

ADELAIDE BUSHWALKERS

Tandanya



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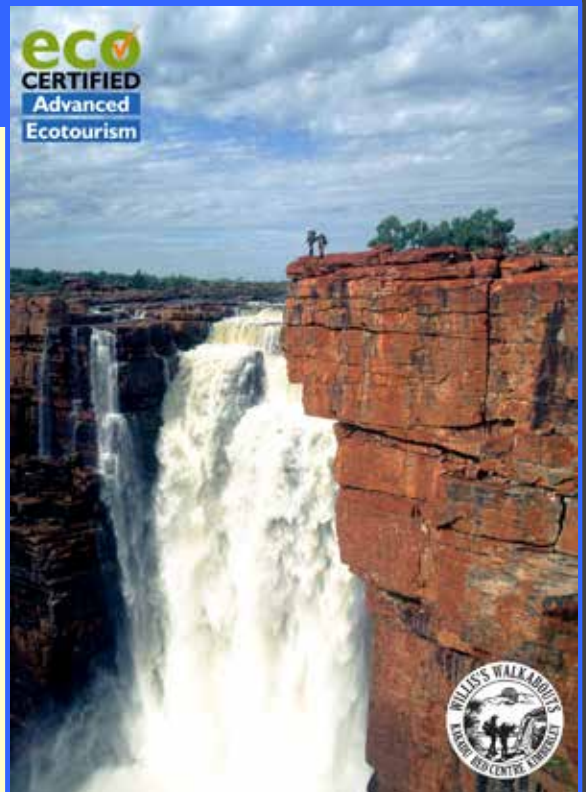
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Adelaide Bushwalkers Inc.

Tandanya

Summer 2013 Volume 43 Number 4



Wind in the Willows (and Gum Trees). Sandbar, Photo: David Wattchow

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Tandanya Summer 2013

A Day On the Heysen Trail

By John Bartlett

The Warren Bonython Memorial Walk Sunday 6th October 2013

Warren Bonython, the well known South Australian public figure had special interests in bushwalking, adventuring and conservation. In particular, it was Warren who conceived the idea of the long distance Heysen Trail.

He died on the 2nd of April 2012 at the age of 95, having been the patron of Adelaide Bushwalkers for more than 40 years.



Elder Range, Photo: Alex Potoczky

In his will, Warren bequeathed the sum of \$10,000 to ABW, a very generous amount indeed, and now that Memorial Walk is over, the Committee will devise a plan to spend the bequest in a manner that would have pleased Warren, and that will benefit bushwalkers in this wonderful state for many years to come.

Initial thoughts are to build a shelter with rainwater tank somewhere along the Heysen Trail.

The Memorial Walk was the brainchild of The Friends of the Heysen Trail – the aim being to have walkers covering the entire length of the Heysen Trail, approximately 1,150km long, stretching from Cape Jervis to Parachilna Gorge, on Sunday, 6th October 2013.

The Friends assigned sections for various walking groups to cover, and co-ordinated the whole event with Simon Cameron, a still current ABW member taking on the role of being the Event Director.

Warren Bonython always wore yellow shorts, so to add a touch of nostalgia to the walk, Simon urged walkers to wear yellow shorts on the big day, and he handed out yellow flags shaped like shorts and asked that leaders erect their flags on a suitable post or tree at the southern end of their official walk.

ABW was assigned seven sections, covering the Heysen Trail from Dutchmans Stern to Buckaringa Gorge, and from Hawker - Leigh Creek Road to

Bunyerroo Gorge, a total distance of 111km. Right from the initial notification, it was my belief that as ABW is one of the premier walking clubs in SA, we should make every effort to commit ourselves and complete the seven stages assigned to us.

Earlier this year when the club became aware of the project, a small group of club walk leaders got together and started formulating plans to complete our seven stages, and it emerged that Mark Proctor would take the lead and became the organiser of the event.

Seven leaders were quickly found, and then came the task of organising such things as pick-up and drop off points, transport, catering, camping sites, timing and so on.

The organising of the event turned out to be a very complicated matter, and Mark's organising skills came to the fore. He finally set out in great and realistic detail just how transport should be arranged, and how the walks should be undertaken.

To be sure of road conditions, access and egress from the start and finish of our seven stages, camp sites, travelling times and catering, Mark and I decided to make a two-day reconnaissance trip in early August, going in Mark's car. This trip proved to be beneficial, and Mark was able to fine tune his very detailed transport and walks plan which in due course ran like the proverbial clockwork.

To assist with transporting small groups to and from their walks over roads not suitable for our bus to travel, two 4WD vehicles were needed, and two club members readily came forward to assist.

It had been hoped firstly, that there would be at least four walkers in each group and secondly, that there would be at least 35 walkers overall, thus enabling the club to charter a bus.

However, only 26 walkers came (23 travelled in the bus), so a self drive bus was hired, and fortunately, three of the walkers were licensed to drive such a bus.

Another major obstacle was getting permission to walk across Arkaba Station. The station owners operate a guided bushwalking business and they did not want our walkers to be seen by their clients. Whilst they allow Heysen Trail walkers to cross their land – on the trail – they do not permit entry or exit from the Heysen Trail except via Moralana Scenic Drive. We wanted one of our groups to exit over Arkaba Station land near Red Range. Because of the transition of part of the station to Perpetual Lease, they are permitted to make



*Mark and Alex (section 55),
Photo: Arthur Ward*

such stipulations but after three days of negotiation we were able to reach a compromise.

At last, after all the planning, the October Long Weekend arrived.

The bus left the Franklin Street bus depot at 6pm on Friday 4th October, and drove to camp at The Dutchman, near Dutchmans Stern. The two 4WDs met the bus there. Two additional walkers went straight to Wilpena Pound to start walking on the Sunday.

On Saturday morning, the seven groups were driven to their respective start points for the weekend to prepare for the big day to follow. As the travel plan was too complicated to be included in these lines, the summary that follows should suffice as a record of a great event in the history of ABW.

Come Sunday 6th October, and all groups completed their stages of the Heysen Trail without any hitches or mishaps. The weather was fine and warm, and the millions of flies recently hatched made a nuisance of themselves.

As planned, and after the bus and the two 4WDs picked up all the walking groups at the end of their walks, our whole party camped at Hawker in the Flinders Ranges Caravan Park on Sunday night, and we joined with a group from The Friends of the Heysen Trail (including the Event Director Simon Cameron) in a fine celebratory dinner at Hawker Sports and Social Club.

While "saying a few words", Simon reported that at that stage, leaders of all but 3 of the 62 stages had reported to him that they had completed their stage. The missing groups reported in the following day.

Simon handed out "Hiking Certificates" to all the participating walkers present, and in passing over to me to "say a few words", I had the great pleasure of handing Mark a thank-you gift in the form of an excellent book of pictures of South Australia taken by Stavros Pippas from all the ABW participants. The whole party, in fact the whole club is very thankful for the work and dedication Mark put into the event.



John Bartlett, Moralana Drive

By next morning, Monday, everybody was on their way home after a great weekend.

ABW can be proud of its achievement.

