone villages, vineyards, chestnut forests and ruined forts. Then we proceeded to Aosta for our first rest day. If we hadn't been trying to outrun the bad weather a rest day long before this would have been in order. We took an AirBnB flat in the lovely ancient Roman garrison town of Aosta, caught up on washing and lying horizontal and pottered around the town eating gelato and people watching.

The Via Francigena path is well signposted in Italy as the Italians have taken to supporting the pilgrim route more than the Swiss. There is signage in Switzerland but it is definitely not as clear or well placed as in Italy. Navigation however was straight forward having prepared my Android OruxMaps app with an offline OSM map covering the entire path as well as preloaded gpx routes of which I had several alternative versions. Our navigation was sorted and I could finally put my language skills to use.

Italy is Italy and they have their own way of doing things, some charming, others infuriating. As a traveller in a foreign country it can often take time to get used to the local rhythms and customs and by the time you've sorted it out you have to leave. The beauty of

slow travel and distance walking is you can adapt the day to suit the local customs. Italians are not big on breakfast. The day starts with coffee and a croissant or other sweet pastries or biscuits. Not a good foundation for a day's walking . If you book a room or hostel and breakfast is included it really isn't much of a deal, as the best coffee and freshest pastries are served in the bars.

What they miss in breakfast they make up for in lunch, which is taken very seriously everywhere. It is the main meal of the day and in the rural areas everyone closes for lunch and the *riposo*, a post meal nap. This could last anywhere from five hours in the south of Italy, to one hour in the cities but mostly 2-3 hours in the mid to northern regions. If you have walked all morning on your *macchiato* and *cornetto semplice* and want a sustaining lunch, and you are in rural Italy you need to have done your preparation and bought bread and fillings beforehand, as most towns are like ghost towns during the *riposo*.

Having had a big lunch the average Italian isn't keen to eat again until eight or so. The *aperitivo* hour, drinks and bar nibbles, starts around six or seven and then restaurants open at 7.30. If you have walked twenty five kms and want to be face down on your bed by 7.30, then fill up on the bar nibbles which are often delicious.

We pressed on from Aosta down through the Aosta Valley, and stopped at Fort Bard, a mountain fort built by the Savoy, burned down by Napoleon, rebuilt and now housing the Museum of the Alps, and having just traversed the Alps we enjoyed poking around the museum.

From Aosta we walked to Nus, St



The trail through old mountain village

Vincent, Issogne, Pont St Martin, where we had a rest day, then onto Ivrea, Viverone, Santhia through semi rural areas and forests, and onto Vercelli where we stopped in an AirBnB flat for two nights. By now we had left the Aosta region and had crossed into Piedmont, home of the slow food movement and one of the wealthier regions of Italy. Our evening meals were a mix of sublime - the chestnut tortellini with walnut sauce - or tourist slop, a plate of oily pasta with something uncertain dabbed on top.

Any establishment that offers pilgrim specials should be avoided, as the food is by no means special, nor is it cheaper. Osteria are a better bet, as they will have a small menu of local specialties where you usually have two choices. Trattoria, restaurants and pizzerias are usually good, it's often about luck and knowing what to order. Pizza in Italy is different to our more American style pizza and to our way of thinking simpler and more delicious therefore we ate a lot of pizza.

Vercelli was a lovely town to spend a day in and we took our time, wandering around and testing the local gelato, museums and

atmosphere. Vercelli is set on the River Po flood plain between Turin and Milan and is the rice bowl of Italy. If you like risotto, then this is the region for you.

From Vercelli we continued on into Lombardia, the most populous and richest province of Italy, and the towns of Robbio, Mortara, Garlasco and then Pavia. The Via Francigena wends its way through the rice fields of Piedmont and Lombardia, following levees, and at first the rice fields were interesting, one could imagine the 1949 movie *Bitter Rice* with the sultry Silvana Magnano, marvel at the ancient bridges and levees, the *nebbia*, a floating mist which lies over this part of Italy giving it a foggy, dreamy feel. But after three or four more days of rice fields the imagination begins to fail and they become "not more bloody rice fields".

Most people, Europeans and Americans, walk the Francigena in the summer. There are endless accounts by said Americans on social media of the huge frogs and huge mosquitoes who frequent these fields in summer, of the heat, humidity and general unpleasant walking



VF trail marker



Medieval hill top village - Terenzo in the Province of Parma

conditions encountered.

We chose the tail end of the European walking season, October, because the temps are mid teens and there are no mozzies. August is the month Europe takes a holiday and as such many attractions are closed and the beaches and lakes crowded. Things ease off in September when the schools and universities go back, and by November the rain and cold weather makes walking unpleasant. Autumn in Europe is a particular favourite of mine as the colours of the forests are magnificent.

We left the rice fields and found ourselves in Pavia, only about an hour from Milan by train, on the Ticino river, a beautiful jewel of a medieval town with several universities, museums, palaces, restaurants and shops. We stayed two nights here. It was small enough to be atmospheric and wealthy enough to have plenty of choices and we speculated about living there for several months as it was such a delight. We stayed in a pilgrim hostel run by Sri Lankan nuns, kind and generous women. Unfortunately there was talk that the hostel was going to stop offering accommodation to pilgrims, no reason given.

From Pavia we took the train to Milan and stayed in the canal district in an AirBnB flat. We took in the sights, shopped, ate, mooched about, marvelled at the Duomo, the Galleria, the fabulous central railway terminal. People say Milan is just another big city, and yes, it doesn't have the ancient grandeur of Rome or the pagan pulse of Naples, but it has so many other attractions, including the La Scala Opera House where we did a fascinating tour of their workshops, the student and design canal district, and all the palaces of the Dukes of Lombardy, art galleries, street life and more. From Milan, Phillipa retired with honours having completed 400 kilometres and flew home with Emirates, via Dubai, and I pressed on with the idea of walking all the way to Rome.

