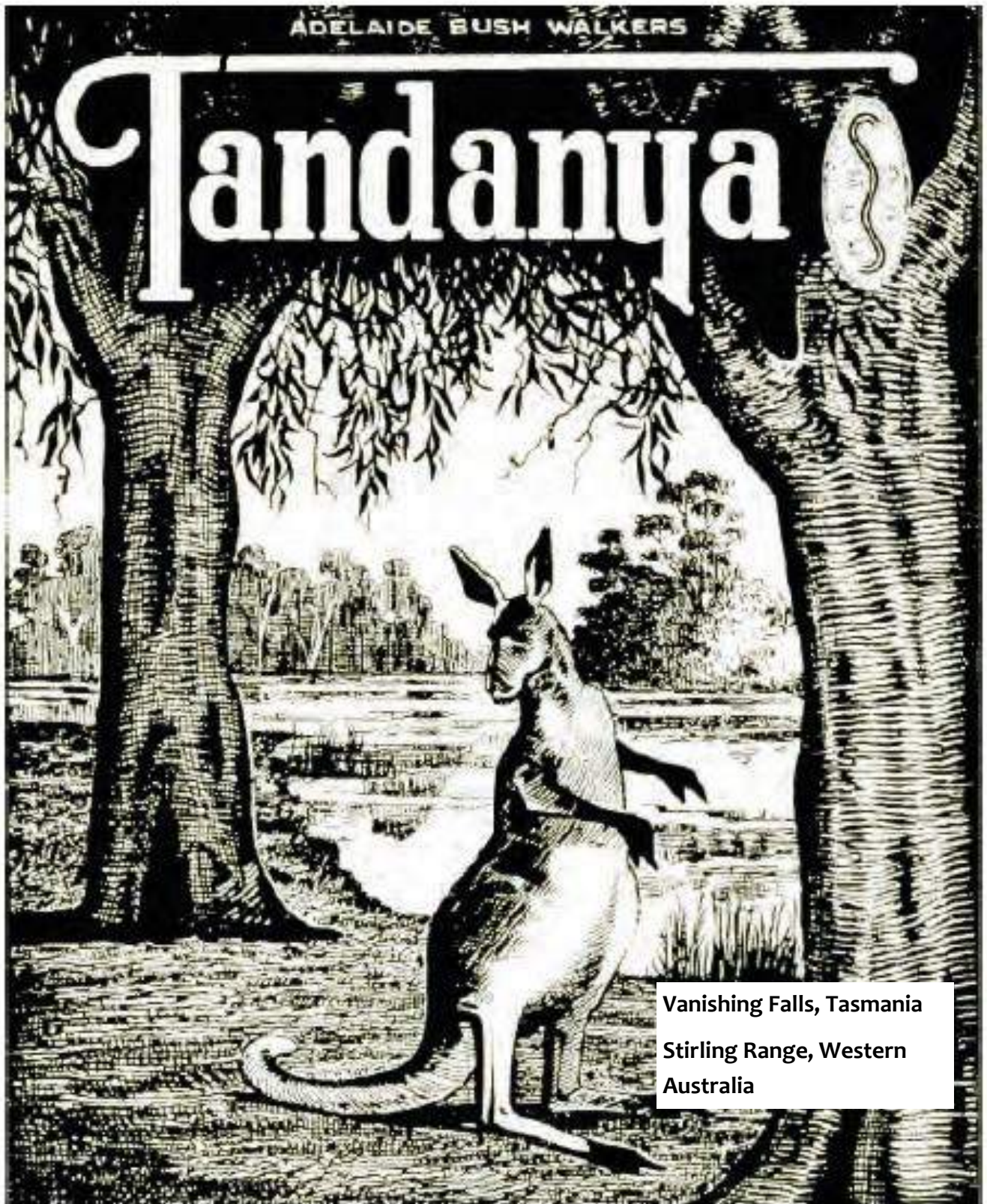


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Adelaide Bushwalkers Magazine

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Vanishing Falls, Tasmania
Stirling Range, Western
Australia

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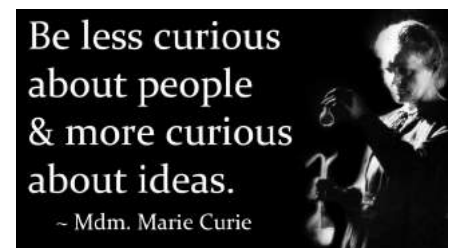
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Searching for Vanishing Falls

By Trevor Jones

ATTEMPT #2

Heading down the last 1.5km along the Salisbury to VF

In February 2020 Tracy Bryant, Bruce Hood and I undertook an epic 14 day walk, via Precipitous Bluff (PB), to visit Vanishing Falls (VF). Bruce and I had tried to get to VF in Mar/Apr 2018, coming in and out from New River, but as a result of slow going due to high river levels we had to turn back about 3km from reaching VF. A bitter disappointment after a huge effort. I had no significant desire at the time to try again, but less than 2 years later found us back – this time with Tracy – in the Tassie wilderness.

This time we were approaching VF from the 'top', coming in initially along the moonlight ridge track towards Precipitous Bluff. This route had the benefit of being less impacted if there was significant rain but did mean a definite 3 days (at least) of Tassie scrub to get to VF. There are several possible approaches to VF, with no definite best route.

After some consideration I opted for an approach leaving from Tramp Camp. I couldn't find any trip notes from anyone going this route, and I sounded out John Chapman, who kindly replied advising "yes you could drop straight down from Tramp Camp - pretty scrubby but probably no worse than anything else there" – while not exactly encouraging I took it as a positive.

All going to plan we would have:

- 4 days on the Moonlight Ridge track

- A day trip to PB

- 3 days though scrub to VF

- 2 days on the Salisbury and then New Rivers back to Cavern Camp

- 3 days + 1 rest day on the South Coast Track to Cockle Creek

We flew into Hobart late on a Saturday night, picked up food left out for us by Strive Foods, and

arrived at Nararra Backpackers after 11pm. With sorting out food and things to leave in Hobart, and a morning visit to the shops by Bruce & Tracy, there was not much rest before our pickup at 8am Sunday morning by Tasmania Wilderness Experiences.

After a relaxing drive we were dropped at our start near Ida Bay Quarry at 10.30am. We started with packs ranging in weight from 23 to 27kg (including packraft, paddle and 14 days food). Being probably the least fit, fortunately I had the lightest pack.

We had lovely weather for our start - sunny with a cool breeze, and as always on a long trip it was exciting to be heading off.

After walking for only 20 minutes we stopped for a 1hr explore of Mystery Ck Cave. An interesting cave with glow worms and the

creek running through it. At one point there is a sign advising on not progressing further unless accompanied by an experienced leader – I only noticed it on the way back – I reckon you have to be a more experienced leader to notice such signs.

Our first days walking was enjoyable, though a mixture of forest and open areas with low scrub, with a not too strenuous 600m climb, and we were arrived into camp at the upper reaches of Moonlight Creek by 5pm.

Day 2 saw us up on Moonlight Ridge with a cold overcast day, and our first view of PB. We met a few people coming back to Ida Bay from short 2 or 3 day walks. But after this we would not see anyone else until day 12. We did the 2hr side trip to Mt La Perouse, the large cairn on top providing a welcome rest spot out of the cold wind. Walking on in the afternoon we had quite a bit of undulating up and down, through thick scrub where we were glad to be on a track, reaching camp at beautiful Ooze Lake at 6.15pm.

The morning on Day 3 saw us



View from Pindars Peak with PB (and convincingly flying Tracy! Ed.)



Approaching Pindars Peak

heading up the longish 3hr climb, with our packs were still feeling heavy, to Pindars Peak - the highest point on the range at about 1250m. The cloud cleared before we got to the top where we had stunning views, including and variable views. We had lunch and

stayed on top for 1.5hrs enjoying the views. Reading the log book there had been a party on PB about once per week so far this year.

The track again passed through very thick scrub in the arvo – I was thinking 'I hope it isn't this bad when we leave the track to head for VF'. We pressed on past Leaning Tree Saddle arriving quite weary at a nice spot in an exposed saddle for camp at 5.35pm.

Day 4 saw the weather return to



Key points on the planned route – Jn is the junction of the Salisbury and New Rivers

We had a short side trip up Mt Wylly with limited but nice views. In the afternoon there was some light drizzle but it stopped while we were putting up our tents at Tramp camp. This was our take off point going off-track to VF, and the scrub was plenty thick approaching camp. There is no water at Tramp camp and so we had carried extra to last us for the night and morning.



View looking North from PB with cloud creeping over the range and disappearing)

cool, heading up from the saddle along Kameruka Moraine. Along the ridge was not too bad with just a few difficult patches of thicker scrub and rocks. Once the ridge started dropping into thicker vegetation we left it to head for the first 'open' area down towards the Salisbury river. It was tough and slow, but steady progress through the tangled forest. One of those things that is hard to describe - and has to be experienced.

Day 5 was our day trip to PB. We woke to heavy cloud and a hint of drizzle. Not promising for views, but we headed off at 8.50 am in the hope it would improve during the 3hr walk to PB. We had a planned rest day for later when we were on the South Coast track, but that never eventuated, today turned out to be the closest to a rest day, and the only day not carrying packs. It was a luxury not having to pack up, and to head off with only a light day pack.

We passed through Low Camp about 10.20 am - one of the other options for heading off to VF - and I was glad it had plenty of scrub around and not clearly better than going from Tramp camp.

The cloud was changing and thinning as we climbed, and on reaching PB we were above the cloud cover. The cloud mainly covered back to the East with other directions mainly cloud free. So we had interesting and variable views. We had lunch and stayed on top for 1.5 hrs enjoying the views. Reading the log book there had been a party on PB about once per week so far this year.

On way back we picked up about 5L of water each, for the night and for the next day - where we hoped to get to and over the Salisbury river - about 3km from Tramp camp.

Where we picked up water - on the side of PB, was the very start of the Salisbury river, we would follow it, more or less, for the next 7 days all the way to the Southern Ocean.

On the way back to camp we had good views of our planned route for the next day - looked simple enough. Back at camp I did a quick check of the ridge we were heading up in the morning - it thankfully looked quite manageable.

Day 6 was a crucial day - our first day without a track. Off track in Tassie can mean progressing less than 1km in a day. We planned on achieving 3.5 km. And not reaching water (the Salisbury) until we had done nearly 3km. Google Earth had played a part in planning the route to pick up the maximum 'open' areas mentioned by John Chapman and others.

We headed off at 8am in nice walking weather - overcast and

Choosing each step is like a game of chess trying to anticipate what the next 3 steps are likely to bring, what will be feasible, often changing one's mind and backtracking a step or two to find a more manageable route. Regularly walking on vegetation 1 or 2m above ground 'level'. Even thick fallen logs were liable to crumble or snap just when you had committed weight to them. Over the next 5 days we would end up with bruises over most of our bodies. And cuts from the tenacious ribbon grass.

Bruce & I had experienced similar on our previous VF attempt 2 years ago, but this was Tracy's first serious experience of Tassie scrub, and despite carrying 44% of her body weight she hardly paused (besides lots of falls!).