Details of the event are as follows:

4WD drivers	Arthur Ward Malcolm Kirkham
Bus drivers	Stefano de Pasquale Romano Mihailovic Giovano Norris (aka John Norris)
Organising Committee	Mark Proctor John Bartlett Trevor May Andrew Cope

Walking Groups

A - Warren Gorge access to Heysen Trail (Saturday)
15.4km, then to Dutchmans Stern 19km (Sunday)

John Norris (Leader)
Judith Cahill
Sally-Anne Thomas
Lucinda Pow

B - Dutchmans Stern - Eyre Depot 19km (Saturday)
Eyre depot - Mt Arden South 12km (Sunday) and
Mt Arden South - Warren Gorge exit 4.5km (Sunday)

Trevor May (Leader)
Lindy May
Trevor Moyle
Sharon Moyle

C - Warren Gorge access to Heysen Trail at Mt Arden
South 4.5km (Saturday) Mt Arden South - Buckaringa
12km (Sunday)

Andrew Cope (Leader)
Jeannie Pope
Andrew Kay

D - Moralana Drive (near Black Gap)- Red Range
campsite on Heysen Trail 15km (Saturday) Red Range
campsite - Leigh Creek Road 21km (Sunday)

Mark Proctor (Leader)
Alex Potoczky

E - Wilpena - Moralana Drive (near Black Gap) 15km
(Saturday) Moralana Drive - Red range 15km, and Red
Range exit to Moralana Drive 4km (Sunday)

Romano Mihailovic (Leader)
Bruce Hood

Cont/...

A Day On the Heysen Trail

By John Bartlett, *continued.*

F - Walks in Wilpena area (Saturday) Wilpena -
Moralana Drive (near Black Gap) 15km (Sunday)

John Bartlett (Leader)
Vic Rowe
Michael Dzintarnieks
Ellen Lyall

G - Walks in Wilpena Area (Saturday) Bunyeroo Gorge
- Wilpena 20km (Sunday)

Roger Kempson (Leader)
Melanie Jackson
Ann Ward
Darrien Newcombe
Marie Newcombe
Stefano de Pasquale

To finance the trip, each person on the bus paid \$150, and all members of the group paid \$25 for the dinner at the Hawker Sports and Social Club.

The two 4WD owners were reimbursed for fuel in accordance with the current club arrangement, and all those on the bus were subsidised \$40 each by the club.

Finally, it worth saying again that the ABW participation in this memorable event was very well organised, ran very smoothly, and all had a good time, upholding the wonderful bushwalking spirit and companionship that exists in Adelaide Bushwalkers in the club's 66th year.



Adelaide Bushwalkers covered 7 sections, here's the group that did the sepctacular Wilpena Pound to Morelana Drive, Photo: Ellen Lyall