Walking on my own was a different experience. I could set my own pace, faster, and on this more popular section of the Via Francigena, I met and walked with other pilgrims. We cooked in the hostels together and shared food and tips. I walked on through many renaissance and medieval towns, sometimes not sure what century I was walking in - Piacenza, Fiorenzuola d'Arda, Fidenza, Medesano, Fornovo di Taro, Cassio, Berceto, Montelungo, Pontremoli, Aulla, Sarzana, Marina di Massa, Camaiore, Lucca, Altopascio, San Miniato, Gambassi Terme, San Gimignano, Colle di Val d'Elsa, Monteriggioni, Sienna.

By the time I arrived in Sienna, 300 kms and two weeks later, I'd had enough. It had rained for a couple of days, I'd had equipment failure with my rain gear and boots, and a tooth filling had fallen out giving me grief. We had decided that if I was to tire of the walk we would return in 2017 to finish it, and so we will pick up the walk at Pontremoli in Tuscany in October this year and together we will make it to Rome.







Conspicuous Cliff, Bilbullam Track, WA, photo Lee Marling

ABW Club information

The club meets at the North Adelaide Community Centre, 176 Tynte 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

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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.

Up By Kosciuszko's Side

by John Bartlett



On top of Mt. Kosciuszko, it was still, and there was only thin, high cloud in the sky, and for all six in my group, this day was an experience never to be forgotten. I was on the summit of our highest mountain in August 1987 with my companions from Adelaide Bushwalkers. We hadn't walked up, but ascended on our cross-country skis as part of an eight-day ski touring trip from Kiandra, 70km to the North, and the day on Mt. Kosciuszko was the culmination of the whole journey.

Looking around me that day, the white slopes and peaks seemed to stretch away forever, and way in the distance to the North, to the West and to the South other peaks could be seen, making the whole panorama seem like a kind of fairyland. "Look," said Charlie, pointing to the North, "there's Mt Jagungal, where we were a few days ago". My comment to the others was "What a pity we couldn't get to the summit because of low cloud that day".

There is a photograph of David, Charlie and me on the summit. Before we left camp that day, Charlie had said "Those with ABW T-shirts with them, wear them. They should look good in a photo".

All members of my party were experienced bushwalkers and we had all had some experience in ski-touring, meaning pack – carrying on skis. At the time of this trip, I was the least experienced, having been introduced to ski touring only three years previously. David and Charlie had been cross country skiing for some years, and had developed turning skills which I had yet to master; hence I had a few tumbles.

Two others in the group, Peter and Joe, had been on quite a few trips whilst Eva was Swiss and been skiing since she was a child. For the rest of us, the Australian ski fields are more than 1,000km from Adelaide, and the season is short by world standards. Hence, getting to and from our snow fields is a big trip in itself.

For five of the seven nights of the trip, we camped in the snow, and I shared my tent with Peter, with the other four in the touring party in two other tents. When the group decided it was time to camp for the night, Peter and I would find a flat, sheltered area, dump our packs on the snow and set about erecting the tent.

The first thing to do was to pack the snow down by methodically fully tramping an area of about four metres square. "I'll level the snow off while you unpack the tent" I would have said to Peter. Cross country skis are quite long and are ideal to use as a "straightedge" as used in landscaping and building, so with care and patience, a good, flat compacted area for sleeping on had been formed. Usually, while I was doing this, Peter would stick the other skis and poles upright in the snow, and go to a nearby small creek, mostly covered by snow and collect some water in wine skins, thus avoiding having to melt some snow.

A ski-touring trip and a bushwalking trip are essentially the same, with the exception that some special gear needs to be taken on a ski trip. In my case, I took half of another insulating waterproof sleeping mat to go under the upper body, and some extra layers of clothing. The body works hard cross-country skiing, so several layers of warm clothing rather than thick padded jackets are preferred.

Gloves, waterproof mitts, insulated camp shoes, a beanie, a minus 10 degree-rated sleeping bag, raincoat with hood, water proof overpants, sunglasses and one light aluminium snow shovel per tent are all necessities for anyone venturing on a ski-touring trip.

Peter and I would erect the dome-shaped two-man tent using special wide pegs to grip in the snow. My tent has two entries, each with a vestibule, making living conditions much easier. We would then quickly set up our beds for the night, for being winter, darkness would descend on us early. In any case, because of the cold, we would be in our sleeping bags early.

A precaution that any bushwalker or ski-tourer takes is never use a stove in a small tent because of fire risks. So that a stove does not gradually sink into the snow as it does your cooking, a small piece of thin plywood is carried to support the stove on the snow.

Another precaution to take when snow-camping

is to put one's ski boots in a plastic bag, and then inside the sleeping bag so they won't freeze overnight.

As my tent has the two vestibules, and to add a small amount of ease and comfort while sitting around eating, chatting and so on before going to bed, Peter and I would dig small pits to drop our legs in.

On this particular trip, Peter and I decided to share the evening meal – alright in principle, but Peter is small and eats a lot less than I do. After a couple of nights when Peter prepared dinner, I had no alternative but to say to him "Peter, I think you are trying to starve me." This was resolved by making small adjustments to our menu for the rest of the trip.