We broke through to the first open area at 12.30 pm, exhausted, having covered only about 1.5km since leaving camp 4.5hrs earlier. After lunch the open area of button grass and light scrub gave us an easy 600m then back into scrub for 2hrs to reach the Salisbury at 3.30 pm. A major milestone. We then pressed on through scrub to reach an open area, and our

target camp, at 5 pm. A very hard day, but I was now confident VF would be achievable.

My backpack had 2 tears, shirt 2 rips, shorts 1, and gloves with their first hole. I had sewing practice most nights off-track. Soon after getting into our tents we had a very loud thunderstorm with heavy rain, which lasted a couple of hours. Most of the lightning was about 8 secs away, but one bright bolt was about 0.1sec away - that got our attention!

Day 7 we woke up to drizzle and so had a late 9.15 am start. It would be a late finish as well. We had a relatively easy morning with open areas separated by bands of trees and scrub and made good progress to at midday reach the start of our next challenge - 1.5km of scrub to get back down to the Salisbury. It was very hard going. We hit the river in thick scrub with no place to camp about 6.30pm, managing about 250m per hr.

We struggled on through scrub parallel to the river, and at 7.10 pm decided to inflate the packrafts. We paddled some pools and rapids, carrying the rafts past some larger 2m drop rapids.

At 8.10pm we stopped at some rocks and decided we'd find the best we could to camp. Bruce & Tracy got a rough spot in the scrub, and I went for some undulating rock on the riverside. I was in bed at 10pm but Bruce & Tracy were only just eating at 10.30 pm. A long hard day, but still basically on schedule. VF was now less than 1.5km away.

Day 8 - After the late finish last night we started late again, at 9.15 am. It was a beautiful sunny day. The nicest day of the walk so far.

We continued to use the packrafts



Getting out the rafts for their first use

having left them inflated over night. But it was slow going having to get out often can carry/manoeuvre them past rocks/rapids. So after a while we packed them up and rock-hopped alongside the river, crossing over regularly as required.

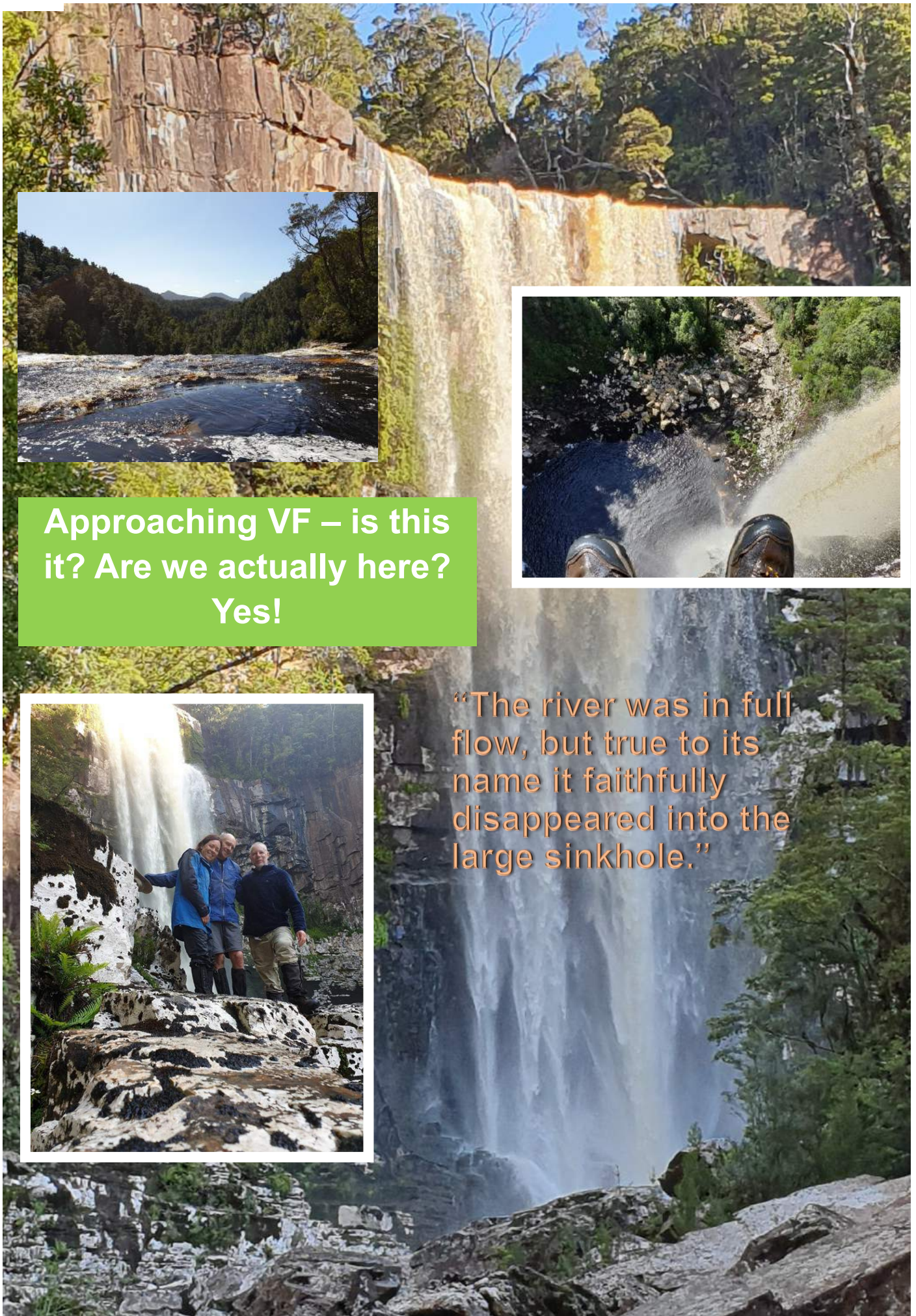
It took us most of the day to cover the final 1.5km down the river, but at 3.30 pm we arrived at the top of Vanishing Falls - in weather. And it just happened to be my birthday - I

had a great day! The river was in full flow, but true to its name it faithfully disappeared into the large sinkhole.

"At Vanishing Falls, the Salisbury River flows over a dolerite plateau underlain by limestone. The river flows over the edge of the dolerite sill and drains straight into a cave system in the limestone, a phenomenon attributed to karst processes. The above-ground channel downstream of the plunge pool flows only during floods." - Wikipedia.



Tracy hanging upside down - after one of many falls



Approaching VF – is this
it? Are we actually here?
Yes!

“The river was in full
flow, but true to its
name it faithfully
disappeared into the
large sinkhole.”

After all the pain, and the 2nd attempt for Bruce and I, it was a great thrill (equivalent to getting to Federation Peak) to finally arrive at VF! The falls are in a lovely scene surrounded by ancient myrtle forest.

After relaxing and enjoying the view for 1hr we walked around and down (avoiding cliff edges) to the bottom of the falls, where we chose to stay and camp the night. We celebrated VF and my birthday (with singing by Tracy & Bruce) a bit of alcohol, a chocolate bar 'cake' complete with candle and plenty of chocolate!

Day 9 - Farewell to VF and a relaxed 9.20 am start. We just needed to now make our way out to the South Coast track. With the river flowing underground we had an easy first 2.5km along the dry, if rocky, riverbed. The water comes back up in 2 places, through caves, to quite quickly be its normal self again.

At a large pool - while Tracy and I scrambled along the edge Bruce stopped, setup his raft and beat us to the other end. So we also setup our rafts, but it proved in the end a time costly exercise. It took a lot of time taking packs on/off and carrying rafts and packs around obstacles. And we only did another 1.5km the rest of the day. Stopping at 6.30 pm, where we packed up the rafts.

We came across an interesting patch of rock in the dry riverbed with several strange imprints, from ancient marine life maybe?

This slow day put us almost a day behind schedule and meant we would miss out on our planned rest day on the South Coast track.

Day 10 - an overcast day where we made better progress without

the rafts, alongside or in the river, crossing often.

The highlight of the day was a tiger snake who hung around for photos - not wanting to give up his sunny rock - we detoured around it

We reached the junction with the New River at 3.50 pm and set off in our rafts at 4.30 pm. The river was about 1m lower than when Bruce and I were there nearly two years earlier on during our failed attempt. We covered an easy 2km paddling and stopped at 5.30 pm at a sandy spot prior to a potential log jam.



Walking down the Salisbury

Day 11 - We lifted the rafts and packs around some initial logs across the river, but found that after only a very short paddle we were doing the same thing - again and again.

Two years ago, Bruce and I carried our rafts past one massive log jam about 350m long, it now appears that the log jam has been spread out. We persevered for about 1km, but with progress slow and no end in sight decided to pack up the rafts and try the forest. After 1hr of pretty good walking in the forest we headed back to the river to find it much improved, and so switched back to the rafts. No problem then getting to New River lagoon, with some nice views of PB on the way, and after 1hr into a headwind across the lagoon we arrived at

Cavern camp about 5.30pm. I was particularly wet & cold and glad to get dry clothes on. We were almost back to the comparative civilization of the South Coast track.

Day 12 - With calm waters and no headwind we made good time to Prion campsite, arriving about



This Tiger snake was not willing to give up the sunny rock

10.30am. We were now back on the well used, very beautiful, South Coast track, but no-one was at Prion. We packed up and headed to Osmiridium beach for a late lunch.

Finally, about 5.15pm, after 11 days, we came across some other people! James and Sue. And their initial question to us was 'did we have a Sat phone?'. Sue was unwell and struggling and wanted to see if she could get someone to come in to carry her pack. We offered for her to use our inReach to contact the transport organisation. Which she did. A bit of a sequence of events then played out culminating in Sue being choppered out and James



Setting up the rafts at the junction of the Salisbury and New Rivers

continuing on and joining our transport back to Hobart.



In and out around logs coming down New River

Day 13 was good walking on track, with packs about 9kg lighter than when we started. We were pretty exhausted and just glad to not be pushing through scrub. All our bruises, lumps and scratches were just starting to heal.

It was nice walking through forest down to Granite Beach, then up onto the muddy South Cape range. With a relatively dry couple of weeks the mud was not bad. About 3km from Granite Beach we caught up with James and Sue, Sue was struggling. We let them know Emergency Services were on their way in. And soon after a rescue chopper came in low scanning the track, but they were under pretty thick tree cover and weren't spotted. About 3 hrs later when we were almost at camp (Sth Cape Rivulet) we met 2 young police officers walking in, and were able to give them some useful info, and they got the chopper to hang about rather than returning to Hobart, and about 1hr

later Sue was on her way back to Hobart.

Day 14 - Our last day! Heading out to Cockle Creek for pickup at 1pm. We enjoyed our last views of



the Southern Ocean then a lovely mainly flat walk along the Blowhole Valley, getting to Cockle Ck just before 12, in time to share and finish our last bit of leftover food.

The weather was kind to us for the trip. Out of all the camp setup / pickups we only had one with a bit of drizzle. And nearly always good walking conditions - weather wise that is – vegetation was a different story.

VF is real challenge to get to – and I'm very glad I don't have to try a 3rd time.

**FIND
VANISHING
FALLS**





View to PB from New River



New River exiting to the Southern Ocean



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Reminiscences of a Tasmaniophile

By John Bartlett



Pack dropping platform on saddle close to Mt Ossa, Tasmania's highest February 2000

Why "TASMANIOPHILE"?

It is a word I invented because of my love of Tasmania.