WILLIS'S WALKABOUTS

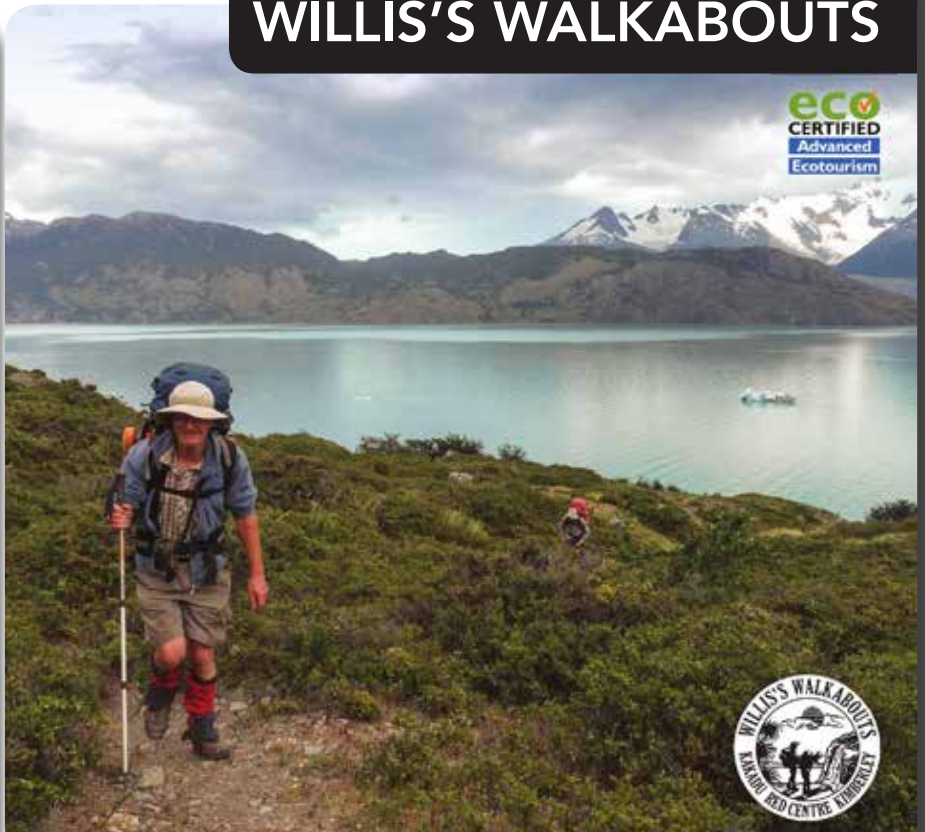
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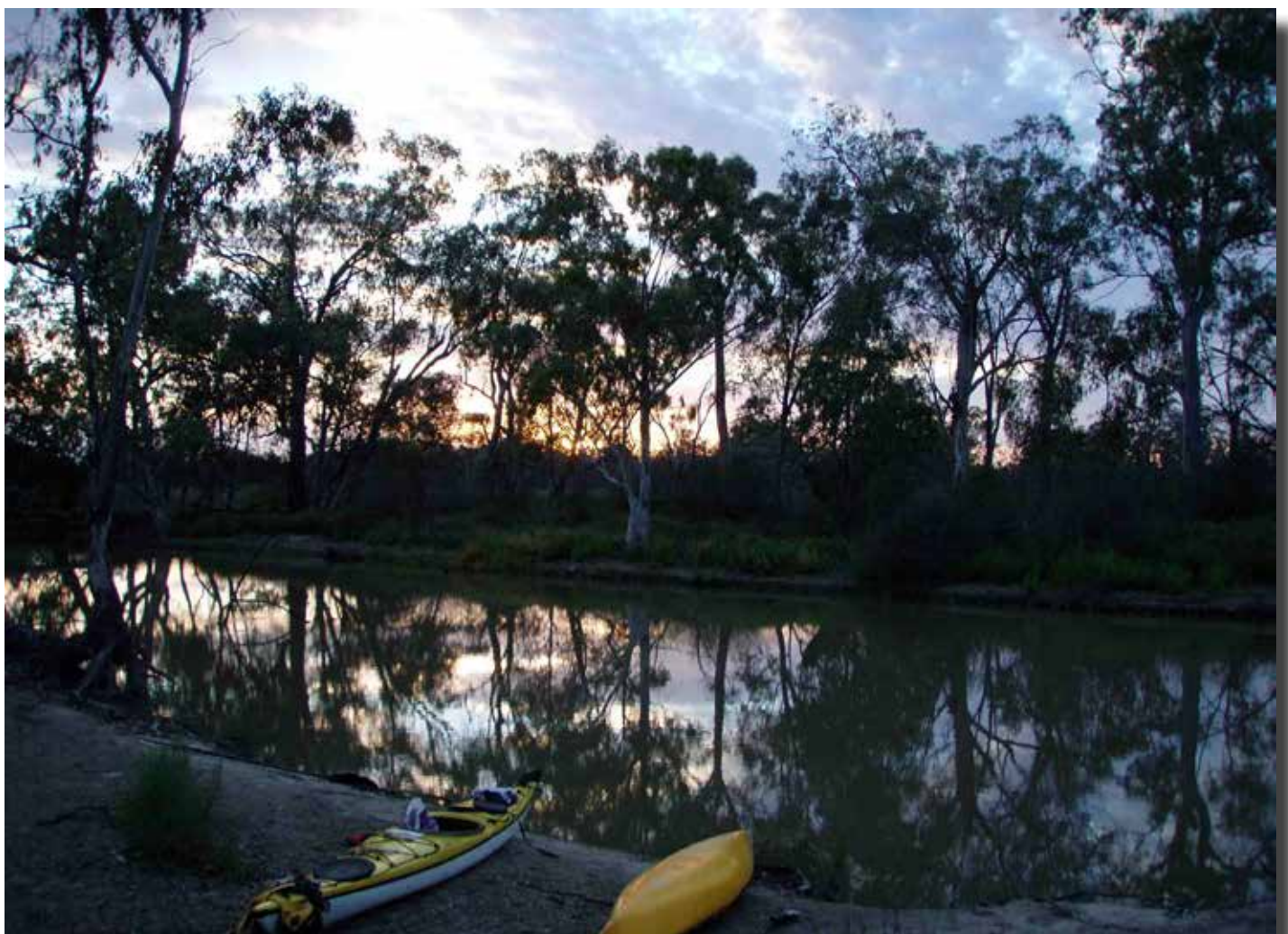
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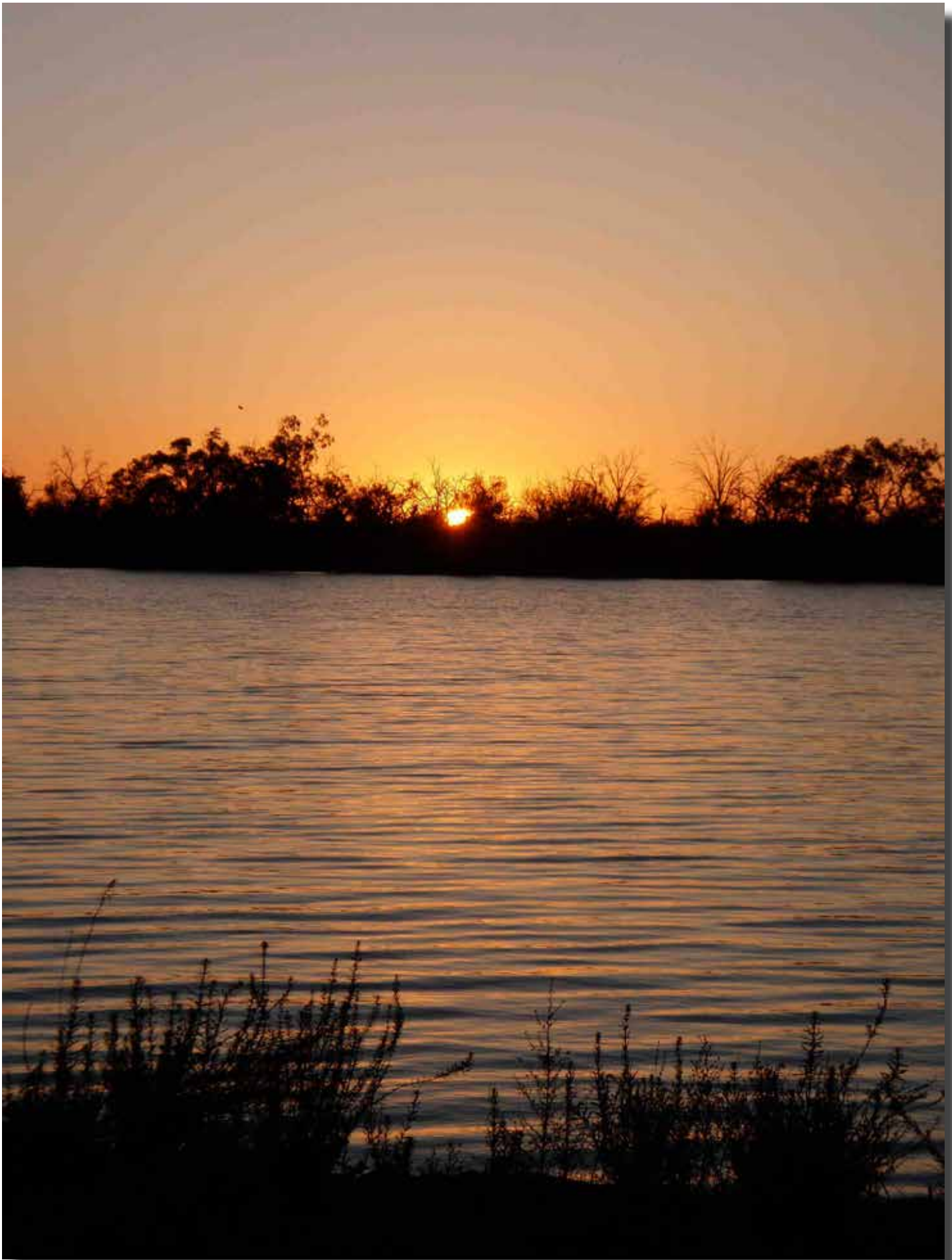


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Wind in the Willows (and Gum Trees). Wide Waters Sunrise, Photo: David Wattchow

Wind in the Willows (and Gum Trees). Photo by David Wattchow on opposite page

Adelaide Bushwalkers Cactus Project on Gum Creek Station August 2013

by Peter Beer

This year the group consisted of 17 searchers who were split into two teams. The same procedures were followed as in previous years, and a record number of cacti were found, principally small seedlings. Details are given below.

The searchers were: Lorraine Billett, Malcolm Kirkham, Alan Plekys, Peter Woodlands, Peter and Alison Beer, Ann and Arthur Ward, Peter and Gwen Shaughnessy, Helen Smith, Syd Kuchel (ARPA), Charlie Adam, David Markey, Judith Cahill, Michael Dzintarnieks and Merylyn Browne.

Num.	Name	Latitude	Long.	Date	Descr
199	1C7	-31 12.73	138 35.482	8/06/2013	L35p.
105	2C17	-31 13.108	138 35.452	8/05/2013	55p. L
204	3C12	-31 12.783	138 35.493	8/06/2013	51p. L
408	11C12	-31 13.357	138 36.097	8/09/2013	2x53.

As in 2012, the number of large cacti was drastically reduced compared with the first surveys of the control area done in 2008 - 2012.

It is to be noted that the terms Large, Medium and Small refer to the size of the plates and not necessarily to the overall size of the cactus plant. Whereas the large cacti found on the first phase between 2008 and 2011 often had over 100 plates, the largest found this year had a maximum of 16 plates, and mostly many less.