In the Australian High Country, ski tourers often camp near snow gums, suggesting having a camp fire. However, on an earlier trip, a fire was lit on the snow, first laying the biggest logs as a platform on which to build the fire. On that occasion, the obvious happened – the fire gradually sank as the snow under it melted, so we never tried that again.

On a trip of this kind, everyone usually sleeps well at night, as ski-touring with a heavy pack on the back is tiring and demanding on the body.

Near sunset on one of the days of tenting in the snow, and on a clear, alpine day, we stood and gazed at the beautiful light shining on the snowgums still laden with snow due to the lack of wind this day.

For the last two nights of the trip, it was our intention to camp in a snow cave, and on the day between those nights, climb Mt.Kosciuszco. David, our leader on this trip had been to this area before and was familiar with it.

"Let's head for Blue Lake as there is a steep, high bank at the West end of the lake where deep snow drifts form, making it an ideal place for digging caves to camp in" he told us. On reaching the lake



Mount Kosciuszko, photo John Bartlett



which was frozen over, caution prevailed and we skied around the edge of the lake on firm snow.

A previous party had dug a small cave, so with the aid of our snow shovels, the cave was enlarged to accommodate five in the party, David had chosen to sleep in his tent, rather than in the cave. It was fun creating this cave, quite safe because of the dense mass of snow around us, and with a rounded ceiling to prevent water dripping down on us, as well as leaving two ventilation shafts, it was a good, safe and novel place to camp.

The silence in the cave was eerie and it was some comfort to know that during the two nights we spent in the cave, it was warmer in the cave at about zero degrees than outside at about minus 5 degrees.

On the first night, David recited Banjo Patterson's *The Man from Snowy River*. Coming to the fifth verse, I heard the words "up by Kosciusco's side. "Ah" I thought to myself, "Those words will become the name of this trip".

I had heard this iconic Australian poem recited several times, but in the almost magical surroundings of the snow cave, and being in the Australian High Country, it was an unforgettable experience.

We went on to reach the summit on the day between the two nights in the snow cave. It was a hard slog going up, but there was the great jubilation in skiing back to the cave. I had a couple of tumbles going down, but no harm was done on the soft snow and we were above the tree line, so no risk of crashing into trees.

Those long runs down through the snow, the swish of the skis, the cold air on my face and the superb scenery were highly exhilarating.

Trips like this one are memorable for me, and looking back on them, I think to myself "how adventurous those ski-touring trips were".



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Lower Glenelg River Bus Trip

BOOK NOW for the popular October Long Weekend Bus Trip. This is the last collective walk for the year. The base for this year's trip will be the Lower Glenelg River National Park in Victoria.

A 25-seater bus has been booked for the trip which will depart from Adelaide at 4 pm on Friday 29 September and return at 7 pm on Monday 2 October. This is great opportunity for new members to complete a qualifying walk before the walking season tapers off for the year. Three walks and a base camp are planned. Each of them crossing varied terrain including beach, forest, and riverside terrain. The going will be mostly flat so the walks will be a little longer per day than usual. It also allows you to bring along some wine and nibbles for evening camps.

To book for the trip, go online and firstly book the walk listed as Lower Glenelg NP: Oct Long Weekend Bus Trip and then select one of the planned walks:

1. Lower Glenelg, Victoria (Bus Trip 1 of 3) - mostly forest
2. A beach and 3 capes walk (Bus Trip 2 of 3) - mostly sea scapes
3. Lake Mombeong & Glenelg River (Bus Trip 3 of 3) - mostly beach and riverside
4. A base camp walk is not yet listed but will be if there is sufficient interest.

This trip enables you to relax in the extra room of a bus and to talk with many other bus trippers during the journey.



Remote First Aid Course

by Pam and David Duffield

"Remote " for remote first aid purposes is defined as anything more than an hour from para medic attendance-and Adelaide Bushwalkers are often in this situation even on walks not far from Adelaide



We attended the "Remote First Aid" Course that was held at Morialta Conservation Park on the 17th 18th and 19th July 2017.

It was run by Survive First Aid which is a highly regarded provider of First Aid Education based in Victoria. We wondered if the time would drag but the answer is a resounding "No".

The course was a great balance of theory and practical scenarios which kept things interesting and moving, and these were interspersed with fascinating videos of heroic rescues and spectacular first aid treatments and interesting resources such as defibrillator carrying drones

The trainer was knowledgeable, friendly, and approachable and no one attending the course should have felt self conscious. He helped everyone in a supportive and friendly way without singling anyone out or showing up their skills.

The practical sessions were great! They were held outside in the lower area of the park adding to the realism of the scenarios. They involved realistic fake blood, compound fractures, and make up that looked frighteningly real. The situations were posed with various combinations of first aiders and victims made up of class members and involved varying types and severities of illnesses and injuries.

They involved diagnosis, prioritization and



treatment in very realistic situations-so realistic were the scenarios that passersby stopped, appalled, and made comments like "that looks bad" and "do you need help?"

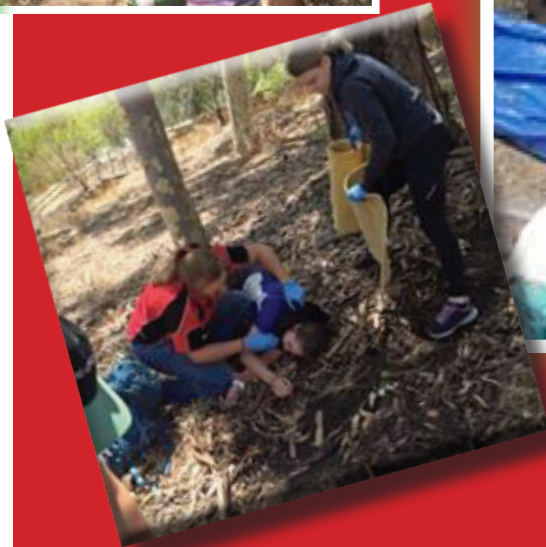
The realism was increased by the fact that the weather was cold and rainy heightening the sense of urgency. Plus the fact that we are all aware that if something were to go wrong it always seems to happen in the worst weather conditions!