In September 1945, I moved to Hobart with my parents as my father had been transferred there from Adelaide with a big promotion in the Commonwealth Public Service. My father died there in July 1950, and in March 1952, my mother and I moved back to Adelaide.

In those formative years there, I extended my love of walking, which began in the Scouts before I first went to Tasmania, and thus I was able to enjoy some of the magnificent mountain and coastal scenery.

Since leaving in 1952, I have been back to Tasmania 24 times with these visits including bushwalking, touring, conferences and a big bike ride.

Why do I love Tasmania, and why have I been back so often? Because I lived there in my formative years. Because of its wonderful scenery and its great, extensive and challenging walking.

In the Summer 2018 edition of

TANDANYA, in my article "Why JB Started Bushwalking When He Was 11", I talked about some of my early experiences walking in Tasmania, so this time, I will relate some of my ventures in the Apple Isle since joining ABW in September 1980 following a walk as a guest of the Hobart Walking Club to the Cradle Mountain area in April 1980.

In 1986., I joined Frank Hall's long walking trip in the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair NP, my first ABW trip to



John with his grandsons in Hobart January 2013

Tasmania- the first of 15 with ABW.

On three of those trips, I took my three grandsons individually along with some ABW members, and to cap that off, in 2013 I took the three of them with me

on a very rewarding trip which took in Dove Lake below Cradle Mountain, Strahan, Hobart, Tasman Peninsula and Freycinet Peninsula.

All the Tasmanian walking trips have been memorable in some way, but some that stand out include the following:

- The trip mentioned above
- Diamond Peak 1991 - 16 days from Strathgordon Road through to Butlers Gorge
- Federation Peak and Mt Anne Circuit 1987
- Traveller Range 2002
- Frenchmans Cap and Freycinet Peninsula 1995
- Precipitous Bluff 1999
- South West Cape and South Coast Track 1989
- Western Arthurs 1993
- Frankland Range 2004

As to Tasmanian weather on my trips - on three or four the weather caused some problems, but on the whole,



Tasman Peninsula 1995

mostly good weather. That is why trips were always planned for the January/February/early March period.

Cradle Mountain is a Tasmanian icon and it has attracted me six times over the years, climbing to its peak in 1951 and 1989. The view one gets of Cradle Mountain on approaching Dove Lake is always breathtaking (subject to the weather of course.).

I must mention the Great Tasmanian Bike Ride (arranged by Bicycle Victoria) which I completed in February 2005 - 9 days, taking us from Deloraine - Cradle Mountain - Strahan, then across the high plateau to Derwent Valley and then Hobart. Quite a few big hills on that ride.

Some ABW walkers describe themselves as Peak-Baggers, as I do (or did !).

Some years ago, Hobart Walking Club published "Peak-Baggers Guide". Between 1947 and 2009, I scored 202 points which the guide describes as "Honourable Peak - Bagger".

Anyone wanting a copy - please contact me.

Hopefully, I haven't finished with Tasmania yet.



On Frank Hall's walk at Narcissus River February 1986



Precipitous Bluff from New River Lagoon February 1999

Tandanya Winter 2020





Please see the ABW website for information on resumption of walking activities and general meetings



General Meetings

Email from the North Adelaide Community Centre:

'Over the coming weeks, all hire groups will need to meet the following requirements and then we can confirm your booking:

A phone conversation with the Centre Coordinator about your group size, room capacity, room availability and the hirer's responsibilities. (8203 7811 Monday-Friday 10am-4pm as of tomorrow please)

Some of your pre-hire responsibilities will include:

Each hire group must complete a COVID-Safe Plan www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/recovery/create-a-covid-safe-plan

(FYI- The measurements for the NACC Hall is 179 meters square & when the back meeting room is available it is 30 m sq.) Although your Plan will possibly come back that the hall allowance is now 89 people, Council has put a limit to 45 people in the hall so that the physical distancing requirements can be safely and practically met.

On the COVID-Safe plan, the Centre's main contact person for the hire group should be listed with their name and phone number as the Owner/Operator/Contact. DO NOT put the Centre Coordinator.

Each hire group is required to print and have available when at the NACC & complete your own Contact Tracing Attendance Record for every session you host at the Centre.

The attendance record must be stored by the hire group for 6 years as you are using a Council-run facility.

It is likely your Plan will recommend an activity being 2 hours or less. Let's chat on this if necessary.

Each group will be required to bring your own hand sanitiser (limited availability on-site).

Each group will be required to clean down any shared equipment you use and store at the Centre including but not limited to: tables, chairs, PA system, door handles, light switches in the rooms you use (cleaning products will be supplied by Centre).

Please Note: Preparation and consumption of food and drink is still prohibited (BYO individual water bottle/ coffee). There is no communal food or drinks sorry and the kitchen is still unavailable. Toilets and hall only at the moment.

The City of Adelaide is also taking extra measures to protect our community, volunteers and staff, including the following conditions:

Do not attend the centre if you or someone with you are unwell or are developing symptoms including fever and flu-like symptoms

Keep 1.5 metres distance from others

Wash hands and use sanitiser provided upon entering and exiting the premises and as required.

Maintain appropriate personal hygiene practices (especially covering coughs and sneezes).

The Centre Conditions of Entry and social distancing measures (through signage and floor markings) at the Centre must be abided by.


The first priority is to accommodate all existing regular hire groups. I am pleased about re-opening the Centre to regular hirers but I am also aware some groups may not be able to return to the Centre at this time due to the gathering restrictions or members of your group falling into the vulnerable, high risk category.

Finally, during our recent conversation I let you know that the storage space in the outside shed won't be available ongoing to the ABW. If you can think about how the Club can work toward that to release it to a Centre need it would be appreciated.'

Kellie Kulinski
Community Centre Coordinator
City Wellbeing
176 Tynte St.
North Adelaide, South Australia, 5006

The Stirling Range High Traverse

By Michael Round



The Stirling Range rises 80km north of Albany with the massive bulk of Bluff Knoll marking its highest point. I knew from a visit a decade ago that it is a most remarkable place, both in terms of its appearance and vegetation. The modestly sized National Park that contains the range has, so I've just read, 'a staggering' 384 plant genera and more than 1500 species. That number includes 87 species endemic to the Park and 138 species of orchids. The Park lies in the SW of WA which itself has over 5000 plant species with the majority endemic to the region and for these reasons, it is formally recognized as one of the world's

biological 'hot spots'. The range is made of metamorphosed marine sediment which has eroded to produce peaks and most of them having a striking appearance. Viewed from Bluff Knoll, the pointed summits at the lower western end of the range in particular, struck me when I first saw as having an almost Tolkeinesque quality. This trip though was to walk on the higher and more rugged eastern end of the range and it was a walk that I'd been looking forward to doing for some time now.

I went to WA in November last year primarily to finish walking the Bibbulmun Track and do the Coast to Coast walk but to get things under

way, Truc, a Perth-based bushwalker, was first to take me on the 'Stirling Range High Traverse'. Truc was part of a small bushwalking party that I led in the Flinders Ranges in 2017 and we've been good friends ever since and this trip would fulfil his promise to one day take me there. (There's a photo of Truc climbing up the dryfall to Rover Rockhole in Tandanya V48:4). The traverse usually takes parties 11/2 days to do but with the longer hours of daylight and without packs, it can also be done in a day and that was our choice.

The Range is a 400 km drive from Perth and with an unavoidable late start, we arrived at our base camp

accommodation an hour after dark. Camp was in the shearers quarters at 'Glenelg', a large mixed farming property which butts against the north side of the range and grain harvest in progress at the time of our visit. Next day we got away early and were driven to the Bluff Knoll Car Park by our host and after our thankyous and goodbyes, set off along the summit track. Cloud often curls over the top of the range in the same manner it does in alpine areas and it did so that morning but cleared soon after we arrived at the summit.

I'd previously read older accounts of people doing the high traverse and of the difficulties posed by the scrub and route finding. However, with an annual trickle of passing bushwalkers over the past four decades, the route is now generally fairly obvious and

easier. Despite that, we did briefly lose the path on a couple of occasions and the first instance was while heading down to the broad low saddle directly east of Bluff Knoll. On such occasions, you soon learn to go back and find the track and not to just hopefully press on! This happened despite this being Truc's twelfth time on the walk and when I enquired as to why so many, he simply replied 'Well what else is there?' Told that, I could appreciate that if you lived in Perth and are looking for rugged places to walk in, the nearest alternate is probably a two-day drive north of the city. Plus of course, this turned out to be a brilliant walk and worth repeating!

Low straw-coloured cropping land spread out from both north and south of the Park and while the

contrast in form and colour was visually striking, it did perhaps lessen the sense of isolation despite our lofty position on top of the range. For most of the time though, our attention was more focused on the oddly shaped peaks ahead of us and on features closer by. I was really looking forward to getting reacquainted with the range's vegetation and wildflowers but unfortunately, a good part of the area we were walking across had been subject to wildfire last summer and it was still a good way from recovery. It made the walking easier I suppose but I didn't think of that in a positive way. Further along the traverse, the range had been spared the flames and we were treated to many impressive floral displays. (It was only when I contacted Truc while writing





this article that I learnt that a fire had burnt out almost half of the national park about six weeks after our walk. This fire was started by lightning strike and online photos and informed commentary indicate that it was an exceptionally hot burn and so severe that the vegetation is tipped to never be able to recover to what it once was. The damage was just too much and reflects the similar situation along the Great Dividing Ranges with the bushfires that occurred there during the same summer.)

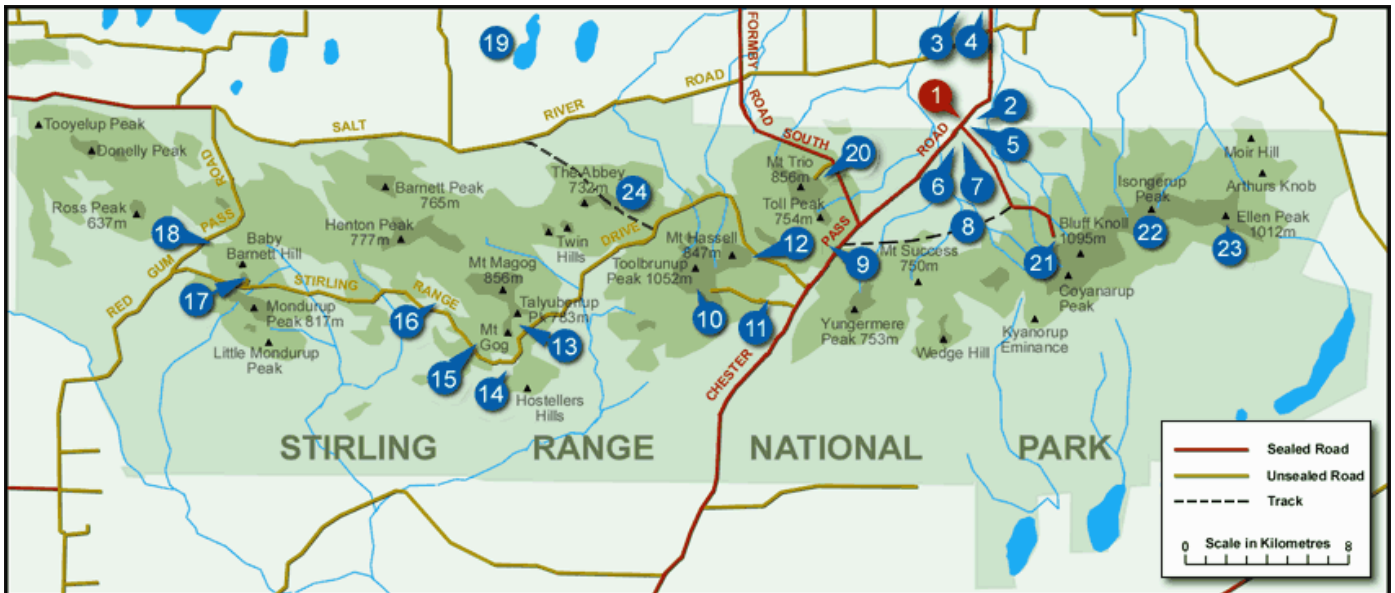
The most anticipated feature of the walk for me was The Three Arrows, the name alone conjuring up a feeling of mild

