

# GROPER'S GOSSIP

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## **SANDGROPER MISSION STATEMENT**

We aim to develop a good social club encouraging friendship among all caravanners.

We aim to promote lawful interests of Club members and to simulate the invention and adoption of equipment for the purposes of good caravanning.

We aim to promote the advantages of caravanning for recreational and social purposes

## ***SANDGROPER CARAVAN CLUB COMMITTEE 2016-2017***

<i>President</i>	<i>Brian Bizzill</i>
<i>Vice President</i>	<i>Roy Lundy</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>David Hiscock</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Alan Parkinson</i>
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	<i>Brian Adams</i>
<i>Rally Coordinator</i>	<i>Ian Moore</i>
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Kel Olesen</i>
	<i>Janet Curow</i>
	<i>June Foote</i>

## **DARKAN RALLY AUGUST 11 - AUGUST 15**

### **Report written by Margot Nicoll and Ian Fullerton**

*Darkan - what a delightful little town! Ian and I headed down to Darkan a few weeks earlier to check out the town and caravan park. We were very impressed with the park which is being rebuilt - first class amenities block and camp kitchen with a large covered verandah. There are 15 powered sites, 10 with cement pads. It is obvious "Royalties for Regions" have made a big impact here - not only have they contributed to the rebuilding of the caravan park but also to a most impressive Sporting Complex.*

*The Shire Council were able to provide us with a couple of contact numbers to assist us in preparing a program. Many emails later we had a Friday night dinner organised, with three local ladies preparing the meal and two men manning the bar at the Sporting Complex. Very nice meal enjoyed by all from the number of second helpings. Also the Seniors Group were willing to open up the town hall and assist us in playing carpet bowls on Saturday afternoon, also providing a scrumptious afternoon tea!*

*The Kerrigans, Ian and I arrived on Wednesday - unfortunately the Kerrigans had a funeral in Mandurah to attend on Thursday so they decided to come a day earlier. Most of the vans arrived on Thursday, dodging the showers to set up. The Hiscocks arrived Friday just in time*



*to join us for dinner. 12 vans in all. The Ashfords had to drop out at the last minute as Robin was not well - trust you have fully recovered Robin. The Gough's visitor Jean-Paul Samuelson was welcomed at the opening of the rally by Alan Parkinson.*

*The covered verandah outside the camp kitchen has pull down blinds which help block the wind - Ian was able to erect his very large tarp along the back wall which was a big help. A lovely young couple who were staying at the park insisted on lending us their outdoor pot belly heater to assist in making us all comfortable. Very generous of them.*

*Saturday morning two of the local shops opened specially for us - we all repaid them by patronizing them both.*

*Our game of carpet bowls was hilarious with everyone putting too much effort in rolling the bowls. Eventually we managed to stay on the mat most times and held fiercely contested finals with Beth and Ian Moore being the Winners.*

*Saturday night everyone joined in a bbq on the verandah with profiteroles as desert followed by very noisy games of 'Beetle'. There was almost an international incident with claims of cheating by some poor losers. All in good fun of course. An Australia Trivia Quiz finished off*

*the night. Some people overdosed on chocolate prizes and could not sleep - they did not have to eat them all at once!*



*We could not have had better weather on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. After all the rain on Wednesday and Thursday we could not believe our good*



*luck. Sunday morning, after a communal breakfast, saw us visiting the Markets held at the Mens Shed and then travelling out to the Six Mile Cottage for a picnic lunch. The cottage was built in the early 1900's. There was no cut timber in those times - it was all done with the broadaxe. The cottage is like a doll's house - a kitchen and one bedroom with all furniture being hand made. Any visitors to the cottage added a lean-to of hessian, or brought tents to stay in. After lunch we all joined in a game of bocce - the girls were outplayed by the men*



*with strong competition by the teams. The Gold Medal winners were Ian 'Killer' Kessell and Ian 'Shorty' Fullerton.*



*Monday the rains came again just in time for us to*

*pack up and head off! It could have waited another one day!*



*Winners of the caravan prize were Clelia & Graham Gough*

#### **ATTENDEES:-**

*Gerry & Margaret Kerrigan  
Ian & Margot Nicoll  
David & Janet Currow  
Alan & Rheta Parkinson  
Graham & Clelia Gough  
Laurie Tyler and Roz*