The average number of large plates for the 2008-2011 was 19, for 2012-2013 the average was 10.



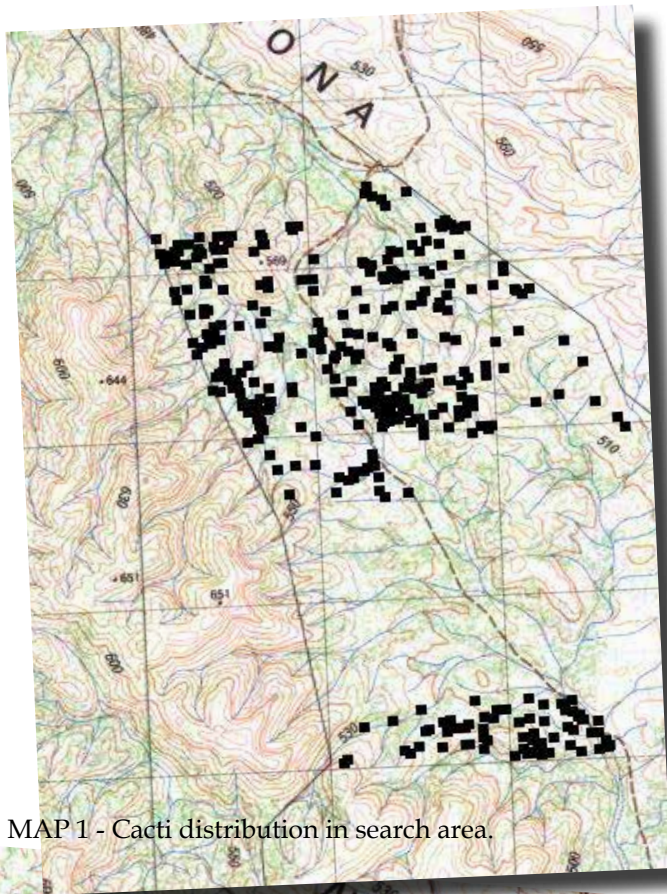
Walking up creek east of ABC Rang

The totals are given in the chart below.

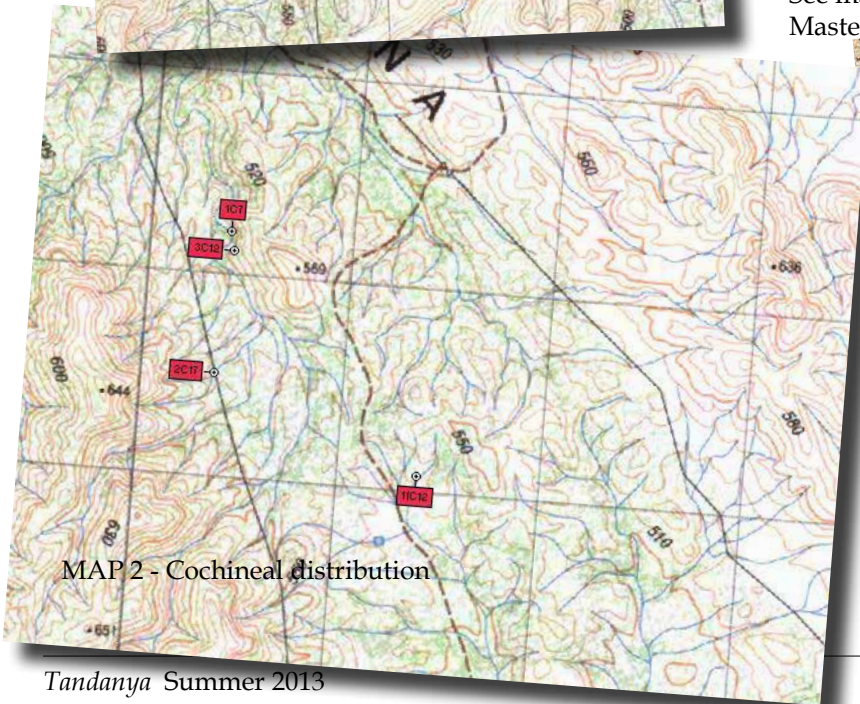
Small	Med.	Large	
845	192	79	
76	17	7	Per cent.
1116		Total	

Cacti found 2013 (All areas)

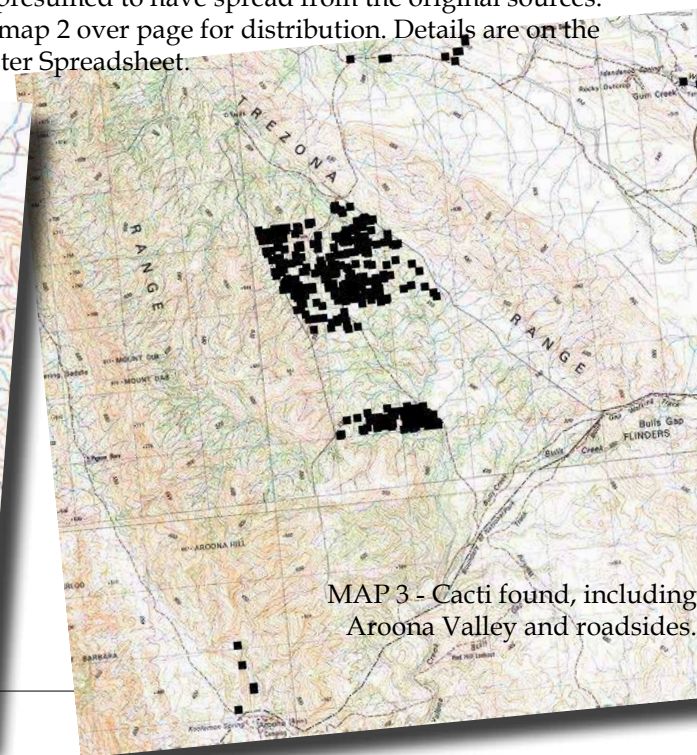
Four cacti were found to be infected with cochineal. These are presumed to have spread from the original sources. See map 2 over page for distribution. Details are on the Master Spreadsheet.



MAP 1 - Cacti distribution in search area.



MAP 2 - Cochineal distribution

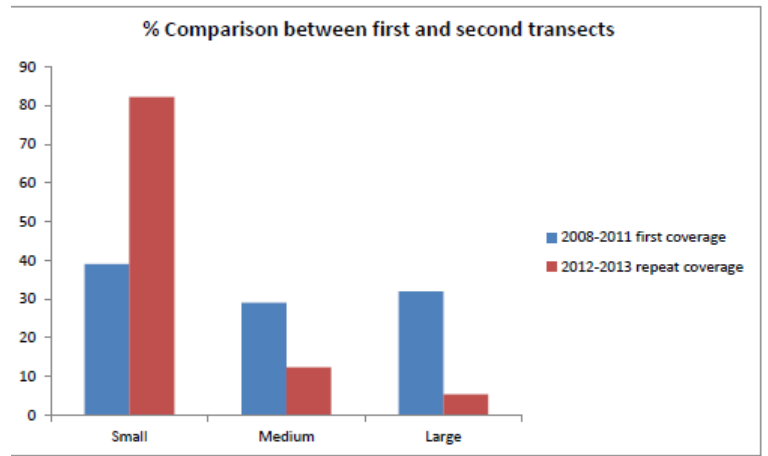


MAP 3 - Cacti found, including Aroona Valley and roadsides.