anxiety and excitement. On the traverse however, the cliffy nature of the peaks means that you generally go around their side rather than go over the top and so it is with the Arrows. The third of the Arrows however has you taking up neither of those options but instead, it lets you pass through the centre of the peak via a deep narrow chasm. (In terms of difficulty, there are only a couple of steep rocky places to contend with but these are easy enough for anyone to manage.) Another feature that I was keen to visit was the soak or spring that is the range's only source of water along the traverse. The soak is located on the

south side of the Third Arrow and we traversed around to check it out. It's located out of sight above some steep rock and to make it easier for walkers, a piece of hose had long ago been rigged to connect the soak to a small container. In more recent years, the setup gained a reputation for being unreliable and we found that it has now in fact been taken away. Walkers can still climb up to get water and some rope has been secured to the rock to make the process at least seem more inviting. Considering the effort required, it's likely that many parties would prefer to bring their own water. Although of no consequence to us, we did pass a small number of campsites during the day, a couple of them are in saddles and two others are beneath large overhanging rock shelters facing to the north.

We had a sunny and warm day perfect for walking but I did learn that the top of the range can get very cold in winter and that snow is not that uncommon! In fact, snow has been recorded on Bluff Knoll for two years in every three over the last fifty years and there have been as many as five falls in a year. The records have the earliest snow falls occurring in April 2019 and the latest in October 1992 when 20 cm was recorded though it's normally unusual for it to be even half this depth. While on snow, I was even more surprised to later on see a photo in the Friends of Bibbilmun Track magazine showing a campsite with its tents covered in snow and what appeared to be a good 10 cm of snow on the ground!





<https://www.ski.com.au/xf/threads/snow-in-south-western-wa.75821/>

That was in 2017 and the site is apparently not far from the Track's northern terminal at Kalamunda.

Mt Ellen is the final peak of the traverse but it was hidden from view for most of the day by the high bulbous mass of Mt Pyungorup. It was late in the day by the time we finally got there and commenced our descent. After a considerable time spent walking along the boundary between cropland and scrub, we arrived back at Glenelg an hour after dark. Once there, Truc summarized the day according to his gps unit. The walk had taken us 13 hours and there was no

argument there. But we'd spent 41/2 hours of that time with no detectable motion and there was argument there. WHAT! We were both initially uncomprehending and in disbelief with myself loudly protesting that we only had three stops with the longest being 40 minutes. It couldn't possibly be true according to me! This outburst was then followed by some calmer introspection, reflection and discussion and we recalled that there were myriad short stops for all sorts of reasons during the walk. We finally accepted the data and agreed that you can't just cherry pick it to suits

yourself. I still don't know how far that walk is but I do know that it was a long day although not a particularly tiring one due to the unburdened nature of our travel. Well I speak for myself because Truc dutifully carried enough stuff to counter any adverse situation that might conceivably befall us.

We spent a second night at Glenelg and on the following day, climbed a couple of peaks in the central part of the range and camped out before driving back to Perth. After completing the Bib and walking the C2C until heat stress obliged me to retire and spend two days recovering in Dunsborough, I returned to Perth. A couple of days later I took Truc out sailing in a hire cat in the Swan River to show my appreciation of the great walk that he took me on. It was windy and perfect for sailing and strong wind gusts had us careering somewhat crazily across the water. These occasions invariably reduced us to fits of laughter and it was a great way to finish my time in the west.



Tandanya Winter 2020

Adelaide Bushwalkers specialises in multi-day wilderness hiking with full packs and camping gear, along with other complimentary activities such as day walks, kayaking, cycling and social activities for our members. Please use the contact details below

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

Contact details

Email: gohiking@adelaidebushwalkers.org

Web: www.adelaidebushwalkers.org

Postal: PO Box 434 North Adelaide South Australia 5006

Banking Details

Bank: Bank SA BSB: 105 900 Account: 950 866 540

Account name: Adelaide Bushwalkers Inc.

Membership queries

Contact the Membership Secretary Bec Thomas on 0474 894 433

or via email through gohiking@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.

The Hawker Hill Range And Its Surprising Pound

By Michael Round



The Hawker Hill Range was recently listed in the Autumn Tandanya as a destination deserving more attention from walkers and the satellite photo (courtesy of Google Earth) surely shows why this is so. The Range's almost circular Pond is very obvious but on land, a wide angle lens is needed to do it photographic justice. Italowie Gap lies at the Range's northern end. The northern and southern parts of the range belong to VGRNP and Nantawarrina Aboriginal Land respectively.



Top L. The Pound as seen from space. Top R. Inside the Pound.

Above L & R. Mount McKinley Creek looking west and east on the south side of the Range.

Below L. The entrance to the Pound's narrow drainage creek. Below R. On the top of the Range looking north.



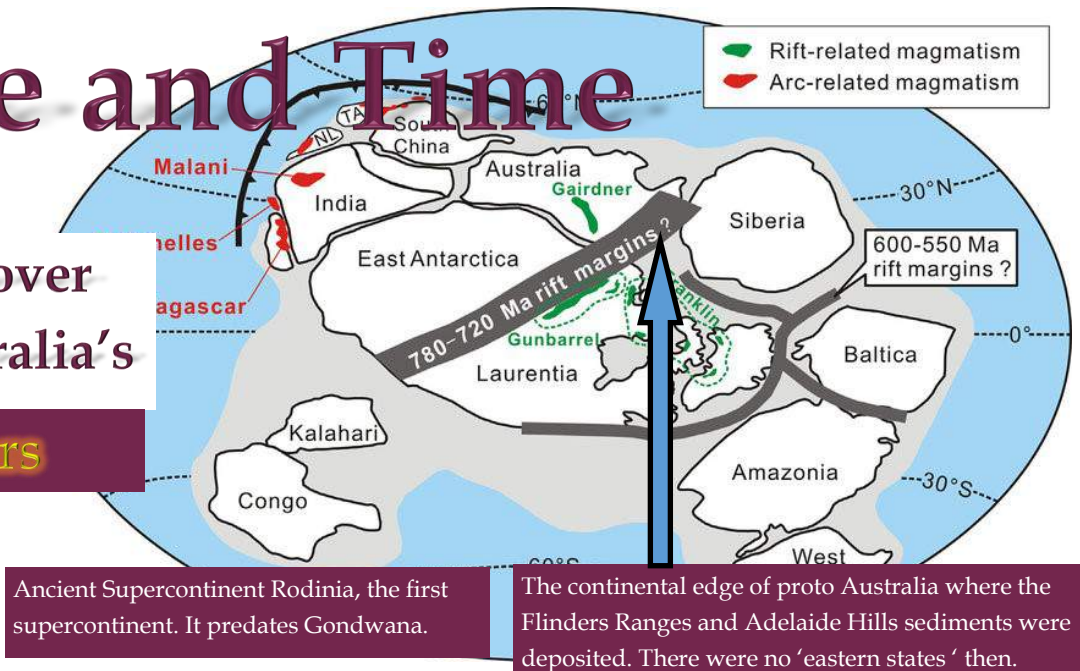
BushWalk Across

Space and Time

And Discover South Australia's

Rock Stars

By Bruce Marquis



Spectacular arid mountain scenery in ancient landscapes, evidence of early life, some of the world's oldest rock outcrops, giant ancient reefs, evidence of global glaciation and more make our State geologically outstanding. Most sites mentioned are accessible and would make interesting bushwalking destinations.

South Australia rocks! We have unique and fascinating Geology in this State. I would encourage leaders to add some interesting geology locations on bushwalks or even make it the focus of the bushwalk. Most of these notes refer to places at or close to existing club destinations.

The breadth of the timescale that can be encountered is awesome. So too are the

significance of events such as the dawn of complex life and earth shattering asteroid impacts. On this page, for example, is a description of how it is possible to visit a location where the very start of the Flinders Ranges sediments can clearly be seen. At Arkaroola Reef there may be evidence of the first animal life on Earth.



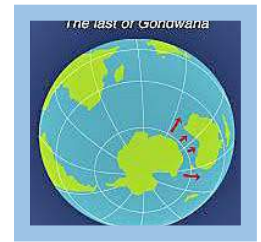
The commencement of the laying down of sediments in the Adelaide Geosyncline can be observed at Arkaroola Waterhole where there is an exposed contact between the 1580 Ma old Mount Neill Granite and the 850 Ma basal Paralana Quartzite (a pink-pale grey quartzite.). This rock sequence lies *unconformably* over the Mount Neill Granite meaning there is a large time gap.

Griselda and Reg Sprigg established Arkaroola Sanctuary and promoted the recognition of its unique geology.

Plan a Geo bushwalk here, an example of the start of the Flinders Ranges sediments at Arkaroola Waterhole