*Kevin & Thelma Forbes  
Ian & Beth Moore  
Ted & June Bunce  
Ian & Natalie Kessell  
David & Paula Hiscock  
**VISITOR:-**  
Jean-Paul Samuelson*



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

*Hi everyone*

*Despite arriving at Darkan in the rain and cold on the Thursday, the weather was near perfect for remainder of the rally.*

*With 11 vans on site, 21 members plus 2 visitors (Ros and Jean-Paul) the park proved satisfactory for our needs. The upgraded facilities were very good and with Ian Fullerton's efforts with the tarpaulin plus the fire provided by Jock (a local at the park) we were able to keep comfortable.*

*Although Darkan is only a small town, Margot and Ian were able to organise an enjoyable and relaxing weekend – A big thanks to you both.*

*Just a reminder to register for future rallies so the organisers can plan based on the numbers attending and therefore facilitate their rally activities. This is especially important whilst we have so many of our Members travelling.*

*Safe travels everyone, and see you soon.*

*Alan Parkinson and David Hiscock*

*Report submitted behalf of Brian Bizzill*



### **SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

<b>Doris Friend</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Natalie Kessell</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Lynne Kirby</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Rheta Parkinson</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup></b>

### **SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**

*No anniversaries this month*



*Happy  
Wedding  
Anniversary!*

# *Coming Events*

## **CAMP GRACE B USSELTON CARAVAN PARK**

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October to Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October [one week block]**

**220 Caves Road SIESTA PARK WA 6280**

Halfway between Busselton and Dunsborough.

Approximatley 270Kms south of Perth

### **DRIVING DIRECTIONS:**

*Drive West from Busselton towards Dunsborough. Camp Grace is approx 5kms past Vasse on the beach side of Caves Road*

*The Park has shady Peppermint trees and lawn areas fronting directly onto the beach and the calm waters of Geographe Bay. It is peaceful and relaxing area close to all the benefits of the Busselton/Margaret River/ South West Capes region..*

## ***BROOKTON CHRISTMAS RALLY***

***24<sup>TH</sup> – 28<sup>TH</sup> November***

Brookton is in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia, about 140 kilometres southeast of Perth.

## **RALLY ATTENDEES for COOROW**

*Brian & Mary Wales*

*Ian Fullerton & Margo Nicoll*

*Alan & Rheta Parkinson*

*David & Janet Currow*

*Gerry & Margaret Kerrigan*

*Laurie Tyler & Roslyn Armstrong*

*Brian & Betty Morris*

*Visitors:*

*Jenny & Paul Shea*

## POLICE

*While taking a routine vandalism report at an elementary school, I was interrupted by a little girl about 6 years old. Looking up and down at my uniform, she asked, 'Are you a cop? Yes,' I answered and continued writing the report.*

*My mother said if I ever needed help I should ask the police. Is that right?*

*'Yes, that's right,' I told her.*

*'Well, then,' she said as she extended her foot toward me, 'would you please tie my shoe?'*

## COOROW RALLY

SEPTEMBER 23rd – 26th.

Coorow Caravan Park Station St. Coorow

### PROGRAMME

Venue Officers: Brian & Mary Wales

#### Friday 23rd. Sept

Arrive & setup, including rigging awnings between 2 vans.

5.00 pm Rally opening/Happy hour

6.00 pm BWO dinner

#### Saturday 24th. Sept

8.00 am Morning walk/Tai Chi if CD available.

9.30 am Free morning.

12.00 pm Wildflower tour and picnic Coorow Farm 6 km round trip.

3.00 pm Bocce, ladder golf.

5.00 pm Happy Hour

6.00 pm Fellowship at Coorow Hotel before set menu meal.

#### Sunday 25th. Sept

8.30 am Communal breakfast.

10.00 am Visit Heritage & Fashion Museums – gold coin entry to each.

1.30 pm Optional further wildflower tour/ scenic drive.

5.00 pm Happy hour.

6.30 pm Club BBQ

#### Monday 26th. Sept.

9.00 am Morning coffee / Rally closes.

Safe journey.