The chart below shows the comparative percentages for the first time and second time surveys.

Description
cochineal not poisoned
L18p (cochineal, not poisoned)
M3p, L8p-cochineal not poisoned
L5p, 3x52p, M4p, L11p, 52p (cochineal, not poisoned), M2p, M3p

Details of Cochineal-infected cacti and associated plants at the same sites.



The Change in distribution between first and second transects over the same area is obvious.



On Thursday 9th the group walked from the Aroona Homestead northwards up Aroona Creek for a kilometre before branching off up a tributary which heads northwards, paralleling the ABC Range on the eastern side.

The Gum Creek boundary is only a few hundred metres north of the Homestead. One of the aims of this walk was to investigate the presence of cacti in this

area. A few cacti were found in Aroona Creek as shown in the south-west corner of Map 3. No more cacti were found on the climb up Aroona Hill, or seen on the surrounding hills when scanned with binoculars. There were many small greenhood and spider orchids flowering on the slopes.



Group on the summit of Aroona Hill



Cactus and cochineal. (1C7)

Our group enjoyed our time at Gum Creek and, as always, appreciated the support of Bill and Jane McIntosh throughout. We would like to thank Emma Bloomfield of DEWNA for coming up from Pt. Augusta, and Lorraine Edmunds, the coordinator of the overall cactus eradication project, who gave an interesting, and encouraging, talk on Cochineal on Sunday night.

As coordinator of the ABW group I would like to thank all participants for their solid efforts and cooperation throughout our stay. We contributed 720 hours as a group this year.

The 2014 exercise is set for the 9th to the 16th of August.

Highlights of Six Weeks in India

by Richard Bowey

(In three emails sent home to friends and family).

Email #1

It's 1900 hrs and I am in Pondicherry, a former French enclave on the east coast of southern India. It's been three days since I said goodbye to my walking mates in Delhi and I'm all alone apart from 1.2 billion Indians.

I arrived in Chennai on Sunday afternoon (safe from the cyclone) and caught a taxi to my first and last (in India) luxurious hotel (A\$38 per night) where I was met by a concierge, had my bags carried to my room, a newspaper was left outside my bedroom door in the morning, free breakfast etc. I stepped outside that first night and found life in full swing unlike the little towns we have been in recently where everything stops at dusk - most unusual for Asia. Actually I have been using my camera to introduce myself to people. I have discovered that Indians love to have their photos taken and to see the images afterwards. So I take photos of hotel staff, cops, food wallas (people preparing food on the streets), taxi drivers etc etc. And then when they ask me which country I come from and I say Australia they ask me about the cricket and I pretend to understand their great passion. Anyway, I talked to cops over here who were pulling buses over and checking their logs books and drivers licences etc and soon had them lining up for photos.

Early next morning I was off to the bus station to catch an antiquated bus to my first port of call - Mamallapuram where there is a World Heritage site - temples from the 6th century. It was interesting but half of Chennai was down for the weekend so it was pretty crowded. I sat at the front of the bus opposite the driver, took a photo of the scene outside the bus when the driver asked me to take a photo of him. I did, showed it to him and from then on he was my best friend pointing out things to me as we went along and stopping one guy who started to hassle me telling him politely (in Tamil) to "nick off".

The distance was 60 km it took 2 hours and cost me Rp 40, about 80 cents. When I got off the bus, a tout picked me up on his motor bike and took me to his pad where I got a (very basic) room for Rp 500 (A\$9.50).

Mamallapuram is a small village by the sea and in the afternoon some people went swimming Indian style - in full clothes wading and messing about in the shallows like they did in South Africa. I asked a guy (using my camera) if they could swim and he said yes but said they didn't trust the sea. Shame. Another distinguishing feature of the beach landscape was the presence of cows - they are holy here and have a licence to roam everywhere. I hadn't realised that they liked the beach though but there they were sitting down next to the fishing boats pulled onto the sand!

I left early this morning catching a bus, by the side of the road, to Pondicherry. This trip was 111 kms, took 2 hours and cost me Rp 75 (A\$1.50). Another room for Rp 500 and today to explore the place. Being French it has wide roads and some nice buildings, Also there are rubbish bins (in some areas) so it is relatively clean, most unusual for India where rubbish is usually dumped on the street and swept up early the next morning by a whole mob of street sweepers. I did get caught in the peak hour this afternoon and it's a cacophony of sound at full blast. Nothing is half hearted here.

I think I will head off early tomorrow. Given it is hot and humid, it is most comfortable to travel early in the morning when it is relatively cool and before the buses are packed. It also means I can move straight into a hotel and get to exploring.

So you can see you don't have to worry about me. I'm doing fine. I found a brand new Domino's pizza place today and had a western style pizza - bloody beautiful and a welcome change from the hot spicy food of the India (and the south).

Email #2

Early on Tuesday morning I was on a bus heading for Thanjavur, site of a World Heritage temple dating back to the eleventh century. This time the bus journey was 6 hours long for which I paid the grand price of Rp 114 (A\$2). Lots of villages, towns, people, rice fields and sugar cane on the way.

At the town, I had a dummy spit when India got the better of me for a few minutes. This was caused by:

- visiting one tourist "attraction" which had multiple entrance fees for different, but not all, sections so I never knew when I could go in and when I had to pay another fee, and consequently got very sick of being told I should or couldn't go here or there (why would I bother?)
- the very old and once beautiful attraction was in an appalling neglected state hardly worthy of any fee
- I saw men pissing on a wall of the ancient structure (in India men, like dogs, piss on anything at any time in full view) and wondered why they can't or don't control themselves - like the women have to.

Cont/...



- I suddenly got tired of
 - the smell of stale urine which assaults you almost everywhere you walk
 - men hoiking and spitting, squirting out betel and tobacco juice and blowing snot onto the roads and footpaths
 - rubbish which is everywhere, much of it non-degradable plastic which blocks up rivers, lakes and looks bloody awful (my Protestant ethics are showing)
 - the look and taste and smell of cooking oil or ghee in which many Indian meals are cooked
 - I couldn't find a decent place to eat and was very, very hungry (as I perpetually am these days)

On Thursday it was another morning bus ride, this time to Madurai, one of the oldest towns in India and site of a great Hindu temple complex which attracts up to 10,000 pilgrims a day - but who'd notice? In India 10,000 is an almost meaningless figure since every decent town here has a population of 250,000 people and often many more. People are everywhere so what's an extra 10k among friends?

For something different, on Friday morning I was at the Madurai railway station at 0415 hrs buying a ticket for a train bound for Kollam in Kerela on the west coast. While buying the ticket was not a problem, discovering my options was. India has 18 official languages and 1600 dialects so most Indian's English is pretty basic and sometimes those who can speak it (or think they can) have such a strong accent that they might as well be speaking Chinese. What makes communication worse is that they have a particular gesture, moving their head in a sort of a figure of



But it passed as quickly as it came when some Indian adolescents - girls and boys on separate occasions urged on, in the case of the former, by their proud parents - approached me to enquire where I was from (and show me they could speak English). Very cute.

