

April 2020



SUBARU 4WD NEWS

Subaru 4WD Web Site: <http://www.subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au/>
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SUBARU 4WD CLUB of WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC.

P.O. BOX 434, SOUTH PERTH, W. A. 6951

Due to

Covid-19 pandemic

ALL MEETINGS AND TRIPS

CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

SUBARU 4WD CLUB NEWSLETTER

SUBARU 4WD CLUB OF WA Inc. 2019/2020 COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT:	Adrian Longwood	0424 723 558 president@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au
SECRETARY:	Deborah Thyne	0420 791 762 secretary@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au
TREASURER:	Joy Unno	0429 374 709 treasurer@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au
SOCIAL ORGANISER:	Joanne Norton	0411 151 024 social@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au
TRIPS CO-ORDINATOR:	Travis Maskey	0422 815 737 trips@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au
EDITOR:	Stephan Millett	0405 221 845 editor@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

David Peck **0402 177 886**, Jim Wilcox **0419 040 969**, Ross Mead **0417 920 848**,
Mark Smithers **0415 954 898**, Karen Eldridge **0412 133 629**

Contact 'all committee' on comm@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au

MERCHANDISE:	David Peck	0402 177 886
WEBMASTER:	Rob Griffiths	0411 249 933
	Jim Wilcox	0419 040 969
4WD ASSOC DELEGATES:	Adrian Longwood	0424 723 558
	Keith Low	0407 477 980
MEMBERSHIP CO-ORDINATOR:	Ross Mead	0417 920 848 membership@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au
PROPERTY OFFICER:	Tony Richards	
ENVIRONMENT OFFICER:	tbc	environment@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au
SOCIAL MEDIA:	tbc	socialmedia@subaru4wdclub.asn.au

Club member of the Year 2018-2019: Stephan Millett

Life members: Fred Offer, Keith Anderson, Jonel Householder, Ray Stewart, Ian Johnson, Peter Andruszkiw, Ron Counce, Jim Wilcox and Tony Richards

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

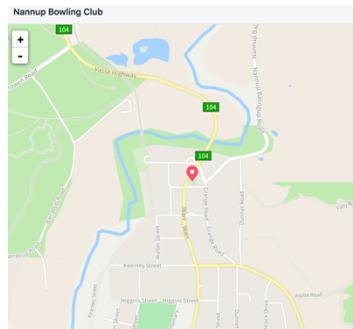
Dear Members, we've all been dealt a sudden change that will alter our lives drastically now and have lasting implications on how we go about daily life and club trips. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has hit WA and you should all be aware that the club has had to suspend all activities as per the broadcast email sent recently. With Travel Restrictions, widespread campground closures and high risk of exposure through our regular meetings it was the obvious and safe thing to do for our members. Now, I don't want to focus on it too much other than I can't stress the importance of Social Distancing, Handwash hygiene, and avoiding all non-essential movement. While this will affect us for some time, in the background the committee will still operate digitally and keep the club operating until we can all get back out on trips and events. The current calendar has been heavily disrupted, but we are hopeful we can resume activities in July/August in time for good weather through spring, but of course when travel restrictions are reduced is out of our hands.

In the meantime, please keep up to date with, and follow all Federal and State Government advice and guidelines during this Pandemic. I hope you all stay safe and healthy during his time. ➡



ANNUAL DINNER IN NANNUP. *The Annual Dinner will be at the Nannup Bowling Club in October. The date is far enough ahead that it's likely to continue as planned. We're in the early days of planning and gathering details so it's not live on the website.* Pic from bowling club

Facebook page



➤ With closures and restrictions every way you look its easy to get caught up in the panic, but please, remain calm, act rationally and be kind to each other.

Now is as good a time to help support the local businesses that are struggling more than ever. Please consider getting takeaway and delivered food options and look after the little guys. Don't forget our Club Sponsors during this time. It's just as hard for them as it is us and we need to make sure we're all in this together.

While all this is going on there's now a little extra time to spend with family at home – a little silver lining in the cloud where we can value those around us. There's also more time to do some upgrades and changes to your car. Plenty of time to install a UHF or awning, clean and sort the camping gear, set the tent up in the back-yard to air it out, waterproof and treat canvas or re-season cast iron cookware.