Australia begins to separate from Antarctica, 80mya



<http://skaurantarctica.blogspot.com>

A Selection of Significant Geological Events In South Australia

Cambrian Explosion of life



Acraman Impact

Wilpena Group sediments and Ediacaran Fauna

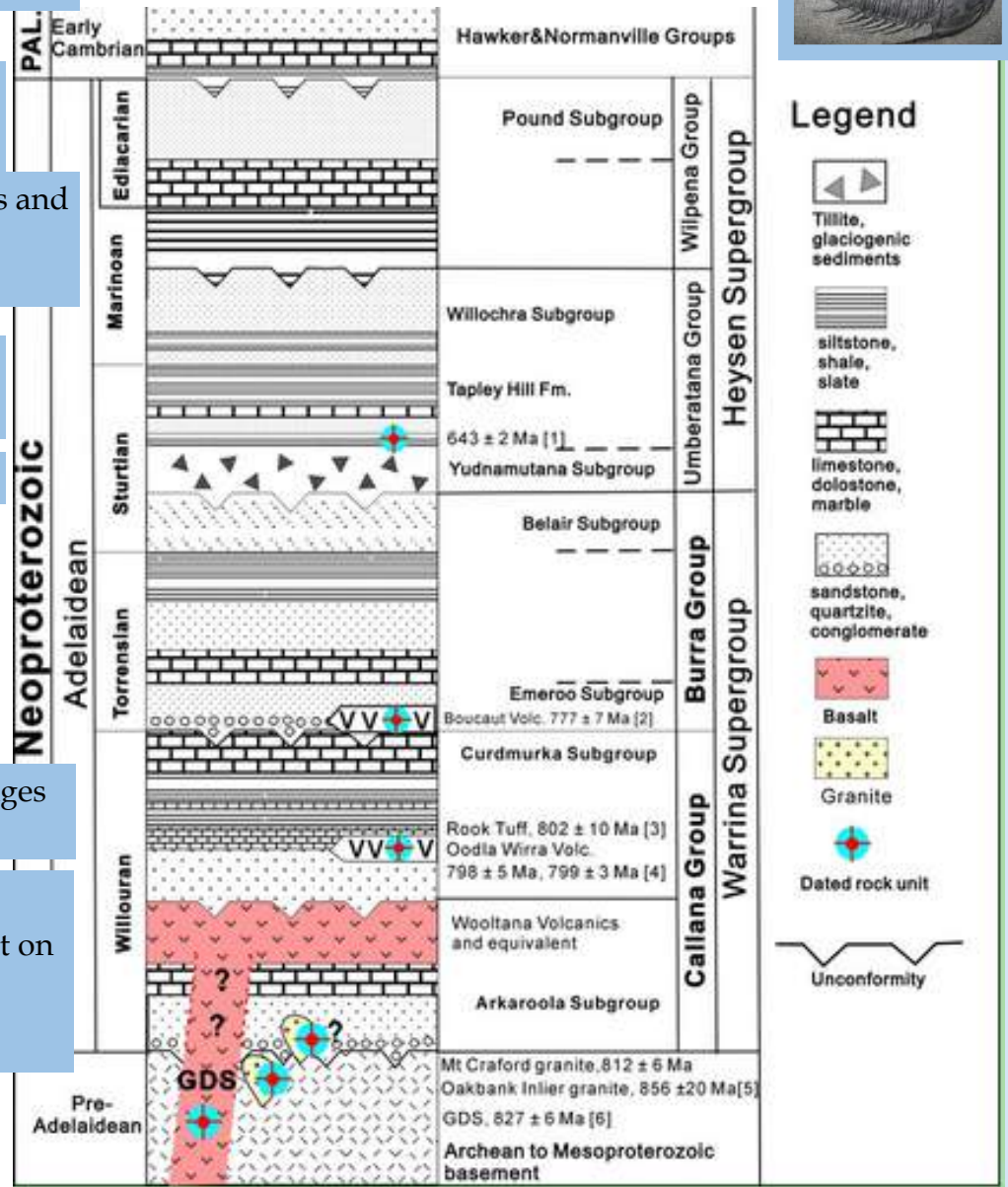
Arkaroola Reef

Snowball Earth

Beginning of Flinders Ranges

Wooltana Volcanics, flood basalts from first rift event on the Adelaide Geosyncline~830mya

Illustration not to scale

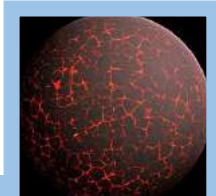


'The RNA world is a hypothetical stage in the evolutionary history of life on Earth, in which self-replicating RNA molecules proliferated before the evolution of DNA and proteins ..' Wikipedia



First life-RNA World-4 billion years ago?

Formation of the Earth, 4.5 billion years ago



Oldest & Richest Rocks In South Australia

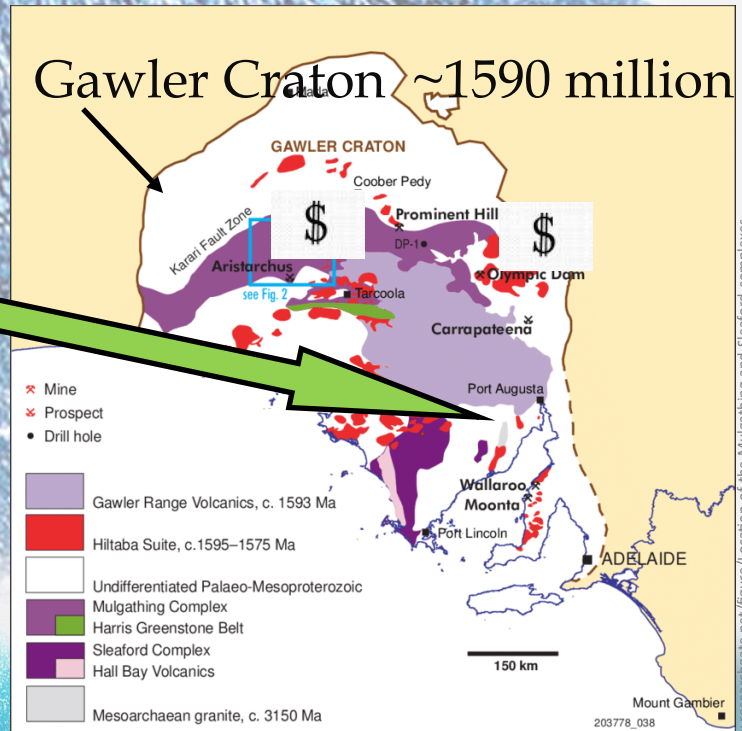
From over *three billion* years old

OUR OLDEST ROCK STAR!



Cooyerdoo Granite: This rock forms the basement to the iron-rich sediments of the Middleback Ranges which have been mined for iron ore since the late 1800s.

Plan a Geo bushwalk here,
Cooyerdoo Granite outcrops,
Middleback Ranges



<https://unsplash.com/photos/QRUBWY-Rat>

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/location-of-the-Mulgathing-and-Sleaford-complexes-within-the-Gawler-Craton-Outlines-of_fig1_260882442

The Cooyerdoo Granite is exposed on the northeastern Eyre Peninsula flanking the entire length of the Middleback Range extending over an area ~1600 km². It occurs as scattered outcrops of subhorizontal pavements and low tors.

The largest area of continuous outcrop occurs to the east of the Middleback Range between Iron Knob and Iron Baron, extending over ~100 km². To the west of the Middleback Range there are a number of isolated outcrops of the Cooyerdoo Granite extending along the entire length of the ranges, from NW of Iron Knob to west of Iron Duke..."

The Cooyerdoo Granite: Paleo- and Mesoarchaean basement of the Gawler Craton MESA Journal 65 June 2012 Stacey McAvaney

It is difficult to comprehend the age of these granite outcrops...over three billion years old, some of the oldest rocks to be found on Earth (the oldest are in WA). They are older than Gondwana and Rodinia. They belong to an Archean age when continents were nothing like the shape or location they are today, there was no life on the land, the atmosphere lacked oxygen, the days were shorter and the sun dimmer.

By the end of the Archean, around 2.4 billion years ago, photosynthesising microbes began pumping large amounts of oxygen into the atmosphere.

The South Australian landscape is truly ancient and when studied and

understood is like reading a book on the history of the Earth and the evolution of Life.

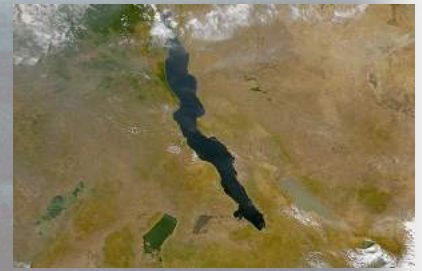
The Gawler Craton is the source rock for SA's richest mines, Olympic Dam and Prominent Hill. There are of course many other financially valuable rock strata across the State eg Cooper Basin, Great Artesian Basin.

Molten South Australia

SA has a huge history of volcanism. For example the lavas of the upper Gawler Range Volcanics on Eyre Peninsula are one of the most voluminous magmatic outpourings preserved on Earth with greater than 30,000 square kilometres still evident. (~1590–1586 Ma)

Plan a Geo bushwalk to look at ancient volcanism, try the Acacia Ridge Hike – Arkaroola

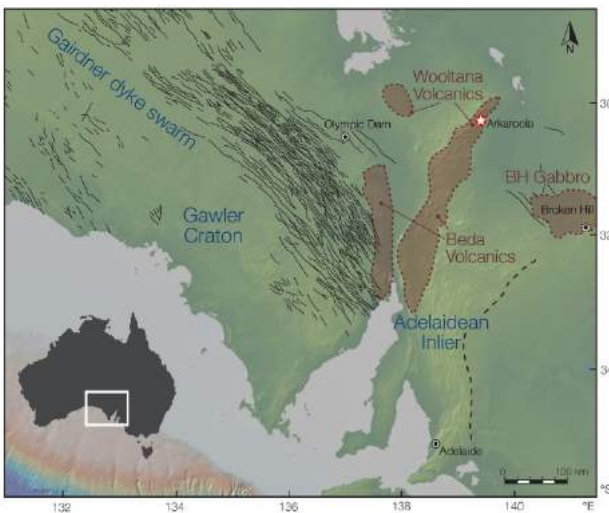
~1590–1586
million years
ago (Ma)



African Rift Valley, Wikipedia

'A giant rift valley developed to the east of Arkaroola some 850 million years ago. At this time, this was the east coast of Australia – there were no "eastern states" – and the Australian continent was found very close to the equator within a super-continent known to geologists as "Rodinia" '.
<https://www.leisuresolutions.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Arkaroola-Field-Guide-A5-V5d-21.pdf>

The rift valley resembled the modern African Rift Valley. Molten rock came to the surface through volcanoes and fissures, the Wooltana Volcanics that can be found near Arkaroola Village.



"The ...Gairdner dykes dated at 827 ± 6 Ma are the longest swarm on the continent and represent the main expression of the ca. 820–830 Ma Gairdner large igneous province that includes the Wooltana Volcanics, Beda Volcanics, and the Little Broken Hill Gabbro ..." (Star indicates location of Tillite Gorge, Arkaroola)...

<https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/430282/1/Erosion.pdf>

granite being produced from sedimentary rock in the world. When the sediments from which the granite were derived were deeply buried, the heat from burial combined with the radiologically produced heat from the Mt Painter Inlier rocks was sufficient to cause melting. Temperatures of at least 720–750°C were required to produce the granite.

Adventurous Adelaide Bushwalkers have been trekking over one of South Australia's most fascinating igneous landscapes, Mawson Plateau. They have been walking over British Empire Granite no less. In another accolade for South Australian geology this is likely the only example of a

Mawson Plateau British Empire Granite

~440–450 Ma

Snowball Earth

Two global snowball earth events occurred in the Neoproterozoic Era, the ca. 717-659 Ma "Sturtian" and ca. 650-635 Ma "Marinoan".

~700 and 635 Ma

When all the continents were grouped together as Rodinia on the equator 700 mya the high rainfall in the tropics resulted in massive nutrient flow from the breakdown of rocks.

"...On geological time scales, the ocean and atmosphere are in equilibrium with respect to CO₂ and can be treated as a single reservoir.

CO₂ is supplied to this reservoir by volcanic and metamorphic emanations, and is removed as sediment in the form of CaCO₃ (limestone) and organic matter (roughly CH₂O). The atmospheric CO₂ forms carbonic acid rain, which is neutralized (protons are consumed) by silicate rock "weathering" (conversion to soil).

The resulting solutes include Ca²⁺ and HCO₃⁻ (bicarbonate) ions that rivers carry to the ocean, where CaCO₃ is precipitated by calcifying organisms and organic matter by primary producers like cyanobacteria and algae. The entire process is often simply referred to as "silicate weathering"

During the Cryogenian Period, encompassing the Sturtian and Marinoan snowball earths, there was a rare preponderance of continents in the tropics, where it is hot and wet. Therefore, the global rate of silicate weathering was high. As a result, CO₂ concentrations fell and the global climate cooled because there was less "greenhouse" warming...."