On Wednesday, I set out early in the morning for Trichy, another interesting town with a fantastic temple complex which was crawling with people. I don't really understand Hinduism so their temples don't interest me that much except for thinking how gaudy they are. Never the less, given how old some of them are, these big babies are as impressive as works as Christianity's cathedrals.

eight which incorporates both our nod and shake of the head. They use it in answer to a question (ie "does this bus go the train station?") and after the gesture, I am never sure if they are actually saying yes or no. Another gesture they use is to very quickly and gracefully roll their hand over (palm down to palm up) which might mean go there, or stay here or as you like it or just plain "whatever!". Just two of Indian's great mysteries which I am still trying to work out.

But back to my train journey. I took the day train rather than the night one because I heard it was a spectacular journey as the train goes over the Western Ghats (mountain range). Not my train though! We



went a different way and for about 25 minutes I feared I was on the wrong train heading to oblivion, a distinct possibility given the language problems, 'cos it looked like I was going to end up in places not even mentioned in my Lonely Planet. Bugger! Well, it all worked out in the end - we went a different way than my ticket suggested (silly me!) - and I reached my destination after a bit of drama and a long day without food - I got to my hotel to 1800 hrs - but better late than never!

And what a ride. The Western Ghats are truly stunning rising out of nowhere and standing like sentinels over east of the elongated Kerala. What a fantastic introduction to this state. Rich red soil everywhere, water by the bucket load and coconuts and banana plantations, papaya plants and vegetable gardens everywhere. Not a square metre of ground not planted with something. And even the weather is (a little) less oppressive which makes it a whole lot easier. It was so hot and humid in Tamil Nadu - about 30-35 degrees with 90% humidity. Gets to you after a while when I'd be a sweating mess in the afternoons.

At Kollam, I found a great little hotel and decided I needed a rest so I stayed in this sleepy little village of

500,000 (?) for an extra day while I investigated the best way to see Kerala's magic waterways.

Today I did what every traveller does in Kerala. I went for a boat ride on the backwaters. And what are backwaters? In my diary I described it thus:

The best way to set the scene is to imagine West Lakes extended all the way to Victor Harbour. Then remove three out of the four houses, shrink them, and plant a coconut tree every ten metres in every direction. Throw in some cows, goats, banana plants and vegetable gardens. Add some ducks, and a fish farm or two (covered by fine blue netting). Then add a few boats - steel fishing boats about thirty metres long, houseboats about seven metres long covered with woven bamboo and a whole series of smaller wooden boats, add some old time fishing net devices which allow nets to be dropped into the water and then hoisted out again by use of a "lever". And now we are starting to get there.

It's more complex than that of course, the backwaters through which we travelled are a series of lakes and lagoons joined together by carefully constructed channels, probably built over the centuries, I would

guess. So we travelled across some quite wide lakes and into some quite narrow channels, twenty five metres at their narrowest, passing dredging equipment other bits and pieces designed to keep this huge area functioning.

And bird life was everywhere – cormorants, egrets, Brahminy Kites, kingfishers and other birds I did not recognise but whose shapes I knew - bitterns and other water birds. Each bend offered a slightly different perspective than the one before so the journey was never boring and I took more photos than I know what to do with.

The seventy something kilometre journey over eight hours was magnificent, better than I could have hoped for, and so beautiful. And restful. After all my travelling of the last week, I had nothing to do but sit back and enjoy the view.

One feature of the trip was the houseboats (featured) which one can hire for about R10,000 per night (with a driver). Fantastic.

Email #3

The next morning I was on a bus heading for Kochi or Cochin (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kochi>), some seventy kilometres north on the coast. It was here that the Portuguese established one of their early colonies. There are two parts of Cochin, the mainland settlement and a couple of islands lying just off shore. My bus took me to Ernakulam, the working part of the city on the mainland where I spent the day (and night), having a look around and trying to get a bus ticket to my next destination, Mysore. The only available one was an all nighter Bugger. These trips are for the kids! But I did get a luxury one.

In my walk around, one of the things that impressed me was an older shopping mall where all thirty shops on the ground floor sold cell phones. Amazing. Everyone seems to have a phone here. I guess with 1.2 billion potential customers, there's money to be made in telecommunications even without trying too hard.

That evening while on "night patrol" I came across a brand new shopping mall, open barely a week. It was a bit like one of Adelaide's malls transplanted in the middle of dirty India. There were more security guards on duty at the entrance to the complex and outside each shop than customers and I had to smile as I saw all the big fashion names - fcuK, Sin ("How can it be a sin when it feels so good?"), Levis, Diesel and others - selling their wares at prices which would be a challenge in Australia. And while the resident food supermarket sold stuff for higher prices than one could buy outside on the street, some people were buying! More stores in the Mall were under construction – Pizza Hut, KFC, Subway and Hungry Jacks to name a few. As I watched people enter just to have a look, I figured this was just the beginning. Here comes the West!

With the business of getting to my next destination out of the way, on Tuesday morning I shifted digs and caught a ferry to the island of Fort Cochin, perhaps four kilometres off shore. Such a contrast to Ernakulam, a bit like a mini Penang, a significantly residential area featuring a large Portuguese (and Dutch) church (built in 1503, the oldest in India) and mansions and now little tourist shops and restaurants. I even saw Vasco Da Gama's original grave! I spent a very lazy couple of days doing not a lot – even got a novel read.

On Wednesday night, I fronted up to my "special bus" for the ride to Mysore in Karnataka State, the all nighter. Well this trip was an adventure in itself but I'll only offer you one story on the trip of 450 kilometres which took its full scheduled ten hours! The conductor was checking the list of passengers and was a bit worried because some had not fronted. Now when you make an advance bus booking you give your phone number so what do you reckon he did? That's right, rang them of course. And who rang and on whose phone? Why the passenger sitting closet to him. In fact there were a number of calls, perhaps eight, as the missing passengers were tracked down one by one and picked up along the way according to the arrangement made. Can you imagine this happening in Australia? Of course not but here there is much more communal cooperation than in the West where we look after ourselves and, apart from family and friends, leave others to look after themselves! Needless to say, I survived the trip on a bus which was as comfortable as a bus can be on such a long journey.

I no sooner arrived in Mysore that I jumped onto another bus which, after two and half hours, took me to Kushalnaga where a substantial part of the Tibetan community has relocated on land purchased relatively cheaply from the Indian government (how different is the Indian's government's response to refugees to the Australian government's - of both major political parties?). Here and round abouts, the Tibetan diaspora, under instructions from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, have carved out their own little niche and live in complete harmony with their Indian hosts.

On Friday, I set out for Sera Jey monastic university, built by the Tibetans and named after a very famous monastery in Tibet which was decimated by the Chinese after their invasion of Tibet in 1959. I especially wanted to come here because this is the current home of the founder of the Tibetan Buddhist Institute (TBI), Khensur Rinpoche, which I attend in Adelaide. It was Rinpoche's close relationship to the Dalai Lama which saw His Holiness visit the centre when he was in Adelaide earlier this year.