Set up your tent in the backyard - but maybe a little better than this pic from Gumtree

A quick update on the National 4WD Council: The WA 4WD Association, of which our club is a member, voted to remain a member of the Council and hopes other States do as well so the Council can continue and push through the rough path it's currently on. Bruce Brinkley, the current chair of the WA Association has stood down, to further focus efforts on the National Council. Alan Brown (Vice Chair) was elected Chair and Keith Evans elected to General Committee.

That's all the updates we have for now. Look forward to seeing you all safe and well in coming months. Safe Subaruing! **The Pres. – Adrian Longwood**

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To receive offers members must mention they are Westcycle members at time of bookings or prior to negotiations. Offer excludes Impreza.

Finska World Championship is still on ... later

Hi all. As you'd be aware all trips and meetings have been canceled for the next few months in an effort to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Also it was announced that all travel that is not essential has been banned as well. So if you were planning to escape the madness, and head out by yourself, you can't. Please think carefully about your actions as there are huge fines for not abiding by the restrictions, and the travel restrictions are aimed at keeping country folk safe – they don't have the same sort of medical help as there is in Perth.

TRIPS

The Finska World championship is not cancelled, just postponed. When the Coronavirus craziness has abated we'll run it, and crown our new champion! In the meantime, you can plan for when the restrictions are lifted. There will be loads of businesses struggling to make ends meet. When the travel ban lifts, I urge you to make a trip out to the regional areas. Spending a little money out there will mean a lot to many people. See you all out there in a few months.

Travis, Trips Coordinator.

Treasurer's Report for March 2020, plus current balance

March 2020	Balance
	Current balance (03-04-20) +\$5357.43
	Closing Balance (31-03-20) +\$5107'43
	Opening Balance (01-03-20)+\$5124.52
Tally for month of March	Total Credits +\$841.57
	Total Debits - \$608.67

Summary: Income consisted of deposits for the Murchison trip, merchandise purchases from the March GM, Bank Interest of 0.46c and a payment from Subaru Australia for 5 new memberships. Expenses were refunding of the cancelled Murchison trip payments and a refund of tea & coffee expenses to Tom Minto. *Note: all reports and minutes of all meetings are available in the Members' section of the Club website.*

Send in your stories...

How are you spending your time in social isolation?

I would like to hear what members are doing while they are isolating themselves as best they can. I am building a shed to



I'm on top of my Covid-19 project!

house my two tractors! And welding farm implements and working on some major house maintenance. And putting this mag together. What are you doing?

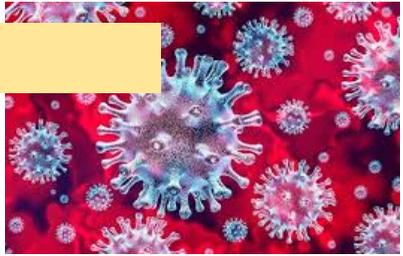
Send a picture with a caption. Send a short reflection on what the effects of the pandemic are for you. Send funny bits from your social media feeds, or sad bits that move you. But please send something.

A long time ago I used the archives in the Battye Library (part of the State Library) to write an Honours paper on how small publications recorded significant events in the earliest days of what became the conservation movement in WA. Our little magazine is in that archive and the archive of the Australian national library,



and our stories may well find themselves in future social histories of the pandemic. So write stories, take pictures, and send them to the editor@subaru4wdclubwa.asn.au Stay safe. **Stephan Millett, Editor**

Your committee acted early



As you know, we have shut down club activities until further notice. We do not know when we will be able to meet in person or when we will be allowed to go camping, driving outside our regional zones or meeting up for socials.

While tens of thousands of people have died from Covid-19, our geographical isolation and a population willing to do what is needed is sparing us the worst. Despite early views in the public that the likely impact of the virus was being exaggerated, the club committee was working on possible actions before 16 March, when the WA government declared a state of emergency. On 17 March all our Club meetings and trips were cancelled until at least June 3. After discussion, this early call was agreed to unanimously.