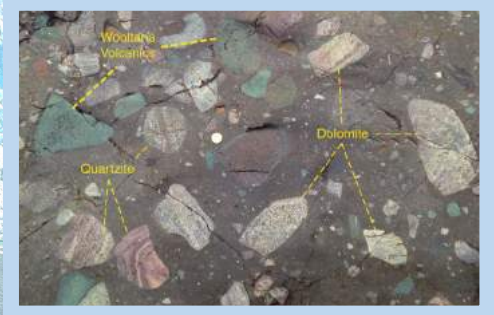
<http://www.snowballearth.org/cause.html>

This is just one hypothesis as to the cause of snowball earth.

These two extraordinary global events have left significant deposits of tillite throughout the Mt Lofty and Flinders Ranges.

Near Adelaide the tillite can be seen in Sturt Gorge Recreational Reserve while the place to see the deposits at Arkaroola is Tillite Gorge.

Another feature is the "cap carbonate" Nuccaleena Formation that was laid down at the end of the second global glaciation and can be seen throughout the Flinders.



Tillite from Arkaroola

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ter.12400>



Plan a Geo bushwalk here, the Golden Spike, Enorama Creek, Flinders Ranges National Park

~589- 542 Ma

Global Stratotype Section and Point (GSSP) for the Geological Ediacaran System and Period, the period during which the first large soft-bodied animals evolved, leaving fossil impressions on sandstone beds of the Pound Subgroup geological formation of the Flinders Ranges. Only such datum point in the Southern Hemisphere. Located at the base of the Nuccaleena Formation, immediately above the Elatina diamictite in Enorama Creek. (Diamictite is a type of sedimentary rock consisting of poorly sorted sediment from clay to boulders)



Arkaroola Reef

650 Ma

The world's best exposed Neoproterozoic interglacial carbonate reef

'.... The Reef is located on the right hand side of the photo and tilts (dips) westwards. The photo shows the shallow water lagoon area which includes Stromatolites (the domed area above the cliff) and the Reef "drop off" and high energy surf zone which lies immediately to the left of the domed area and immediately above the mid-escarpment green vegetation band ...'

<https://www.leisuresolutions.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Arkaroola-Field-Guide-A5-V5d-21.pdf>

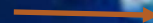


Illustration of Arkaroola Reef copyright Andrew Plant, used with permission.

First animal life?

There is evidence based on fossil findings and molecular clock studies that the proto-sponges (considered to be the first animals on Earth) evolved before and during the first Snowball Earth event. (In Search of the First Animals, Shirin Baydjanova, 2015)

It is possible these life forms existed on the Arkaroola Reef as depicted by the artist by the lighter growth on the right.



Plan a Geo bushwalk here, Arkaroola at Kingsmill Creek. In the foreground are the shales of the Tapley Hill Formation and in the background is Arkaroola Reef

Between the two great global ice events conditions were warm enough for the growth of huge stromatolite reefs. These reefs were nothing like the Great Barrier Reef. There were only relatively insignificant sponge like animal life forms, nothing like the wondrous diversity of coral and fish life of modern reefs.

The Oodnaminta and the Arkaroola Reef are two of just five Neoproterozoic reefs known for Australia and all are found in the Northern Flinders Ranges. There are no known equivalent reefs elsewhere on Earth. Of the five

sites, the Oodnaminta and Arkaroola Reefs have the best exposures and Arkaroola Reef has the best preserved textures for the fossil evidence.

"The reef is distinguished by its diverse stromatolitic framework; its internal architecture as exposed on the gorge walls of Kingsmill Creek, reveals spatial and temporal variability of the stromatolite assemblage. Growth.....initiated development of a stable carbonate substrate on underlying thick mudstone-to-sandstone. Once stabilised, a robust reef framework developed, first through vertical growth of large domical thrombolitic stromatolites forming stacked bioherms of metre-scale relief...."

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08120099.2020.1732464>

Acraman Impact Ejecta

580 Ma



Illustration copyright Don Davis used with permission, shows Chicxulub Asteroid Impact not Acraman Impact, but appearance would have been similar on impact.



When found the ejecta appears as a thin band of pink rock. In the photo right, it is within the wavy green band of rock.



Plan a Geo bushwalk here, exposure of Acraman Impact ejecta, Bunyerroo Gorge, Flinders Ranges

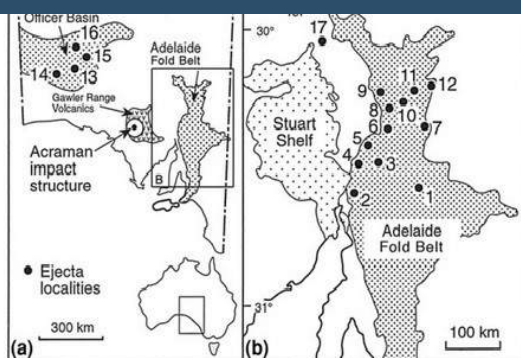


Fig. 7.3 Maps showing locations where the Acraman **ejecta** layer has been recognized. **a** Map of South Australia showing outlines of Adelaide Fold Belt and Officer Basin and the **location** of the Acraman impact structure. The numbered locations are drill cores in the Officer Basin containing the Acraman **ejecta** layer as follows: 13 = both Observatory Hill 1 and Murnaroo 1, 14 = Lake Maurice West 1, 15 = Giles 1, and 16 = Munta 1. **b** Map showing the outlines of the Adelaide Fold Belt and the equivalent Stuart Shelf and the locations of occurrences of the Acraman **ejecta** layer. Site 6 is **Bunyerroo Gorge**, site 12 is Wearing Hills, and all of the occurrences are surface outcrops except for 17, which is a drill core in strata of the Stuart Shelf. Modified after Fig. 1 in Wallace et al. (1996)

4

kilometres across and travelling at around 90 000 kilometres an hour (the asteroid) slammed into an area of red volcanic rock about 430 kilometres northwest of Adelaide. Within seconds the meteorite vaporised in a ball of fire, carving out a crater about 4 kilometres deep and 40 kilometres in diameter and spawning earthquakes fierce enough to raise 100-metre-high tsunamis in a shallow sea 300 kilometres away...."

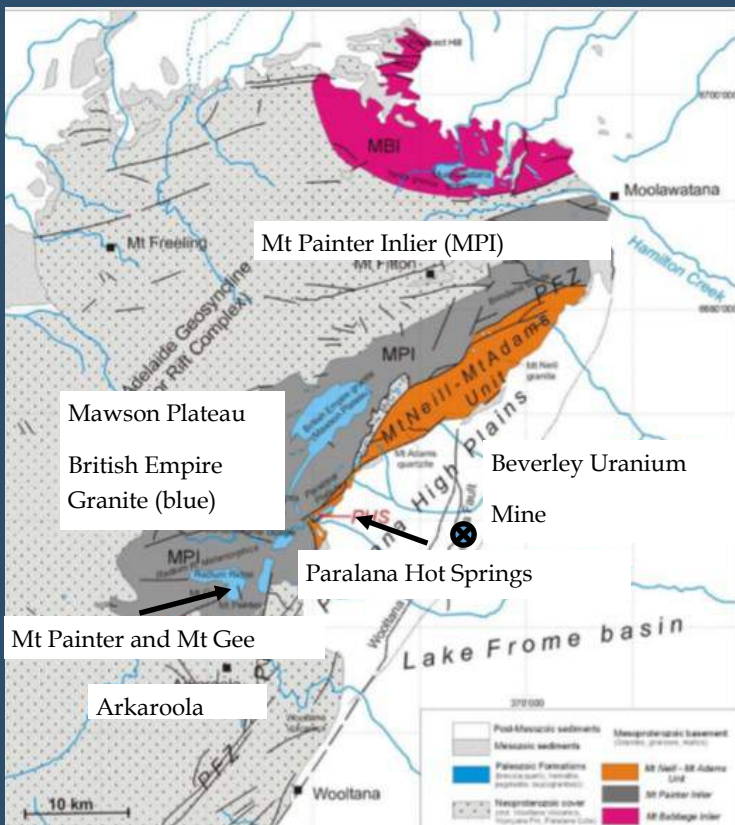
<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg16321988-100-secret-strike/>

<https://books.google.com.au/books?id=-INR5Y7PFWYC&pg=PA377&lpg=PA377&dq=bunyerroo+gorge+ejecta+location&source=bl&ots=fYodN5vJzI&sig=ACFu3U1-f1R4DFAU4m541Kj8u9qFCe52tg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjsir3zTqAhX2xTgGHS-IBIAQ6AEwBHoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=bunyerroo%20gorge%20ejecta%20location&f=false>

Mt Painter Inlier

1,500 Ma

92
U
238.03



The Mt Painter Inlier comprises early Mesoproterozoic (1,600 - 1,000 million year old) metamorphosed sedimentary, felsic volcanic, and granitic rocks. (felsic volcanic rocks may contain phenocrysts of mafic minerals, usually hornblende, pyroxene or a feldspar mineral). The Mt Neil granite of this region is well known as a uranium-rich igneous rock and is the source of much of the nuclear decay heat that has generated the British Empire granite of Mawson Plateau 440mya and heats Paralana Hot Springs today. Mt Painter and Mt Gee have significant uranium mineralisation. The millions of years of hydrothermal activity in the region has resulted in uranium being deposited in paleo channels on the adjacent plains eg at Beverley Uranium Mine.

An inlier is an area of older rocks surrounded by younger rocks.

Hot Rocks

Natural radiogenic heat generated by the natural decay of U-Th-K rich minerals in the 1580 Ma granitic rocks of the Mt Painter Inlier have generated geological phenomena and geological processes over geologic time that are not replicated anywhere else in Australia...

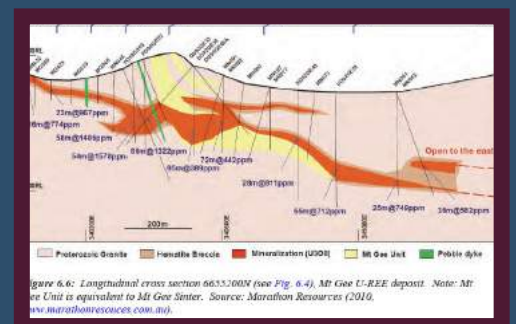
Arkaroola's features are unique and equivalent phenomena anywhere else on Earth have not been reported in the international literature. This radiogenic heat is generated by the natural decay of radioactive uranium, thorium and potassium minerals within 1580 Ma granitic rocks. This heat, trapped below many kilometres of overlying rock, has interacted with its surroundings to cause a unique suite of phenomena. Over 1580 Ma it has potentially been responsible for the enhanced metamorphism of the Neoproterozoic sedimentary cover ... the genesis of granitic melts, explosive hydrothermal brecciation of basement rocks, high temperature hydrothermal uranium mineralisation, ...and a multi-million year geothermal site with boiling pools and geysers and the modern day Paralana Hot Springs...."

The hydrothermal system at Arkaroola now apparent as Paralana Hot Springs once produced massive geysers as found at Yellowstone in the USA. But Yellowstone is a volcanic system. Arkaroola gets its heat from nuclear decay. It is unique in the world as the longest such non volcanic hydrothermal system lasting for some 260m years.

