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Sunraysia Bushwalkers

February 2014

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CHALKA CREEK CANOE TRIP

7th December, 2013



The Murray Darling Basin Commission has classified the Hattah Lakes system as an icon site within their jurisdiction. The lakes have historically been supplied through the Chalka Creek, which would commence flowing when river volumes were around 36,000 mega litres per day. The last decade has not provided sufficient flows to keep the lakes in an optimal condition, but some water has been delivered on occasions through the use of high volume portable pumps.

2013 has seen the installation of seven permanent electric pumps on the riverbank at the head of the Chalka Creek. With a capability of pushing 1000 mega litres per day into the waterway, this seasons' pumping has, by early December, filled Lakes Lockie, Mournpall, (and presumably, Hattah) high levels. Water is flowing in the North Arm of the Creek and pumping at the current rate is expected to occur well into January.



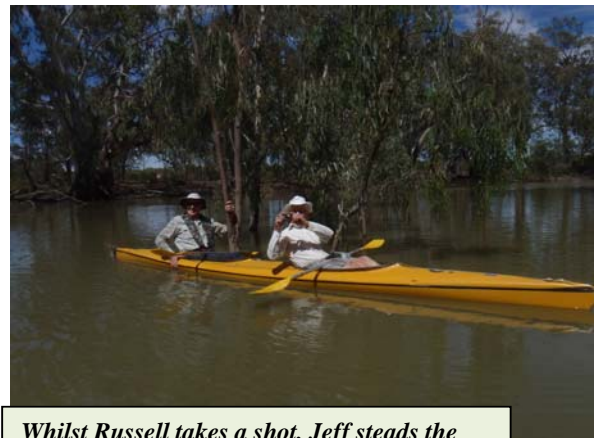
The seven large pipes and pumps



Canoeists: Peter, Russell, Michael, Tyson, Dick & Jeff plus Roger (photographer)

Such conditions provide a wonderful opportunity to paddle a canoe along this creek. On Saturday, seven paddlers from our Club launched into the flowing water, downstream of the exclusion buoys that screen the pump discharge pool. It was a pleasure to easily glide with the help of a strong current in the first part of the creek where the waters are confined by close banks.

The Red Gum trees have had the benefit of a number of recent pumpings and appear to be in reasonable health. Each of the many bends would reveal a new picturesque vista ahead.



Whilst Russell takes a shot, Jeff steers the canoe with the aid of a sapling.



Paddling Pete

There are sections where the stream widens out with less obvious movement of water. The creek bed in some of these places supports great numbers of sapling red gum that have been established from past fillings. On previous occasions when the writer has navigated with less water flow, these young trees have been a bit of an obstacle, but this time the higher levels made travel around them easier. In just a few areas there are the skeletons of

Black Box trees that have succumbed to the harsh conditions of relatively recent times.

Fallen timber is a natural part of the creek. We were able to shove over many of the light horizontal limbs that bob up and down near the surface. At three locations we were confronted with somewhat more navigational challenges through wooden barrages across the water course. In each of these places we all made the passage through without incident, but it is important to never underestimate the combined hazards of snags and fast flows.

We saw quite a number of groups of Black Ducks. They would fly ahead and then land again on the water. At no stage did we see the pretence of them being wounded which is an indicator that for the moment they have no young ones nearby. Sometimes we would encounter a Wood Duck which would allow us to get very close, before diving beneath the surface for around half a minute. It was earlier in the season a couple of years ago when we previously took the same journey. At that time we found numerous Eurasian Coots' nests, but this time did not see any numbers of these birds. And yet it was marvellous to hear the croaking of frogs for most of the journey.

Not everything we saw was a welcome sight. Around three kilometres from our destination, we saw a small black and white animal trot up the bank as we got closer. Then there were three more of them that went over the top and out of sight. Mother pig would not have been far away. It is the first time I have spotted feral pigs in the Park.