I would like to acknowledge the behind-the-scenes work by club secretary Deb Thyne and president Adrian Longwood in putting together an early action plan to guide what the club should do. Deb is an experienced nurse and she understood better, and earlier, than others what we might be facing. Now, of course, we all understand what a pandemic is. I trust all of us are managing OK while doing what we must to keep ourselves and others safe while Covid-19 ravages the world. The Club continues, but our usual activities can't until further notice, but the committee is looking at ways to have meetings via video conferencing. **Stephan Millett**

Coming events: *We are not sure if we will be allowed to travel June, but this Calendar for June is here, in the hope that we can get together by then.*

JUNE 2020							
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Tues 2. Committee
							Tues 9. General meeting
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Sun 7 – Sat 13. Hyden Hide-outs
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Sun 14. Fiddles and Nibbles
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	Sat 27 – Sun 28. Camp oven cookout
28	29	30					

do more of the fun stuff



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Toward William Creek. Day 28 – Sunday, 4 August 2019

Another cool morning greeted us and several people had trouble maintaining circulation in their fingers. Otherwise, it was a routine breakfast and packing process - other than the opportunity for some photos of a royal spoonbill in the Mungerannie wetland.

We fueled up and said thanks to the managers – whilst picking up Daniel's beanie that he had left on the bar - before heading off

on the dot of 8:30am with Jo leading the way. Our first stop was the Mulka ruins about 40km south. Unfortunately, the only interpretive sign was blank so there was no information about the meagre ruins. However, it seemed most likely to be the familiar narrative of idealistic dreams unfulfilled in a harsh landscape.

Only a short distance farther south Jo got a flat tyre. This was more than a little inconvenient as she didn't have a second spare (having punctured north of Finke earlier) due to some misunderstandings during the planning ➡

The Deserts Trip 2019
Heading West

➤ process. In the end, we put David's two spares on the back wheels despite some concerns about repercussions for the transmission. Nothing arose in the short term. On the south side of Cooper Creek we stopped for morning tea and to take a look at the 'MV Tom Brennan', a punt that had been used to ferry people and goods across the Cooper when it was in flood. On resumption, we soon had more tyre trouble with Daniel suffering a flat. Chris, who had been with Jo when she got her puncture, was now in Daniel's car and concerned he may get a reputation as a jinx. It was a fairly quick fix, however, and those at the rear of the convoy who had stopped to assist were soon on their way, with the others going slowly up front.

As they were catching up Jason radioed that there was an ostrich by the road. After his effort yesterday with the jabirus, which were actually brolgas, it was understandable that there were some questions about this pronouncement! However, it was there for all to see, and we stopped for some time for photos. According to Keith W's



Yes. It was an ostrich. A fear of being disembowelled kept the photographer at a distance

bird book it was likely to be part of the only remaining viable feral population in Australia. Shortly afterwards we stopped for lunch on the northern side of the Clayton River, where there was a small spring fed by a pipe from a bore higher up at the roadside stopping place.

As we headed on after lunch, we forewent climbing Tree Bluff for a reprise of 2009, but stopped briefly at the Lake Harry ruins, before arriving at Marree a bit before 2pm. Here we had a chance for a look around at the historical info in the old railway precinct, and several of us bought ice-creams. Jo tried for suitable tyres without luck. However, she messaged the Coober Pedy ➤

▶ tyre place that she had previously spoken to from Birdsville for two tyres instead of one.

Further west, we all stopped at 'plane henge' – a quirky place with some amazing metal



'sculptures', including a couple of planes standing vertically with their tails buried in the ground - for some quick photos. It was quick only for some, however, and that rendered the convoy rather strung out for a while. We re-gathered at the Lake Eyre South lookout around 4pm for another short stay and photo session.

Coward Springs was packed when we arrived a bit before 5pm, and the area we had reserved was very cosy (read small), though pleasant, with tamarind trees giving shelter. We were blessed by an absence of wind, at least initially. However, we were a little disappointed to find that the pool we'd heard about was no more than a spa, and not all that warm either. Most of us decided to forgo a dip and wait for a shower at Coober Pedy.