# On the Way to Canberra

## Report from Glenda Olesen

Roebuck Plains was where we had to stay while waiting for repairs to our fridge. The Adams arrived then went on to catch up with the group. We collapsed with gastro then gave up on waiting for spare parts. A quick dash to Kununurra for a few days and the fridge was quickly repaired. A delightful stay with the others beside the lake and a rodeo night was good entertainment. The men tried fishing out at Ivanhoe crossing with no luck.



Next to Nitmiluk Ieliyn Nat Park, Edith Falls, north of Katherine? Wonderful swimming areas and great walks up to higher falls.

Although unpowered it is a lovely place to stay.

Noodling down the Mataranka and Bitter Springs hot springs good fun. Improvement at Mataranka good but Kel not thrilled with the croc nearby.

We headed east towards The Gulf of Carpentaria where we free camped at Goanna Creek rest area. A small delightful look out over the plains to Limmen Nat Park. A camp fire, with millions of stars made for a beautiful evening. Past Cape Crawford, a green clean roadhouse but we continued towards Borroloola. Stopping at Caranbirini Conservation Reserve to view the lagoon full of water lillies and bird life. We passed the McArthur River mine. A mighty mine extracting lead and zinc. Using the good mine road we had a quick look at Borroloola then onto King Ash Bay via a dust bowl road.



The camp, King Ash Bay Fishing Club, with improvements, good facilities, was a lovely surprise. Roast pork, lemon meringue pie and fun at the club washed the dust away. Unfortunately the wind came up so no fishing available. A big disappointment to the men.

Returning to Caranbirini we walked through the sandstone pillars called the Organ Pipes, part of the lost city formations. Really worthwhile looking at. On return to our van Maureen & Ronnie had whipped up fresh scones, yum!

Turning left we headed down the Tablelands Highway. A single lane asphalt road, rough in places. Lots of cattle, the countryside looking good. It is such wide open landscape across the tablelands, Open Sky Country. We spent the night on Brunett Downs rest area. Once again a camp fire under a million stars. The police arrived, looking for a handcuffed escapee in a stolen car... Continuing southwards we passed a large family group of Wedge tailed eagles feeding on roadkill so we were able to closely see these magnificent birds. More cattle, lots of calves.



At Barkley Homestead we turned left onto the Barkly Highway into Queensland and crossed the empty wide open plains to camp beside the billabongs under the Coolibar trees at Camooweal. We were delighted to see Brolgas as well as pelicans, darters, herons etc all feeding in the billabong. Helen was fortunate to see the Brolgas dancing. A trip to the Drovers Camp where Tom Green kept us enthralled with tales of the drovers life and how

the stock routes were opened up.

A large flock of Straw Neck Ibis arrived then a huge feral ginger cat killed a Darter across from us. Brian B wanted a gun!

Mt Isa full up. A major rodeo attracting caravaners from all over. We met up with Lyn and Alan Kirby for lunch. Lovely to catch up with them again. Rains south of us forced us to reconsider going to Birdsville. Fear of being stuck out there a factor so we headed to Cloncurry and pretty country.



Turning onto the Lansborough Highway in Central West Queensland we headed to Winton. It is such flat empty grasslands, all a bright green due to recent rains. At the stockyards we were able to wash our vans and cars off the red dust and mud from our North. Winton has Gregorory North, a bush poet, The Man of Many Hats, in the caravan park so we had a very entertaining evening. The Australian Age of Dinosaurs, where fossil dinosaur bones are cleaned and restored is very interesting. Volunteers painstakingly clean away the millions of years of dirt.

Another evening involving snakes is tonight's entertainment then we will go different routes to visit families and friends. Not long to Canberra now! Glenda.

## **TRAVELLERS - NOLA & MIKE STEIN**

Hi All,

Since our previous email, we have travelled far and wide. From Bribie Island, we stayed for a week at Twin Waters with a friend. Such a beautiful place. Lovely walks around the canals. We were able to take with us Brenda the dog who was most appreciative of her outings. Our friend Connie organised varied outings which included dining at very popular restaurants, also some retail therapy!!

Airlie Beach was fantastic, a sailing regatta was held on the weekend while we were there, so very busy combining it with the many tourists. We then travelled to Coolum Beach and met up with the Bizzills enjoyed morning walks together along the most beautiful beach sharing it with many different breeds of dogs. We also had some enjoyable dining experiences with their friends who live nearby.