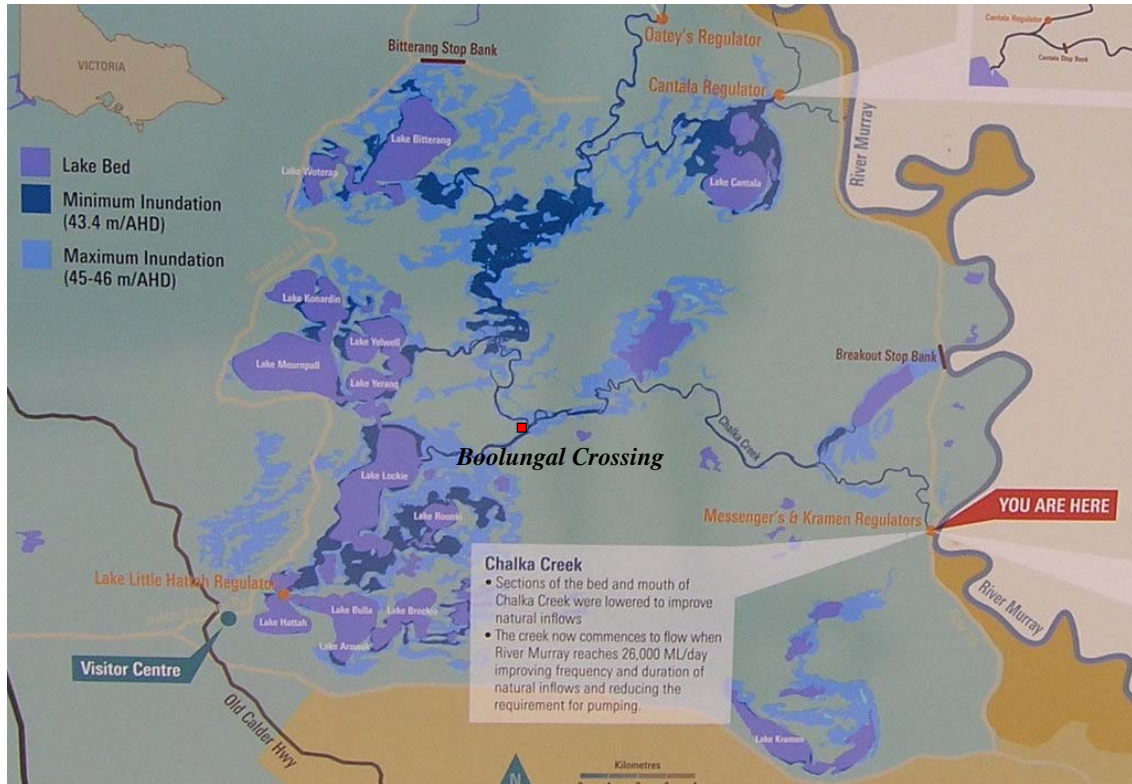


Steady as she goes Mike!

After around three and a half hours including two stops we reached our destination of Boolungal Crossing. Although we had encountered a couple of places where perhaps, there was potential for a wrong turn, at this stage of pumping the directional flow of water makes keeping to the main stream in this section of the

creek, a relatively easy task. On a fine mild day like the one we had, it is indeed a great pleasure to quietly take a canoe along this scenic stream. It has however, the ever present potential of danger and as always we were mindful of the real risks posed by the innocent looking creek.

Written by Dick Johnstone



Mallee CMA information board showing the likely inundation of water within the Hattah Nation Park during various pumping regimes

KANGAROO ISLAND

The proposed trip to K.I. has been set for **6th – 12th April 2014**

Duration: 7 days, including travel to and from Mildura

Depart: Mildura Sunday 6th April.

Drive to Cape Jervis and catch the 6pm ferry across to Penneshaw. Overnight east end of the Island and next day drive to Flinders Chase National Park.