Julie and Wayne did a nice chicken stew for dinner around the campfire in a longitudinally cut gas bottle. Stephan presented the wooden spoon to Chris for being associated, as a passenger, with both punctures incurred during the day. However, Keith W topped him again by presenting Stephan with a small 'perpetual' wooden spoon, fashioned from an ice-cream stick, on a string to go around his neck! Afterwards, Deb read a poem about a skink preaching against burning bush wood as it was home to little creatures! Later, as the circle got smaller, our conversation turned to some of the technical and other aspects of Daniel's amateur radio hobby, and Jo's involvement with Scouts. **Keith Low**

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Coward Springs: Day 29 – Monday, 5 August 2019

This morning was again cold but we were spared the wind that we'd had the last few mornings. It was a relaxed start to the day, during which we fixed Daniel's tyre and helped some neighbours with theirs. In thanks, they unpacked their innovative camper (Innovan) and showed us their interesting portable composting toilet (Seperett). The site manager, Prue, popped down to talk to Keith W about local birds, but he had headed off searching for them already.

Most of us walked up to the museum – housed in an old engine driver's cabin – which contained a small but quite interesting coverage of the history of Coward Springs. On return, Keith W reported that he had photographed a chirruping wedgebill (another first), as well as a fairy wren.

We departed just after 10am and retraced our steps 6km to the Wabma Kadarbu Mound Springs



Keith Low heading to the Coward Springs museum

Conservation Park where we checked out 'The Bubbler' and 'Blanche Cup' mound springs and had morning tea. Heading back north again, we came across the Beresford Siding ruins which were quite interesting. It included some remains of stone walls that seemed to be water-gathering infrastructure – a little reminiscent of places like Karalee and Boondi Rocks in WA. ➡

Arriving at William Creek

➡ Not much farther up the road we turned into Strangways Springs and arrived just on 12:30pm. After a quick lunch, during which a tour bus arrived, we headed up the walk track. Most of us had a



A welcome coffee at William Creek

good look around and several found a working mound spring with a pool of water on the track past the cemetery that others had understood was blocked. We arrived at William Creek before 2:30pm and joined the throng booking camping sites at the pub. We were served by a young lady from Estonia with excellent English - though Stephan corrected her use of 'house' as a general term for a building! Then it was over to the caravan park where we were all able to find reasonable spots close together. Chris discovered that there was a Telstra 'small cell' operating so most of us retired to the shade of the rather poorly outfitted camp kitchen to get online.

Around this time a large group of vehicles came in that were participating in the Drivers Run, a fund raiser for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service of northern NSW. The convoy of 48 vehicles, which had raised about \$350,000, was on its way up to Oodnadatta and Dalhousie to cross the Simpson on the way home. Most of them came from the Tamworth area. One of the participants was a lady who relied on a mobility scooter, which they needed to get across the desert on a trailer! In the evening a cold breeze had come up and made it quite uncomfortable, so we retired to the so-called camp kitchen (no water, no jug, no microwave etc) to escape it. Deb and Keith did ➡

➤ great home-made gnocchi for dinner, followed by rice pudding and fruit for dessert. Spoilt! Chris had been the only one to eat over at the pub – which he said was very busy – and he returned for the wooden spoon presentation. In the end he made it a 'golden spoon' and presented it to Stephan for some of his erudite comments about our capacity to harm the environment. After that, most people drifted off to bed but several of us had a discussion with Jo who was a little concerned about returning home across the Nullarbor on her own, as she was not intending to do the Anne Beadell Highway leg from Coober Pedy. **Keith Low**



Television and common room, at Riba's Underground outside Coober Pedy

Coober Pedy : Day 30 – Tuesday, 6 August 2019

Several of us allowed ourselves a lie in this morning as Chris, Deb, Jo and Daniel were doing sightseeing flights this morning and our departure would be delayed. Preparation was relaxed as a result. Some decided to go down to the William Creek pub for a coffee. Stephan described it as excellent, which supported the barman's view that the barista was the best there is – a commendation that ignored her haircut!