Despite knowing something of this complex, I was still surprised by its extent and beauty. As I arrived in my tuktuk, I felt I was in Tibet itself, the old pre-Chinese Tibet. About the size of Flinders University and with



some 2000 resident monks studying for the eighteen year (!) geshe qualification (another seven years if they want to do the advanced geshe course), it was truly remarkable. Housed in residential complexes designed to accommodate between fifty and a couple of hundred monks, there were also teaching halls and spaces, temples and all the facilities needed to keep so many happy and healthy - kitchens, health centres, libraries and even (simple) shops, (simple) restaurants, an internet facility and an ATM! And of course there were maroon robed monks and (qualified) geshe (teachers) everywhere. The facility is a credit to all the Tibetans who worked so hard to recreate their old and much loved monastery in order to preserve both the unique form of Tibetan Buddhism and the cultural aspects of its predecessor. And it is so peaceful and has no rubbish!! Within its walls, India almost does not exist (although Indians work here). Sadly, my timetable only allowed me the one day here but in that time I was also fortunate to meet two young men, now monks in training, from Adelaide's TBI and through them was fortunate to be able to pay my respects to Rinpoche himself who, while ninety years old, is still very sharp .. and mindful!

On Saturday, I headed back to Mysore. Billing itself as the Heritage City, it is a real charmer, quite different from any I have seen before with wide tree lined boulevards, lovely old and well maintained buildings including an extraordinary palace, a much milder climate and it has a Domino's. Real Pizza. And a restaurant selling my favourite Thai Green Chicken Curry. Yum Yum. How good is that?

I spent a couple of days here to check out the local sights including going to Chamundi Hill, a 1062 metre hill which rises out of the plain giving 360 degree views of the city and topped with a temple or two, and one of the eight most religious hills in India according to the sign. I also visited the Zoo which was pretty good and packed with people, the magnificent palace including seeing it lit up on Sunday night (which it always is) by 97,000 globes (I counted them). What a sight!

Yesterday morning was a three hour bus journey to Bangalore from where I will catch my flight home tonight. Bangalore is a modern city referred to as the Silicon Valley of India with many large IT companies head quartered here. It's not much to look at, though, and I only got here yesterday because I always like to have a day up my sleeve when I am flying out of a city just in case

So that's about it. I'm about to leave India after 6 weeks and while it will be good to be able to eat as much as I like of my favourite foods as I work to put on the weight I have lost since being here, it has been a great experience revealing lots of "new" Indias I had not seen previously - the beautiful Indian Himalaya (much less populated than Nepal) and the three very different states; the frenetic Tamil Nadu with its temples, the beautiful and exotic Kerala and the more moderate and modern Karnataka complete with its Tibetan monastic community.

Richard Bowey

Wind in the Willows (and Gum Trees)

By *David Wattchow*

From October 8th to 12th Trevor Moyle and myself explored the waterways of Ral Ral Creek and backwaters. It blew, from the South, then the East, West and North. The lower aspects of the creek are festooned with willows (and the main river), but higher up gums are predominant.

We left from Jane Eliza landing (Liba Liba houseboats) in Renmark. Shortly we left the houseboats and willows, getting into much better country before entering the Ral Ral Wide Waters. At the top end of the Wide Waters is a great area for camping, with an excellent view back down the waters and of the sunrise across them.

Now the creek leaves the orchard irrigation country but only after passing a big pumping station. There is a sunken weir opposite the pumps, and a rapid flow was going over it, making for some interesting moments. The banks become much more natural, till an embankment is reached. We discounted any idea of "going for it" over the weir (largely due to a head high road), and portaged the gear and canoes around the obstruction.

It was really warming up now, with the wind strengthening from the East, then North. We hugged the banks to attain some respite from the wind. It became really strong after lunch (recorded as 60 k/hr in Renmark), and we called a halt after paddling along Hunchee Creek, under a stock footbridge, then into Little Hunchee Creek. We sought shade from gum trees, and a cooling swim (it was still rather chilly). Then we whiled away the afternoon. It reached 37 degrees that day, and was still rather hot at night, but plenty of bugs ensured we had our flyscreens zipped up.

A lagoon to the North attracted our attention, with a potential creek leading through to the main river. By the next morning a change was working its way across the country, and the strong Northerlies had lessened, making a paddle of the lagoon much better. The creek exiting the top end had flow, indicating it would probably connect to the main river, which it did after several kms of very pleasant winding around obstacles.

A lull in the wind enabled fast progress down the main stream (current running at several kms/hour) and we swept past the variegated cliffs near Murtho Park. There a crystalline, sandy bar on the last Easterly bend before entering the main strait, and Headings

Cliffs. On acute river bends the sand deposits from the mainstream into white, pure, sandbars. We retired into a side creek (North side) for lunch, before tackling the strait, along which the Westerly front was now in full force.

Nevertheless there was a vague sheltered aspect on the South side, and we progressed up to the interconnecting creek to Hunchee, and a great camp just short of another embankment (presumably holds back the water in Ral Ral/Hunchee creek system). Next day we spied an ill defined creek leading into the Horseshoe Lagoon (said to be good for bird life, including white bellied sea eagles). A certain amount of "gardening" was required to get through, but Trev was in his element clearing the obstructions, and floating canoes under fallen trees.

Near the end we heard voices - way out in the donga, and surprisingly (for both parties), came across a family wandering along a bush track, across which the creek flowed!! We emerged, like wild men, from the creek!! We portaged this, thrashed our way through the swamp (involving some more swimming for me), and entered this most wonderful Horseshoe Lagoon, with large flocks of pelicans and swans (presumably they find fishing easier here than in the main stream). We spotted large stick nests in the trees, but no sea eagles (guess they were having a break).

The lagoon does connect via a much more defined passage to Ninkle Nook Bend in its Southern aspect. We paddled back up the main, to enter Bulyong Creek. Looked like interesting waters to the North, but it was late in the day. Seems like Bulyong Ck is some sort of thoroughfare for small water craft from Renmark to reach the main river, and they were impelled to go flat out around the bends. Luckily by evening the racket died down for a peaceful camp. While sitting there an enormous goanna (perenti) sauntered down from a tree, and wandered through the camp.

At the end of Bulyong Creek one can enter another lagoon system, that eventually swings North and then becomes a small winding creek that connects to the main stream. We tried to reconnect to this system further down stream, but ran into reeds and obstacles, that forced our return to the main stream.