The emphasis of the course was doing what you can with what is available which is such a sensible and realistic aim that one can't help but agree!—using what you have in your pack or your first aid kit or lying around –not about doing a perfect job with good resources in ideal conditions but adapting what you've got as best you can in the bush.

We highly recommend this course and think that anyone in the club would find it interesting and useful and educational and that it increases knowledge and confidence. After all, while we all hope that nothing will go wrong we want to be able to provide assistance to the best of our ability if something does.

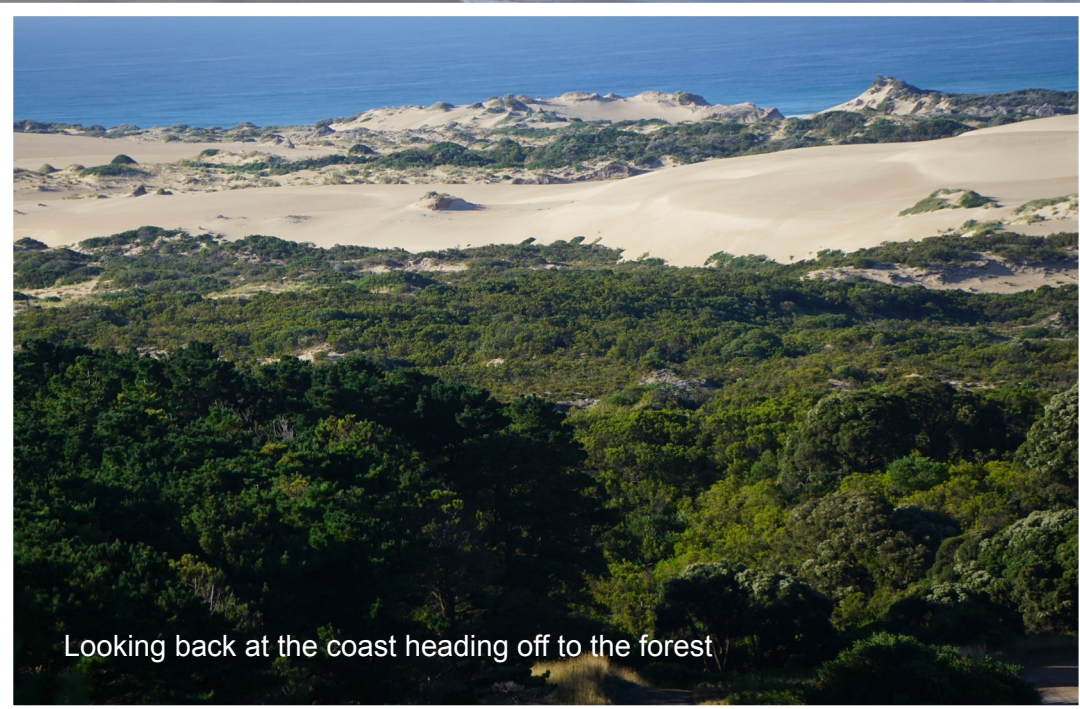
We are grateful to the club for subsidizing this course and would recommend members of the club avail themselves of this wonderful opportunity—Get involved! It may save your life or that of someone else one day.

REMOTE FIRST AID



Discovery Bay





Looking back at the coast heading off to the forest

Water Sources for Bushwalking in the Northern Flinders Ranges

By Mike Round

The semi-permanent and unmapped Gammon's rock-hole below Benbonyathe Hill (GR 235355).

ABW is currently in the process of surveying the water resources of potential interest to bushwalkers in the northern Flinders Ranges (north of Parachilna-Blinman-Wirrealpa) with the hope that it will make it easier to plan multi-day walks in the region especially in years of average rainfall or lower. The area of interest is covered on all or part of twelve 1:50,000 topographic series maps. In addition to the areas very popular with bushwalkers, the survey also covers adjacent less popular areas of lower elevation but which in fact, offer interesting walking. Because of its wide scope, over 250 potential sources of water are

included in the survey and it is planned that the information will be tabled and placed on the ABW website later next year. It is also hoped that the site will continue to be updated as new information becomes available.

This article is a follow-up to an earlier one that set out the background and aims of the project (*Tandanya* Vol. 44.1, Autumn 2014) Information for the survey has been gained by on-site visits during bushwalks (and this is particularly useful for getting information about the more remote sites) and also from talking to the land owners. Progress made to date includes:



Yellow Well (disused) on Warraweena.



Water scooped from a wheel track south of Lake Torrens and for emergency use but thankfully not needed.