Return: Saturday 12th April.

Depart: 10.30am ferry and drive back.

Accommodation:

Camping: Need to bring provisions, may be able to have an occasional meal out. Cafe at the nearby Information Centre (Rocky River)

Walking: Mostly day walks but those wishing to can do overnight treks.

Cost: Flinders Chase National Park Camp Grounds.
Per Car includes 5 persons

Rocky River \$27 per car Toilets/Showers
West Bay/Snake Lagoon \$13 per car Toilets
Most camping ~ \$13 - \$15 per night per vehicle.
May camp in a couple of different locations.

Ferry: Per Person \$94 return (\$76.00 concession)
\$180 per vehicle return

General Information: www.tourkangarooisland.com.au/

Information supplied by Verna



Progressive Lunch 2014

Just a brief note to say that due to the excessive and sustained heatwave we have been experiencing it was suggested that rather than our traditional Progressive Lunch, it would be much kinder on us all to *progress* to having a restaurant meal with the comfort of air conditioning rather than pedalling between venues. It was very well accepted and sixteen members had a most enjoyable lunch at the Grand Pizza Café.



FEDERATION WEEKEND 2014

UPDATE

Friday 7, Saturday 8, Sunday 9 November 2014

Rawson & Surrounds

The Federation Weekend 2014 Walks Planning Subcommittee has been very busy carrying out walk recces. Some of the iconic walks which appeared on the program the last time there was a Federation Weekend in the area, back in 2004 will be repeated. Seven new walks will be offered. The hub for the weekend will be the Rawson Village. An all-inclusive accommodation and meals package has been negotiated with the venue owners.

Rawson Village is located in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range, near Walhalla, Mount Baw Baw, Mount St. Gwinear, and the Thomson Reservoir.

A Matter of Interest

The Club receives a quarterly magazine from the Friends of the Heysen Trail. Their magazine can be viewed on the web site below.

<http://www.heysentrail.asn.au/trailwalker/>

**FOLLOWING OUR MEETING ON WEDNESDAY OUR CALENDAR WILL BE
SIGNIFICANTLY UP-DATED**



SUNRAYSIA BUSHWALKERS

PLANNED WALKS FOR 2014

If you intend going on any of these trips please contact the Trip Leader by 8 pm the Thursdays beforehand so that arrangements may be finalized. Unless a minimum of 4 walkers (including the Trip Leader) have registered by Thursday evening walks may have to be cancelled.

2014	Activity	Grade	Contact
February 12	Deferred General Meeting – Updating of calendar		
April 6 - 12	Kangaroo Island – 7 days	E	Verna 50234102
April 18 – 21	Mutawintji National Park		
	Cobdobla – <i>Suggestion only at present</i>		
	Glue Pot - <i>Suggestion only at present</i>		
Late April/May	Mt Feathertop – Harriet Ville to Ridge Walk - <i>Suggestion only at present</i>		
	Katoomba to Jenolan Caves (5 days) - <i>Suggestion only at present</i>		
Nov 7-9	Federation Walks Weekend Rawson & Surrounds		

All walks are given a **two letter grading code**

<p>The first letter refers to the distance S - short (8-12 klms a day) M - medium (12-20 klms a day) L - long (20 plus klms a day)</p>	<p>The second letter refers to the terrain E - easy (mainly following form of marked track typically on flat ground) M - medium (mainly on formed tracks but may include some off-track walking with moderate climbs on or off track) H - hard (day or overnight walks which may require long or multiple steep climbs, cross country travel, creek crossings &/or some rock scrambling) R - rough (day or overnight walks in difficult terrain which may include long &/or steep climbs and considerable off track walking. May include special requirements such as requirement to carry extra water, experience in rock scrambling &/or snow, knowledge of survival)</p>
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**Next Meeting
Wednesday 5th March at 8.00 pm
at Drysdale's
2164 Fifteenth Street,
Irymple**