At one stage on the drive west to Coober Pedy, Keith and Deb fell behind when Keith stopped for what he thought may be an elusive gibber bird, and they fell out of radio contact so the convoy had to stop for a while. Then Daniel raised that his low fuel light was on. As a result, we stopped for lunch a bit earlier than we might have, about midday, in Engenina Creek 60km west of Coober Pedy. It was about the only place around with a modicum of shade. ➤

➤ We got away again just after 12:30pm and arrived in Coober Pedy before 1:30pm. Most of us went straight to the Bridgestone tyre centre to deal with tyre issues or, in Stephan's case, book a wheel alignment for tomorrow morning. Then, after toying with doing some touristy things or going to the pub, we headed straight back to Riba's to book in. A number took the underground camping option, some took



Deb divining for opal during the mine tour

underground rooms, and some camped. Showers, washing and time online filled much of the afternoon.

Stephan did a miso soup and then rice noodles in bolognese sauce for dinner. There were a couple of very young girls from Yass, NSW, in the camp kitchen doing the dishes for their parents after dinner. We were impressed by their responsibility.

Around 8pm, once the mine tour that some of us did had finished, we gathered in the camp kitchen for the wooden spoon, which went to Daniel for exiting the car park at William Creek via the pedestrian access, and running low on fuel again despite the opportunity to fill up at William Creek (or from his jerry). Afterwards, Stephan, David, Jason, Daniel and both Keiths drove down to the bar and grill in town to have a farewell drink with Chris, who was heading to Adelaide by bus in the morning for his flight to Perth. Unfortunately, we weren't impressed with the sterility and lack of character of the place, so we quickly made the decision to have dinner tomorrow night in another spot. To make matters worse, they stopped serving at 9pm and we got kicked out at 9:15pm! **Keith Low**

Day 31

Wednesday,

7 August 2019

With today being largely a rest day, people went in a variety of different directions, especially in the morning. There were some preparation and readiness jobs to do, some felt the need to



Inside the Catholic chapel in Coober Pedy

sample a real coffee, many checked out some of the opal shops (several of which were real 'dives'), and generally doing the touristy things around town was 'de rigueur'. The relatively new and well-conceived Umoona museum and gallery was quite popular. As the morning went by the wind grew stronger and dust was flying – one expected some tumbleweeds to roll past any minute!

Unfortunately, at lunch time, Stephan copped a little bit of gluten in the lemon pepper the chicken in his sandwich was cooked with – despite specifically asking for gluten-free bread. This largely ruined the rest of his day.

Around 3pm most of us, apart from Stephan who was still feeling lousy, gathered back at Riba's and headed out to The Breakaways, north of town. This is a magical area of multi-coloured mesas and breakaways, quite like the well-known Painted Hills – which Jo and Daniel had flown over yesterday out of William Creek – but more accessible. We stopped several times as we wound through the area and braved the wind for photos. Sunset is an excellent time to get the best of the colours, and we made sure we were part of the throng at the main lookout in time to take advantage of the opportunity for some beautiful sights and photos.

Once the sun had set, we headed back into town where Stephan felt just well enough to join us for dinner at John's Pizza Bar and Restaurant. It was 

doing a roaring trade, but we got our meals in a timely fashion and enjoyed a lovely dinner. Whilst there, we did the wooden spoon presentation, won by Stephan for spraying Daniel with water through the open door of Daniel's vehicle. **Keith Low**

... and we start the Anne Beadell Highway

Coober Pedy to 20 km West of Tallaringa Well: 8 August

I slept well in my underground tent sheltered from the gale blowing overnight

despite a snorer who echoed through the tunnels. Packing up the tent I emerged outside to a windy and cold 7 degrees for breakfast in the draughty camp kitchen. The wind had died down but was still gusty and unpleasant. At breakfast I said farewell to Keith and Deb who were heading for



Perth via the Nullarbor. After breakfast I drove into town to refuel the car and fill all my jerrycans for the long drive ahead. I also bought more supplies for the meal I was scheduled to prepare in a few days. I was waiting at the information centre where we had arranged to meet for departure by 8:15. However a sequence of events delayed our departure until 10. David had to get his two spare wheels off Jo's car while Jo had to have two new tyres fitted to her rims. This was dependent on the tyres

Note: The Anne Beadell 'highway' is a rough, rutted route that takes a direct line from near Coober Pedy more than 1200km to Laverton. There is one place to get fuel and no place to get food. Water from tanks at Ilkurlka had to be boiled.