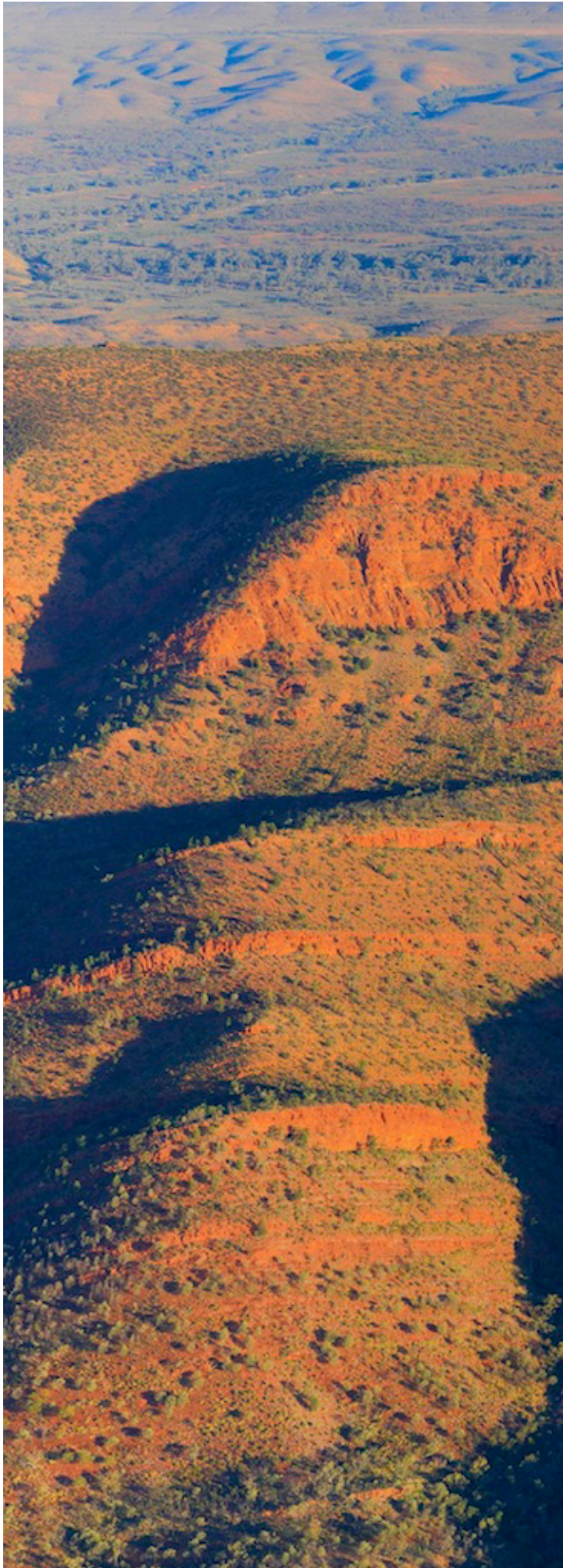
Gear dumped in Italowie Gorge to assist faster exit to safety by a thirsty solo bushwalker during the drought year of 1967. Photo taken August 1968.

1. field notes on many springs and other water resources over much of the region,
2. correct grid references of a number of sites shown incorrectly on the map,
3. lists of the springs and waterholes found to be dry at the time of visit and of derelict or non-functioning bores and wells where no water is available,
4. a list of potential sites that could not be located despite searching, and finally
5. data on water quality and salinity at many sites

Maps can contain mistakes and we have been able to correct several errors pertaining to water sources except in cases where we could not find what we were looking for (e.g. Alierona Spring on Pinda Springs). The most recent example of this is an unnamed well (GR 391611) on the headwaters of Yudnamutana Creek and that, according to the map, lies 350 m west of Wheal Frost Mine on Arkaroola. Despite a lengthy search by three of us, no well was found within 0.5 km of the map location.

Whether or not waterholes and springs contain water during the time of a planned visit is probably the prime interest of bushwalkers going to walk anywhere in this region and the likelihood of any particular site having water can often be difficult to know in advance. The Gammons are unique for being the only area that has a stated likelihood of each of its waterholes containing water. This is thanks to the extensive walking in the area and research over many years by Ray Sinclair-Wood of Quorn and his estimates are given in Adrian Heard's long out of date (1990) '*A Walking Guide to the Northern Flinders Ranges*'. The ideal would be to establish correlations between the water status of any named waterhole and rainfall over the months preceding the walk (summer and onwards). That may be possible with the existing data for the Gammon and this may it is worth following up.

Making broad statements about the reliability of waterholes from what presents at a single visit can be difficult depending on the circumstances. Visits in wet years for example will tell you nothing about the likelihood of



water at the same site in drier years. In this respect, it was fortuitous that rain, but not too much of it, fell over much of the region 4-6 weeks prior to our two later trips of this year as this resulted in many of the water courses having transient pools. This meant that, where named springs and waterholes were found to be dry, then it seems reasonable to conclude that they no longer flow or exist. Springs and waterholes falling into this category include Amberrona Spring and Warrancurrayana Water on Umberatana Station and Gordon Springs on Arkaroola. The spring at Hanigans Gap (Moolooloo) was found to be dry in three different and recent rainfall years and this provides good evidence that this spring also no longer functions.

After coming across a couple of dry springs in the Umberatana hills, it was a big surprise to find that Weedna Spring, sited at the head of a minor creek that flows north from the dry Weedna Plains, produced a 400 m long stream that was running in places. The presence of fully submerged water plants in deeper pools suggests that the spring flows permanently.

A further aspect of water resources but one not so often encountered, is salty water. Reg Sprigg recorded the salt content of some of Arkaroola's water-holes over many years and found for example that Bolla Bollana Spring's salinity varied greatly according to rainfall. During our visit there this year, Rob Jung found that it contained 4300 mg/L salts which exceeds the human tolerance limit (3000 mg/L). This is near Sprigg's highest value for that spring (4400 mg/L) although he found much higher concentrations in some nearby springs during drought.