What a Rockstar!

Old Faithfull,
Yellowstone

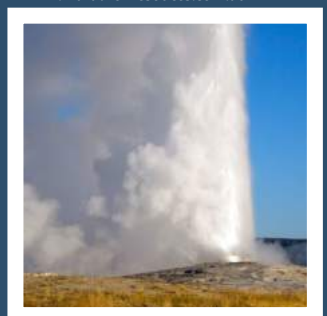
www.yellowstonepark.com



Mt Gee uranium

Source: Marathon Resources (2010)

www.marathonresources.com.au



Plan a Geo bushwalk here, visit Paralana Hot Springs, but be careful of the Radon gas that may be lingering.

260 Ma

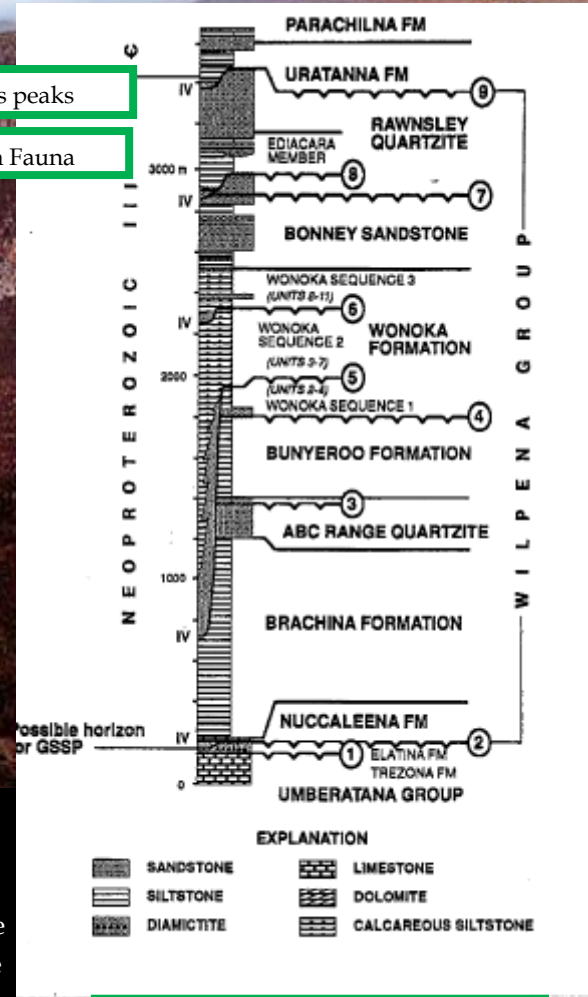
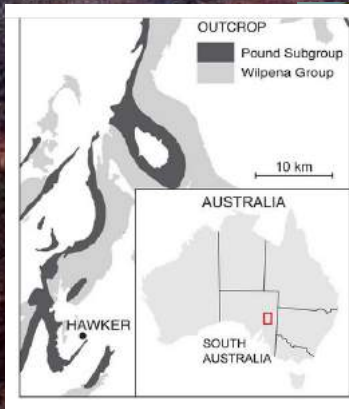
<https://www.leisuresolutions.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Arkaroola-Field-Guide-A5-V5d-21.pdf>

Wilpena Group Rocks and Ediacaran Fauna

550 Ma

Outstanding Flinders Ranges peaks

Ediacaran Fauna



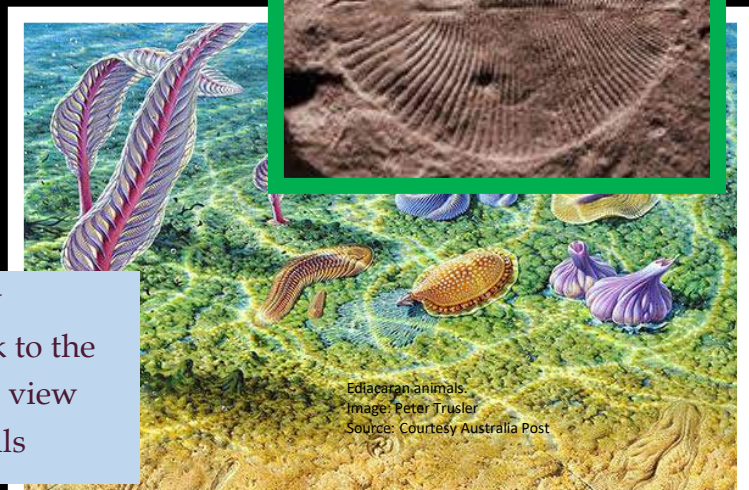
The Wilpena Group sediments of the Flinders Ranges are familiar to all Adelaide Bushwalkers. They form the prominent features throughout the Ranges including Wilpena Pound, ABC Range, Devils Peak etc.. These sediments are the later stages of the Adelaide Geosyncline before the Delmarian Orogeny at the time of the breakup of Rodinia ended sedimentation.

They contain the Ediacaran fossils, the first multi-cellular complex life. These are found elsewhere in the world but the best exposures are at Ediacara Conservation Park,

proclaimed in 2007, and is located east of Lake Torrens. The Ediacaran fossils can be seen at the South Australian Museum.

Global Rockstar!

Take a geology education walk to the SA Museum to view Ediacaran fossils



Ediacaran animals.
Image: Peter Trusler
Source: Courtesy Australia Post

Arkaroola as a Mars Analogue

Mars 2027?

S

outh Australia's outback
simulates life on Mars...

"We selected the Arkaroola region over 30 or 40 sites all over central Australia as being the one where all the ducks lined up in terms of scientific interest, access and land tenure," Dr Clarke said.

Doug Sprigg, the owner of Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary, said there had been eight Mars simulations at Arkaroola over the past two decades, however the researchers worked in temporary structures rather than a permanent state of the art analogue.

He said while some groups came to test software and equipment, others had come to dig for fossils and search for microscopic life.

Arkaroola has 100-million-year-old hot springs that appear to have evidence of extremophiles – organisms that live in extreme environments.

"This ancient life exists happily in current hot springs on the earth surface and in the mid oceanic rift zones, so developing and testing methods to proving its existence in Arkaroola may give us the methods to detect pre-existing life on the surface of Mars," Mr Sprigg said....'

Outback South Australia
at Arkaroola

ABC SA Country Hour, By
Marty McCarthy

9/11/19



Simulation astronauts installing a weather station in Arkaroola . Credit Mars Society Australia and Saber Astronautics

With some imagination you too can have a taste of a Mars walk when you visit Arkaroola. Observe and experience the rocky terrain, ancient landscape and further north desert dunes. On Mars evidence of hydrothermal hot springs which once may have existed as has at Paralana Hot Springs for millions of years may be found. Like at Arkaroola such geological features may have encouraged life in a harsh environment over huge lengths of time and evidence of life may be present.

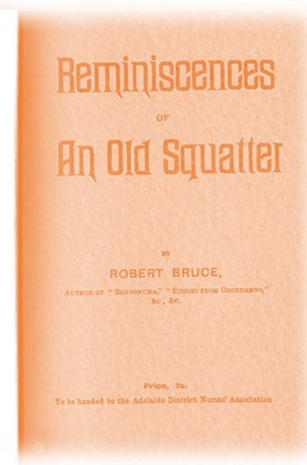
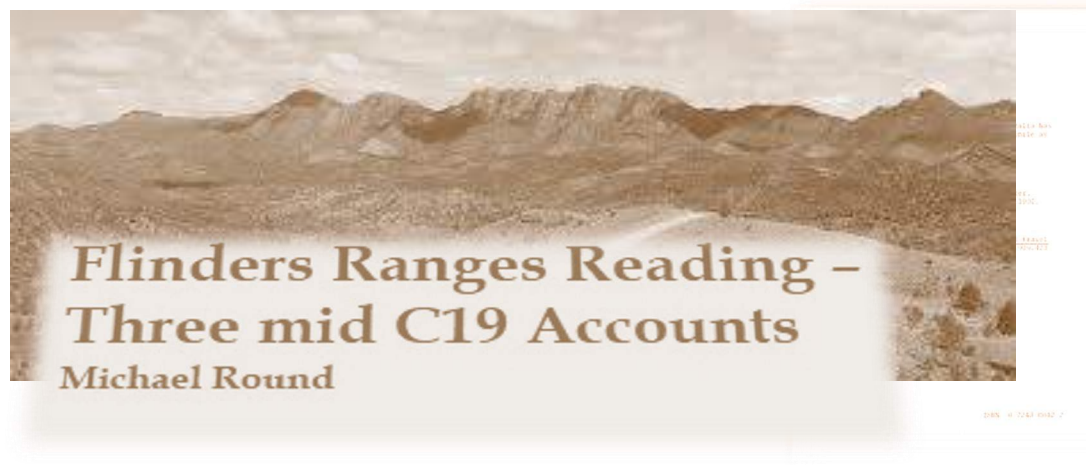
The Mars Society is pleased to announce that the 23rd Annual International Mars Society Convention will be convened Thursday-Sunday, October 15-18, 2020 all over the world via the Internet!



A rover explores Arkaroola in outback South Australia Credit Mars Society Australia.

This ancient, arid terrain represents some of the best analogue landscapes and settings in Australia to observe features and processes fundamental to the evolution of the Earth. The strata of the Flinders Ranges record the evolution of terrestrial surface environments and the biosphere through the Cryogenian, Ediacaran and Cambrian periods, including evidence for Neoproterozoic glaciations, orbital and rotational dynamics and asteroid impact. The diverse assemblages of stromatolites, ancient and modern hydrothermal systems, and alteration assemblages provide field laboratories for astrobiological and hyperspectral research and training. For these reasons the northern Flinders Ranges near Arkaroola have been selected as a site for multi-disciplinary Mars analogue research and space education..."

<https://www.aca.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/Thomas%20Clarke%20Gostin%20Williams%20and%20Walter%20202012.pdf>



It is just natural I think, to take an interest in the areas you walk in and what place more interesting than the Flinders Ranges with its sometimes vexed history of exploration, surveying, pastoralism, mining, farming and railways. And what better time than now due to the Covid 19 restrictions, to read and find out more about the place? Hans Mincham's *The Story of the Flinders Ranges* tells a great story of the area's history but he can't tell everything and it's thanks to this book that I came across references to three published contemporary accounts of life in the central Flinders in the mid-C19. The accounts are those of William Jessop who was essentially a travel writer who moved about in that general area in 1859, Robert Bruce who was overseer of Arkaba in 1858-59 and Frederick Hayward who owned Aroona from 1850-1862.

All of these accounts give a picture and often in great detail, of what life was like at that region, a time not long before it would have more people and industry than it has today and two decades before any towns were surveyed and settled. The accounts describe the crude habitations of that time and of the people who lived there, the itinerant

workers and of others passing through and all had a great deal to say about the aborigines. Here though, I'm going to try and cover aspects that are more closely relevant to bushwalking, namely something on what the region was once like, of its fauna and of course, on anything to do with walking!