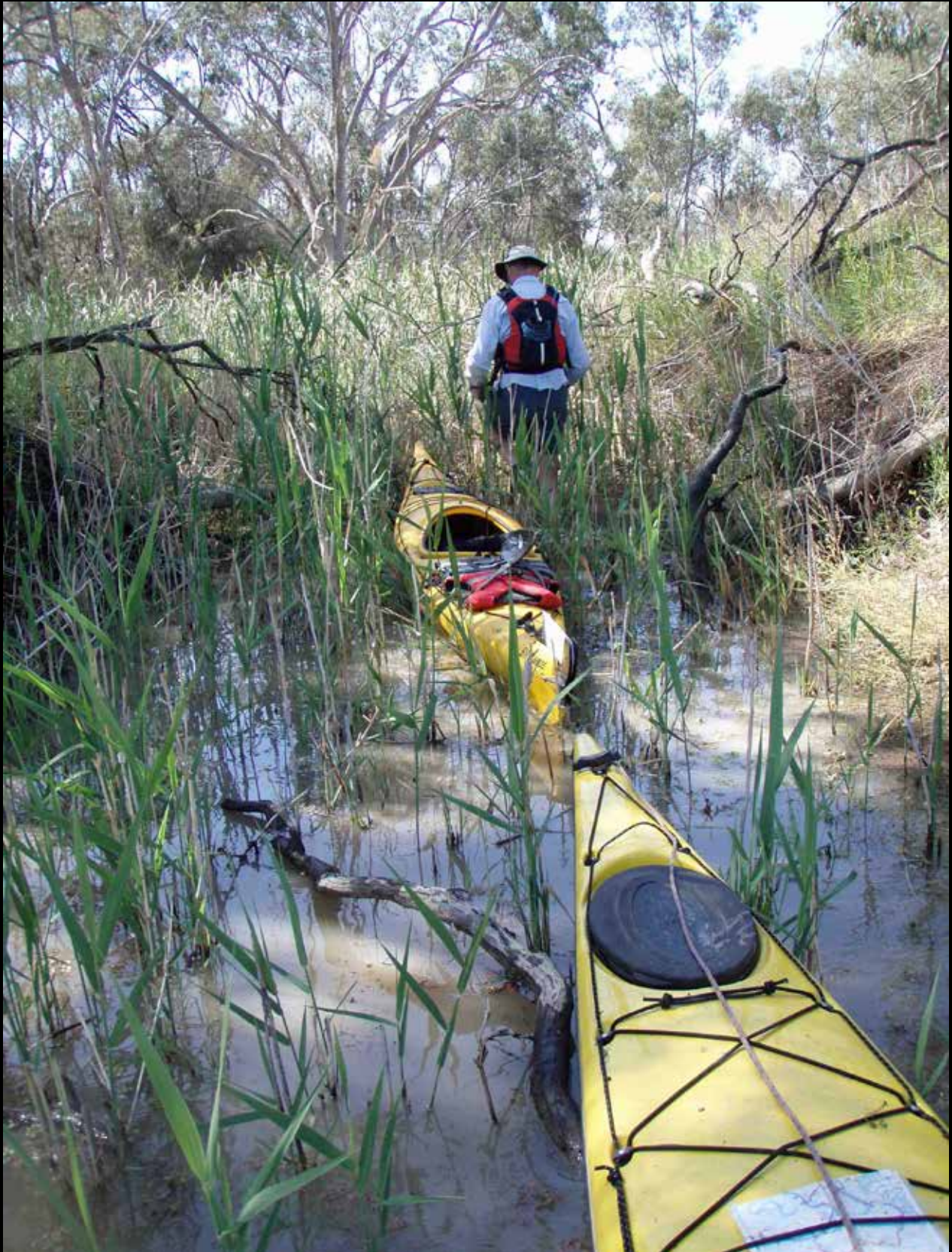
Not to be done with yet the wind proceeded to power along the strait, and we were right into it before getting back to the car. Thus ended a really interesting trip, with lots of out of the way backwaters to explore.



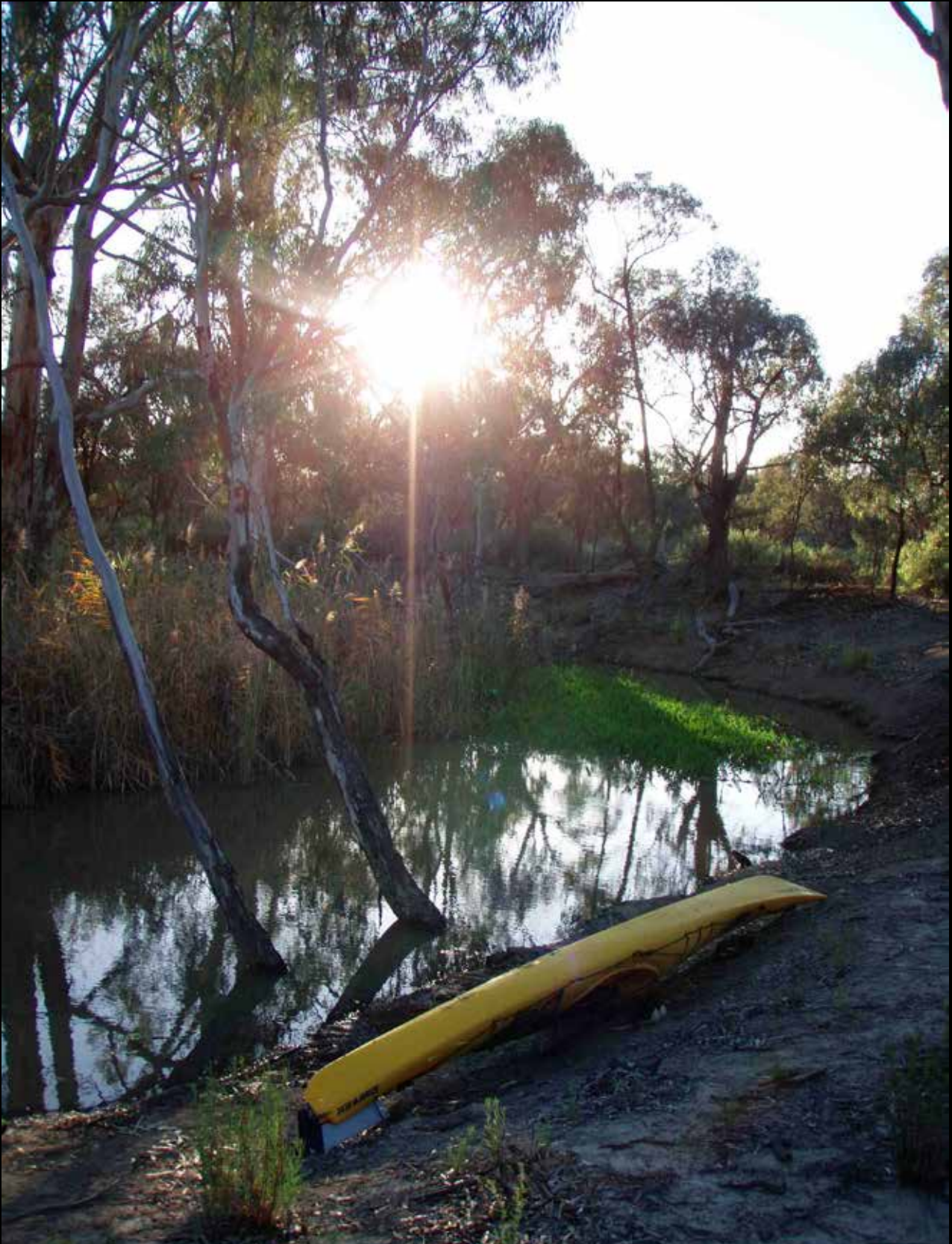
Wind in the Willows (and Gum Trees). Murtho Cliffs, Photo: David Wattchow



Wind in the Willows (and Gum Trees). Murtho Cliffs, Photo David Wattchow



Wind in the Willows (and Gum Trees). Exploring, Photo: David Wattchow



Wind in the Willows (and Gum Trees). Bulyong Creek, Photo: David Wattchow on opposite page

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