The project has turned up some surprising results and perhaps none more-so than for Mocatoona Spring on Angepena Station. This permanent spring is marked on the map (GR 849030) as being located at the junction of two water courses and while this once was the case, it no longer is. The original spring was

used by a miner who lived on site and worked a mine during the cooler months of each year but he returned one autumn to find the spring had gone dry. He searched about and eventually found water flowing from the base of a large gum tree 400 m away (GR 851 027) and where it previously hadn't. It can now be seen in the new location flowing by pipe to an old stone tank. This is a case of the map being not so much wrong, but out of date.

Named waterholes play an essential part of bushwalking trips in the northern Flinders and, just to add what I think is an interesting aside, an interstate companion once commented that it was the first time he had ever walked in a place where waterholes had names. That was three years ago in the Gammons and he expressed surprise and a certain amount of pleasure when he said this and it did impress on me another way in which the Flinders are special.

Water is essential heavy stuff and carrying significantly more than you generally end up needing is not only wearying but is also poor practice if, by better trusting your informed judgement, much of it could have been avoided. It is hoped that the data base, once it comes online, will go at least some way to help resolve this issue and make it easier to plan walks in the region.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of two people who have made a tremendous contribution to this project and these are Rob Jung of Sydney-based Coast and Mountain Bushwalkers and Jim Happ of Maroondah Bushwalking Club, Victoria and formerly of Port Pirie. I have had the pleasure of walking with Rob in the Flinders but unfortunately, Jim has now finished with extended walks and carrying big loads. Thanks also to John Callinan and Bob Geary of ABW who contributed data on Warraweena and Mt Hack. I would also like to thank the land owners and managers who have all shown interest and been welcoming. They have provided much useful information for the project.



Nooldoonooldoona waterhole Arkaroola



Flinders Spectacular



by Paul Falkenberg

Mambray Creek campground

For the ABW beholder, splendour might well hide in a sunset or beam from a face, be held in hand or stir in a heart, be borne by the light of a campfire or be seen on the hues of a vast mountain vista. Whatever one's persuasion might be, I suspect that splendour is a state best shared. And perhaps July's 2017 'Flinders Spectacular' event would be the event to find this out?!

On the Thursday night, sixteen keen ABW trekkers led by Sammi Lanyon rendezvoused at Mambray Creek's gum studded campground, coming together around the light of a campfire. The fire was stoked into being by David's early arrival, and his 'let there be more light' sunset mantra.

Pam set the chef's bar high by roasting a whole chicken & veggies to perfection in the fire's coals; a dish not even eclipsed by Quorn's Local Hotel on the forthcoming Saturday night. I should know I think, cos I tried the chicken dishes at both outlets.

As chairs encircled and conversations spilled, splendour took the form of ABW faces flickering by the light of the campfire; as human foils against the enshrouding dark of night; eating, greeting, and asking, 'Would you like more wine comrade?' Conversations ranged from Karen moving to Melbourne where family-ties were calling, to George's 'The Tuscan Shiraz', which arrived all the way from Italy. In both cases, distance with its tyranny, was there for a challenge.

Beyond 10pm the lessor pursuits of tented sleep and snoring dreams began to summon the faces

away, one by one. I thought that my liking for interactions up late had been sunk, until a fellow night owl, in that of Martin remained native to the cause. I don't remember everything that we talked about thereafter, but the fire had us warm and the wine had our tongues; until we too succumb about midnight.

On the Friday morning 9:00am, we began our 18km day trek, by ascending to 'The Battery', taking in the sapphire blues of Spencer Gulf in the west, before descending into the fiery ochres of 'Hidden Gorge' to the east. The gorge greeted with towering rock faces set ablaze in the sun, yet the gorge had its other dark side too. Shadowy rock faces, un-loved and orphaned by a sun otherwise careless, where green mosses of symbiotic pity mattered not ... Ohh!



Down at our feet, smooth stones and brazen boulders lay strewn along the creek bed, having been released from the cliffs ages ago. In stark contrast to those rocks recently fallen, laying awkward and out of place, jagged and jutting up; displeased, as late arrivals on their character rounding journey across geological eons towards a recipient sea ... Ooo!

Eventually Sammi's clockwork and clockwise circuit brought us out into the wider abutments of Mambray creek, where a courteous 7km walk had us back to our campsite by late afternoon. The campground's glorious showers became an ABW centre point, as personal pursuits for best lather ensued; warm soapy water washing down wanton bushwalker bodies ... Ahhh!

Fireside that night, Stephanie skilfully captured our ears by delivering a couple of her favourite pieces of literature. One being a poem called 'The Walrus and the Carpenter'; whose two shady characters walked us down an oyster beach of gluttony and poetic deceit.

Sammi too intrigued us with two poignant readings; the latter being Baz Luhrmann's 'Wear Sunscreen'; which took us on a life lamenting journey of introspection and poetic advice. In turn we all waxed and flossed lyrical, late into the night.

Tai meanwhile shared her splendorous cooking treats, one having a nice spicy zing, enough to get my taste buds partying for some time. Then, like the night before, we human creatures of routine migrated back to our tents one by one.

At 8:30 on Saturday morning Sammi's well managed schedule had us packed up, and keenly on the road to our next exuberance in that of Mt Brown. The namesake of naturalist Robert Brown, who was part of the Mathew Flinders crew aboard the ship 'Investigator' back in 1802. We parked in the trailhead carpark, where Robyn's orange cake made its daylight debut. Tongues of sweet anticipation licked our 21st century lips, as pieces of cake were kindly cut and handed to us each. If only Flinders and Brown could have been back there dining with us; to know that any feelings that they might have had of being imperial bitches to a cruel sea and scurvy, could so easily have been diluted amongst we land loving commoners, now blessed with tasty cake!