We had a great experience at Bundaberg. Every Tuesday they put on a BBQ sausage sizzle with live entertainment, country & western music together with bush poets recitals. All proceeds go to Make A Wish foundation. Coolum Beach Park did a similar thing raising money for Breast Cancer Foundation.

We are now at Coolangatta with the Bizzills, Adams plus family members and Olesens. We are here for 3 days possibly more. The weather all the way has been amazing, lovely warm days and cool nights.

Cheers Nola & Mike



## TRAVELLING WITH SCHELL AND HALSE



Sunset at Uluru

We left Alice and continued northwards with Ron being sure there were no down hills. We stopped at <sup>1</sup>the Barrow Creek where just north the day previous there had been a tragic car and van accident. We stopped at the Marbles overnight and admired the formation of the rocks in the area. Up early and a warmer morning with a beautiful orange sunrise. Many ant hills through here have been dressed in T Shirts. Some of the Stuart Highway still have open speed limits. Lots of little birds around here all quiet. We saw 3 cyclists on the highway and then two guys pushing carts along the highway, our way is faster and more comfortable. Cross the border into Queensland, the sign shows the lovely Gold Coast but nothing of the outback. Found a lovely spot on the Georgina at the Billabong in Cammoweal where we settled down to enjoy a couple of days. Pelicans Brolgas, little birds, a couple of bustards. My grandson was amazed to hear of the Lillies that close up in the evening. Loved seeing the Drovers Camp again and soak up our Australian History. Again we are off and camp east of Mount Isa. Heard some blasts at about 3am which Jim tells me are from the Mount Isa mines. Most nights we have been able to have fires as wood has been available. We didn't stop at Mount Isa and our next major stop was Longreach. We met a kiwi lass who was travelling to the Tanami Desert to work at a roadhouse just on the edge of the bitumen. Longreach and we went through the Qantas museum, again a great history lesson. Too wet on the Thompson river so off to parts unknown. Our next few days saw us travel through Cloncurry, Winton, Stongehenge, Windorah a tiny town in what seems the middle of nowhere. At this stage I was reading the book Tom Kruse the Birdsville Mailman and what a man he was. The roads are still narrow and rough, and watch for the cattle and roos. We find the two ways are great assets to warn each other of the cattle etc. We stopped at Cunnamulla where we learnt the story of the Artesian Basin. Looked for the Census forms as tonight is the BIG night where Australia finds out who is who and where they are. Well the Post Office has nothing but Jamie in the Tourist Bureau is most helpful however he has no forms. I ring the Census Office and get told they will find us tonight in the designated sites. If not she will remove our house from the list so we don't get a fine!!!! Ok so how many grey nomads got missed. And no one turned up at the designated site as said.

*With Jim leading we are heading for St George when eagle eyed Ron spots the sign and asks Jim are we going to Bourke. Nope quick turn around and we are right again.*

*Last trip we found a little pub called Nindigully, one of the odd little pubs in the outback. So lets go back where we met some outback Queenslanders, and what a great little spot. From there we head for Lightning Ridge, Ron rings Doris to see where she is. Well said Doris in Lightning Ridge, where said Ron, in the Opal Caravan Park, what number said Ron 19 said Doris, we are too in the Opal Park numbers 69 and 70. What a lovely catch up then Peter and Mary arrived so It's catch up all round. Mel and Suzie are here and as usual they give a great*



show. We went to the Black Hand Mine where Ron Caplin has spent 19 years carving the limestone into all sorts of figures, animals, people, politicians, etc.



After Lightning Ridge we head uphill towards Glen Innes, a very Scottish town some 1100 mtres above sea level. Very proud of their history and some great buildings in town. Now in Glen Innes again we had to find room for two vans, the tourist places don't think we tow vans. Jim thinks carefully and leaves room for Ron. However he did encroach a little on the driveway in front. Its OK he said as he watched the Local Policeman manage to get past and into the back yard of the Police Station. Onto the hills again 1410 mtres said the sign at Loch Lomond. Inverell is next the home of Thunderbolt the Bushranger. Bit of rain at this stage. Next morning we head to Tamworth again steep inclines and steep descents.