Jessop was highly educated and describes his travels in a writing style Mincham describes as being at times 'quaint' and I can only agree. Certainly the book's title is. Hence, while Jessop might go 'thither' and travel at night on horseback with the way lit by the sky's 'refulgent orb' rather than the moon, I soon got to appreciate the great variety of things he wrote about even if some of it was gained second hand, it might otherwise been lost, stories about the ways of the local aborigines in particular. Jessop was a guest of various stations during his time in the area and they provided him not only with accommodation but also with a shod horse to get to his next destination, knowing the horse would one day be returned. It's hardly surprising then that he wrote how the station owners and overseers we're very generous though in this respect, only Kanyaka was less welcoming but it reportedly did suffer from an excess of passing

traffic.

Jessop was a keen peak-bagger and stopping over at one station in the district, wrote how he's following my usual course, assaulted the highest hill that was near me and on another summit 'heaped together some large stones in humble imitation of a cairn'. As I've previously recounted in *Tandanya*, Jessop devoted a whole chapter on the long day he spent attempting to climb St Marys Peak by way of walking along the rim of the Pound from Edeowie Gap. Jessop scoffed at the name given to the Pound's highest peak and instead strongly considered that it should have the aboriginal name. At least, so he believed, that would serve as a reminder of a people that he and many others at that time, considered were destined for extinction.

Whether on foot or on horseback, newcomers in particular sometimes came to grief when traveling in the broader region north of Pekina and Jessop tells of several accounts he heard of people dying of heatstroke or thirst during summer and sometimes after getting lost. Fifteen deaths in the previous six years was the reported tally. After describing how heat stroke first 'loosens the joints, unbraces the nerves and dries a man up. Jessop goes into a lot more detail and perhaps not all of is strictly



Robert Bruce

clinical of the unfortunate's awful decline. (I just thought that if you're thinking of going walking in dry country in summertime, you might be interested!)

Jessop wrote a lot about the aborigines and black-white relationships and at one time, he reports was advised "You talk too much yabba yabba, you yabba yabba all day". This was in the early days of miners heading north and Jessop gives the impression that he preferred the company of station people and described the miners as having 'their labour hard, their feeling hard and their speech hard'. It was a small world and the Jessop met or heard stories of people, some who's names we still know or read

about today because of their land ownership or because of their deeds or misdeeds. Mt Hayward was already known by that name at the time and Jessop even referred to 'Haywards Range', now the Heysen Range but having no officially recognized name for over a century. Jessop had several friendly encounters with Bruce though he never got to meet Hayward while staying as a guest of Aroona because the latter was away on business at the time.

For sheer exuberance as expressed in his writing, Robert Bruce surely has few equals and this is immediately apparent in his *Reminiscences of an Old Squatter* published in 1902. In it, Bruce describes his experiences from the time he boarded the ship *Marion* at Port Adelaide and bound for Port Augusta and followed this up by a year or more as Arkaba's overseer. Bruce had emigrated following the urging of his older brother Doug who was overseer at Wonoka and where Bruce first stayed to learn the trade. But first Bruce had to get there and his description of walking from Saltia to Mt Arden Station during a heatwave with a large dog draped around his neck like a scarf because the heat-affected creature refused to move, is at times side-splittingly

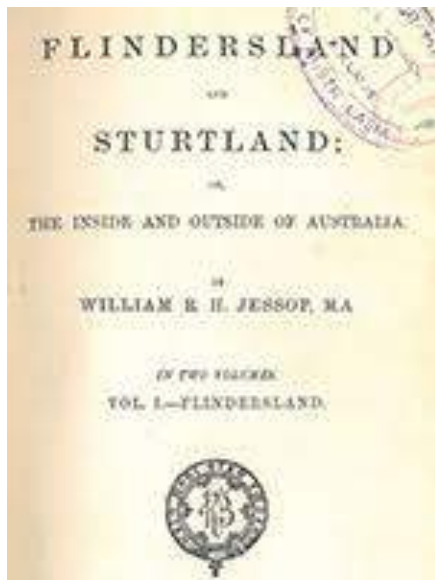
funny.

One of Bruce's contemporaries described him as being 'ever enquiring' and this is well reflected in the detail of the things he wrote about. He also seemed able to bring out the funny side of seemingly almost anything. This includes his descriptions of some cultural misunderstandings between whites and aborigines and which sometimes had an amusing outcome. Bruce's most notable encounter was probably with John McDouall Stuart who was resting at Moolooloo when returning from what was probably his forth venture into central Australia. Their short exchange really brought out what a tough nut Stuart was, but also how very draining on him that that expedition had been.

Many bushwalkers may well warm to Bruce's account of being lost while out on horseback when he was still new to the country. His description of his tussle between rising panic and reason and how he dealt with it and for reason to eventually prevail will I think, bring a smile to the face of anyone who has been in that situation. It's clear that Bruce had a kind nature but what he was like in real life is unclear because, despite how as a reader you get the



The harsh Willochra Plain



impression of a 'life-of-the-party' sort of personality, Jessop gives the impression of Bruce being a quiet sort of person and who at their first encounter, showed Jessop his landscape sketches.

Bruce loved words and Paul Depesquale's critical review of SA's C19- early C20 writing lamented his sometimes over-the-top use of them although he did at least concede that the writing could be entertaining. Max Harris thought it a great read and considered the book to be unique among Australia's pioneer writing.

You are very likely to burst out in laughter at times while reading Bruce's Reminiscences but not so the next author and to whom I'm afraid I never really warmed.

Frederick Hayward worked with stock at Pekina for two years before going to Aroona in 1850 and soon afterwards, purchasing it. Aroona at that time was described as the 'remotest and wildest run in the colony'. Hayward was very determined, hard-working and resourceful and very able to get his own way with people. Mincham wrote of Hayward that 'no tougher pioneer ever went north' nor 'probably worked harder'. Hayward knew that he occupied the most beautiful run in the colony but despite that, he always had his mind set on returning to England a wealthy man. He was able to do this after selling Aroona for an extraordinarily high sum in 1862 and not long before a crippling drought set in. Back 'home', he retired early on a large estate which he called Aroona. Perhaps because of that eventual goal, Hayward never spent

money on improving the living quarters at Aroona which, demoted after its sale to be an outstation of Edeowie, soon fell into ruin according to Mincham.

The passages of Hayward's Reminiscences that have most stuck with me are his accounts of the occasions when a report would come in that aborigines had taken off with a mob of sheep. Hayward would soon get a small party together and give chase. They could be out for a couple of days and having finally closed in on the offenders, would attack typically early next morning. It's fair I think to conclude that Hayward's account of the attacks are very understated and with the survivors all fled, his party would gather up all the artefacts used in daily life and hunting and burn the lot. In later years, he wrote how he lamented the passing of the good old days and it's clear what he's referring to. This adds support to the reply that Bruce got one day when he came across a group of women and enquired where all the men were. 'White fella shoot 'em all.'



Fig. 3: Australian Aborigines— War. [Calvert Collection, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.]

<https://www.abc.com.au/hiv/article/2016/03/17/petition-calls-official-frontier-wars-remembrance-day>

".. This adds support to the reply that Bruce got one day when he came across a group of women and enquired where all the men were. 'White fella shoot 'em all.' .."

'....The remoteness of new pastoral districts and the difficulty of providing adequate police resources to them seemed almost inevitably to produce a hidden culture of settler reprisals against Aboriginal people. Many went unreported, the only records being hidden in private diaries. In an effort to hide the killings, Aboriginal bodies were often burnt.....Violence in the Flinders Ranges proved to be as bad as that on Eyre Peninsula and the South East. Regardless of the Mounted Troopers there were many killings on both sides of the frontier. An eye for an eye was a common method applied by both parties as taking prisoners was often very inconvenient....'

<https://www.southeastaustralianhistory.com.au/silence.htm>

As can only be expected of course, much of the lower country would have been very different to what it is today but the contemporary writers' stated impressions can be hard to interpret. For example, even good saltbush country might look frightful to someone newly arrived and more accustomed to England's green fields. Jessop described crossing land that looked very bare at one stage but none of them wrote of the terrible dust storms that typically afflicted the region probably every summer in later decades and this situation almost certainly exacerbated by the arrival of rabbits in the 1870s. There's no problem however with interpreting Bruce's description of the river red gums lining the banks of Willochra Creek and how they stood out as a distant green landmark as he travelled north for the first time towards Kanyaka. These days, any river red gums now lining the creek in the same area are dead and this I think reflects the loss of a greater amount of vegetation that once covered the Willochra Plain and kept the salt at bay.

Surface waters are always a thing of interest in dry country and one of the first things that Jessop commented on when he first arrived at Aroona was of seeing 'an abundance of water' and 'numerous springs which bubble out everywhere'. Not so today although forty years ago I met an old man there who told me that water still sprung from the ground during the time he was employed there although that could now be nearly a century ago.

Bruce is the most informative of the three on fauna and some of what he wrote is pretty spectacular. When he first arrived at Pt Augusta in 1858, Bruce wrote how the nests of stick-nest rats were scattered among the black oaks that grew along the

shoreline. Like many others I suspect, he tells of taking some delight in setting fire to one for the excitement of seeing rats and possibly snakes as he'd been told, flee the inferno. After leaving that fledgling town by bullock cart and heading to Pichie Richie and Saltia, he reported how they saw a pair of bustards nearby and how the driver cussed at not having his gun with him. Bruce encountered a very large carpet python on two occasions while at Arkaba, one of them while he was drinking from a creek. He killed both despite station workers later chiding him for killing the first of them. (And here's me earlier on writing of his kind nature. It obviously didn't extend to pythons!) I think he did eventually lament his action. Another of Bruce's notable encounters with wildlife was while staying overnight in a hut and have a plague of native rodents of some sort swarm through the hut only to just as quickly disappear.

Jessop's useful contribution concerning fauna is, while a guest at Arkaba, writing of meeting a lubra with a bag of tortoises as well a boy catching fish 'of good size' with a line and bent pin. And I can't think now if it was Jessop or Bruce, perhaps both, but possum skins were commonly worn or used as blankets by aborigines and these were from local possums now extinct in the Flinders except for the most southerly margin. (Apparently an attempt is currently being made to reintroduce possums to the Flinders.) We know of course of the decline or complete loss of many fauna species in the Flinders but to read first-hand accounts of encounters with some of those species is kind of shocking and it makes you more aware of just how much the poorer both the landscape and we are for it. From my not always reliable recall,

Hayward's only comment on wild fauna was to write how he got to find wallaby hunting a bit dull.

To finish on a personal note, I first read the books by Jessop and Bruce behind lock and electronic key in the Somerville Reading Room at the SLSA a decade ago while Hayward's account can be readily accessed in the library shelves. Since then, I've managed to buy a second-hand copy of the facsimile edition of Bruce's book published in 1970 by the SA Libraries Board. More recently, I purchased a facsimile of Jessop's book published on demand by a company based in the USA. These books I am happy to lend if you are interested. In the references below, I've also included Mincham's history of the Hawker district and written to celebrate the town's centenary. However it does cover a wide area including the land farmed during the agricultural advance and it includes a wonderful selection of historic photographs.

Bruce, Robert (1902) *Reminiscences of and Old Squatter*.

Hayward, J.F. (1927-28) *Reminiscences*. Proceedings of the Royal Geographic Society of Australia (SA Branch), Vol. 29.

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Mincham Hans (1980) *Hawker - Hub of the Flinders*.



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Have you spotted something quirky?