A north westerly breeze began to cuss and stiffen as we set off on the summit's 15km loop. At the pointy end of our crew strode Zack, un-phased and dashing in his all season's black T-shirt; as if

possessing the cardio vascular credentials of a polar mountaineer; and so giving our own hearts cool cause to aspire.

The summit gave us a tower of stairs to ascend, a visitor's book to sign, and a wind protected rock ledge upon which to munch on a mandarin or two. Mt Remarkable loomed in the distant south, as did the Dutchman's Stern and thoughts of tomorrow to the north.

On the way down bull ant mounds owned the path at frequent intervals; emboldened civilisations not unlike our own, except I don't think that their busyness left them any capacity to look up; to sense the impending crush of bushwalker boot. Alas, many little bodies lay strewn trailside after our passing.

But then Bec had cause to dance a quick trick, as one of the little blighters uncharacteristically latched onto her boot then sock then bare skin. But despite the little guy's pincer prowess, it too ended up trailside, hardly a match for the pinching fingers of human defensiveness. And whilst it was sad to see such hallowed genetics of earthy adventure dashed, there was crude comfort in knowing that mankind's boot-print on this planet remained dominant and absolute!

After the walk our intended destination became the Quorn caravan park campground, then onto one of its local pubs for a local's dinner. We did our best to fit into the local scene, knowing that town locals can readily pick a stranger, can easily pick city mannerisms, and can pick those without sheep knowledge. No matter though, cos a few of us had known a sheep or two over the years, had been trained in the perils of sticky pub carpet, and took to country-style cooking like cockies to the sky. Dare I say it then, that those sheep assured locals were actually in our element!!

Even the tatty pool table at the next pub with its torn felt top and boat deck roll, was to be well within our accomplished ABW skill set; as 'Echo Beach' and 'Hall of Fame' pumped from the time honoured jukebox at a dollar a pop. Bruce partnered by Mal appeared to have the final pool game won, until foiled by George and Kerry, who's well calculated mind game, did them in, producing an 'in-off' win.

We returned to the campground, where the bulk of the group bedded down for the night, except Martin, myself, and a further night owl recruit in that of Bruce. We sat by the camp's communal fire assessing the day's events, sharing common experiences, and learned the humble risks of almost

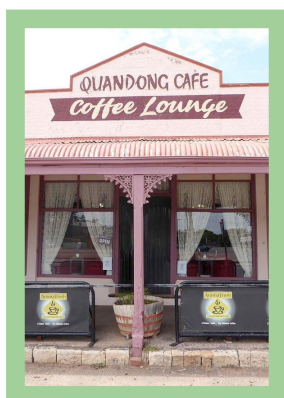
being electrocuted aboard an immobilised train locomotive. Eventually we too surrendered to sweet tiredness just on the toll of midnight.

Sunday Morning, 9:00am, we arrived at the Dutchman's Stern trail carpark on the slope of a hill. Clutch problems meant that Mal needed to leave his vehicle out of gear while parked. So in order to reduce the risk of roll away, Mal's free-mason like improvisation saw him place a well selected rock behind the vehicle's rear wheel. You've no doubt heard the term 'Rock 'n Roll', well in this instance it was 'Rock 'n Chock'. And for those of you who remember the movie 'The Wanderers', please be assured that I have not misspelled the word 'chock'...!

We then set off on the 11km loop to the top, pausing a couple of times to feed our hungry phones with megabytes of panoramic splendour. At the top, Tracy's eyes became mesmerized by a peak on the far flung northern horizon, to which she emotively voiced the name, 'Cone Hill'!! Immediately my ears pricked and my eyes panned, as hallucinations of a misspent youth wafted into my mind. Fortunately the peak's lucid silhouette identified it as being so named by geometric shape, rather than by place of participation. And I'm sure that Tracy surmised similarly too.

At our final hillside break, we got on board Bec's keen vision and salute-able imagination for items multi-use when out bush. By sharing her notion of riding down one of the opposing hillside screeds on an empty pizza-box, after feeding on its contents, and then later using the box to start the campfire; Carpe diem camping, indeed!

The walk finished at the old homestead and shearers quarters, where an unmoving bearded dragon the 'nose-who was local in likeable question.



Finally, we drive to Quandong lunch of and green disbanded and found our own ways back to Adelaide, where the throws and throngs of brick, letterbox and lawn awaited. A big thankyou to Sammi from all of us, for leading such a well-organised event over three days; an event of Splendour indeed!

Night Skies For Bushwalkers

by Dr. Ian Musgrave.



The evening sky facing west as seen in South Australia on November 21 at 9:00 pm. Mercury, Saturn and the crescent Moon form a line in the early evening.

Spring nights are getting shorter and warmer, so you are more likely to want to stay up to view the delightful spring sky. You will still need warm clothing when you walk away from the campfire to catch our spring gems, but they are worth it. This spring starts with Jupiter and Saturn gracing the evening sky and Venus lowering in the morning sky.

The nights of the spring Full Moons are Wednesday September 6, Friday October 6 and Saturday November 4. Nights on and around the full Moon make moving around camp easy, but the bright Moon washes out the glorious stars.

Spring starts with Jupiter and Saturn visible in the evening sky. Jupiter and the bright star Spica are close together above the western horizon early in September and are closest on September 11. After this Jupiter sinks closer to the horizon and is lost to view mid-October. Jupiter reappears in the morning sky in November, but is low in the twilight for most of November. Saturn is visible high in the northern sky in the dark dust lanes that bisect the constellation Sagittarius. As spring progresses, Saturn moves towards the western horizon, but

has good visibility for most of spring.