The weather is till rainy so we settle in and go to the museums of the country singers. We then took a drive to Werriss Creek which was one of the busiest train station in Aust. Many WW2 soldiers travelled through there for jungle war training. The koalas in this area have lost a lot of their numbers due to drought conditions.

Then we found a little gem just out of Tamworth, Nundle has the greatest little woollen mills. Nundle is 50kms from Tamworth and they do all their own processing after the cleaning of the wool. Again we see a lookout with the greatest views, about 1400 mtrs above sea level.

This morning it is drizzling and we are about to head towards Tarree where our daughter has a friend who has offered us a place on the bank of the river.

So its off again to explore new areas and places.



## **NEALE/FRIEND ON THE WAY TO CANBERRA**

*Our last report we were on our way to Woomera where we stayed for 2 nights. We did a day trip to Roxby Downs which we found to be a thriving town and being so close to Andamooka we did a look around there also. We did the museum on the morning we left on our way to Wilpena pound and the Flinders Ranges. We stayed at the Rawnsley park which is about 20 km from the Pound, we actually looked at Rawnsley Bluff from our site ,a lovely bush park. On the Saturday we packed a lunch and headed for the gorges and the high spots, a beautiful day. On the Sunday it was back to Quorn and the Pichi Richi train for a pleasant couple of hours. We decided to stay another night to have a look into Wilpena Pound but we woke to light rain which continued all day. Would never have been able to pack up in the rain anyway.*

*The following day it was back down to Hawker, and a wonderful gallery- Jeff Morgan. Certainly worth a visit. It was onto Peterborough with Peter doing the Steam town and Doris and I to a patchwork shop and onto the town hall to see a centenary quilt the ladies of the district did some years ago.*

*Broken Hill the next stop for 5 nights, the usual stock up, washing etc. we did a wonderful tour of the town organised by the park with the guide being an old miner. The park also had at 4.30 each afternoon a gathering in the BBQ area which was good.*

*We went to Silverton for a day, the Palace hotel for Dinner, the Pro Hart and Jack Abolsom galleries also the Silver City Mint and the Big Picture, a huge painting in the round depicting the area around Broken Hill, fantastic. We also went to the Miners memorial which overlooks the town.*

*Onto Wilcannia but we stayed 5 km further on at Warrawong, at a station, thank you Ruth, a great spot.*

*To Cobar, census night, where we stayed at a free camp Newry Reservoir, thanks to Wicki Camps, a lovely spot.*

*We had the census people come to us but Doris and I had done our duty as our families had sent us the necessary number to log in. They didn't believe we had done it but we assured her that we had receipt numbers....we did it at the weekend before, no hassles for us.*

*Doris was having battery trouble and was happy to stay and make her own way north.*

*Onto Bourke for a few nights with Doris catching us up there. We did the usual visitor stuff and moved onto Lightning Ridge to find Doris and the Schells and Ron already there. I was in my element with all the opals, I just love them but waited till the last day to shop. Once again the usual sights, also we did the orange car door tour, pubs in the scrubs, about 100 round trip from Lightning Ridge. Just 3 pubs in the middle of opal mounds, tin shacks and mullic heaps and rather rough roads.*

*The bush poets Mel and Susie are now based in Lightning Ridge and came out to the Opal caravan park every afternoon to entertain us. Still great, we really enjoy them and what's more they recognised us.*

*The artesian bore was just up the road, so had a go, 41 deg, so lovely to have warm feet at last.*

*We set off for Hebel, just several kms into Qld and known for their coffee and pies, also the old pub but a bit early for a beer. Met Hank and his wife, from Red Gum, in the carpark heading for Canberra also. They had been on the road since February. Into St George for 3 nights, a lovely little town, on the Balonne River which last flooded in 2012.*

*We did the Saturday morning markets and then to the Riversands Winery for a cheese platter and bottle of wine for lunch. We used these three days for rest!!! After our busy time in Lightning Ridge.*

*We arrived in Roma today and who should be here but Brian and Ronnie. So it was a catch up and drinks late in the afternoon. Lovely to meet up with friends. We will be here for a few days to see if I can find my fathers side of the family and also, to the cattle sales on Tuesday. We will then head towards Miles, Dalby, Toowoomba, for maybe a week, maintenance week. This is all new area for us and looking forward to trip down to Canberra. See you in Canberra*

*Mary and Peter*