In the skies bright Venus is easily recognisable as the brightest object in the eastern morning skies in September. Venus then sinks into the twilight by the beginning of October, passing very close to the bright star Regulus on September 20. Venus is still visible low in the twilight for the majority of October. You can still see Venus in early November but you will need a flat level horizon like the desert or ocean to see it rise shortly before sunrise.

Mercury puts in a brief appearance in the morning skies in October, but will be very difficult to see. Mercury returns to the evening sky in November. This is a good return, and Mercury will be reasonably high in moderately dark skies. Mercury climbs the constellation of the scorpion and is close to the bright star Antares on the 13th. Mercury also comes close to Saturn low in the late twilight on November 26 where the pair should be obvious.

Mars finally comes out of the sun's glow and is visible low in the twilight from the beginning of October. On the 6th Venus and Mars are very close together, and are visible around half an hour before sunrise, but you will probably need binoculars to see Mars in the twilight. Mars rises higher into darker skies as spring advances. On November 29 Mars is close to the bright star Spica.

On September 18 the thin crescent Moon, Venus, and the bright star Regulus form a line. On September 22 the thin crescent Moon is close to Jupiter. On October 4 the crescent Moon is close to Venus and on October 18, the Crescent Moon, Venus and Mars form a line in the morning twilight. On October 24th the crescent Moon and Saturn are close. On November 15 the thin crescent Moon is close to Mars in the morning sky. On November 21 the crescent Moon is in a line with Saturn and Mercury in the early evening sky.

At the start of spring, the distinctive curled question mark of Scorpius the scorpion is high in the western sky, but it gets progressively 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) marks the heart of Scorpius.

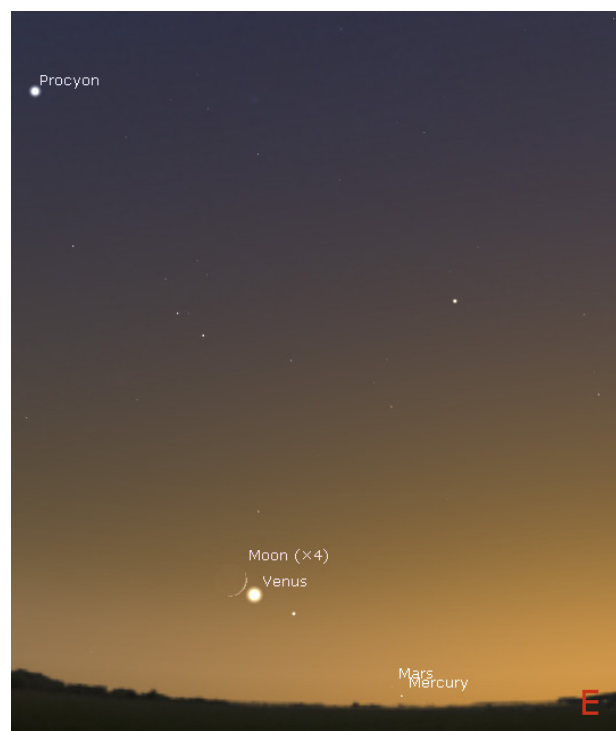
Another obvious constellation is Sagittarius, the archer. Or rather, for Australians it is the distinctive grouping of stars below the curl of Scorpio's tail we call the "teapot". The teapot is upside down, with the lid facing the horizon, and the spout pointing towards the tail of the Scorpion. The 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.

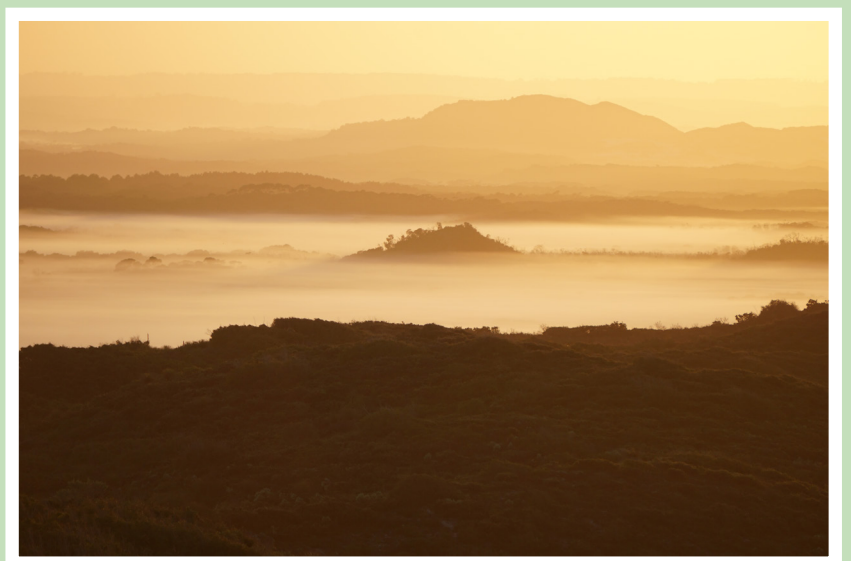
The eastern horizon, in contrast, is devoid of bright and interesting constellations for most of spring. By the end of November, Taurus, Orion and the bright star Sirius can be seen gracing the eastern horizon around 10pm. In the north, the only readily distinguishable star is bright white Altair. Flanked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



The morning sky facing east as seen in South Australia on September 18 at 5:40 am. Venus, the bright star Regulus and the thin crescent Moon form a line in the early evening, with Mars and Mercury low above the horizon.



Mist over Peaceful Bay at dawn,
Lee Marling