▶ arriving by bus and did go to plan although David didn't get to the information centre until after 9. Meanwhile Wayne, who had a flat tyre last night returning from the Breakaways, was trying to get the wheel fixed. The first shop he went to removed the tyre from the rim then refused to replace it suspecting it might be



damaged as there was something loose inside. Wayne then had to find a second garage willing to put the tyre back on the rim so he could try plugging it. Wayne was charged for each remove and replace – costing twice as much. By the time he had sorted this out it was nearly 10. While we waited Keith and Deb, then Jo, passed by as they set off towards Port Augusta.

We finally departed, locating the Anne Beadell Highway turn off just north of Coober Pedy. At first the road was quite good, travelling through the conical piles of spoil in the opal mining area then through barren gibber plains which gave way to low shrubs and trees. After the turnoff to Mabel Downs homestead the track deteriorated becoming narrower and heavily corrugated. The going was rough and slow; at times restricted to 20 km/hr. Numerous chicken tracks, usually smoother than the main track, provided brief respite from the jarring. We took morning tea at the dog fence where we had to do a 6 km diversion up and down the fence to pass through a gate!

After lunch, taken in a convenient chicken track, we had a brief photo stop at Tallaringa Native Well. The well pipe is protected with a steel mesh cover but, without a pump, it is not practical to use it. As we drove on some bushes had what looked like silk matting at their base which glowed in the light of the lowering sun. Although they disappeared before we stopped for the night, I later discovered these to be aggregations of spiders forming a common silk mat with multiple burrows underneath. It was a cold day with the

➤ temperature barely reaching 18 degrees and the wind blowing strongly and only diminishing in the late afternoon when we stopped for the night about 20 km west of Tallaringa Well. Here I fitted the spare air filter I was carrying so the car would not be compromised by dust in the days ahead. David cooked us a tasty inverted shepherds pie (pastry underneath) on hot coals. **Daniel Bedo**

Anne Beadell Highway

9 Aug 20 km West of Tallaringa Well to Anne's Corner

It was a relatively mild night with the temperature at 8 degrees when I emerged from my tent at 6:45. The wind started to increase in strength making it feel colder. We were ready to leave at 8:15 on a track which continued much the same as yesterday. There were fewer chicken tracks now so it was rough most of the time. Constantly scanning the track for



hazards and selecting which side to favour for a less rugged ride required full concentration. We stopped every 45 minutes or so to check the tyres and shock absorber temperature. David advised that if the shock absorber was too hot to hold, tyre pressure should be reduced. After a few stops an optimal setting was achieved which for my car was down to 23 psi.

After about an hour we found the remains of a camper trailer which had been stripped of wheels, suspension and other fittings. This did not stop David, Stephan and Wayne looking for anything useful. David managed to salvage a good strong hinge. Later there were more chicken tracks which, although sinuous, provided smooth relief from the corrugations. Through the morning clouds began to develop and thicken looking quite grey by lunch time ➤

▶ but there was no rain. During the afternoon they thinned out and the sun broke through raising the temperature from 15 to 18 degrees.

We made a short diversion to visit the site of British atomic bomb tests carried out in 1952.

Codenamed Totem 1 and 2, the bombs were mounted on steel towers 20 metres high about 1.5 km apart. Ground zero is marked with a concrete obelisk listing the test dates and a warning that for several hundred metres radiation is too high for prolonged habitation. There are many pieces of vitrified sand



scattered around the site and the vegetation is clear for hundreds of metres around the obelisks. Only the tower corner bases remain as a few twisted and melted pieces. We continued on about 20 km northwest to Emu where the personnel for the bomb tests were housed. Little remains beside some foundations where tents used to be and odd bits and pieces.

An interesting plaque records a visit by corporal McNamara, a plant operator in Project X200, in 2003. It has a cryptic message which I suspect was the instruction to observers that they could turn and look at the atomic blast after the initial flash of light. The nearby airstrip still has a good smooth surface on which we held a mock drag race filmed with Wayne's drone. Beyond Emu the track became more sandy making driving a little easier but we used more fuel. We stopped for lunch about 16 km west of Emu taking advantage of the shade under a large desert oak tree at the boundary of the Maralinga Protected Area. Entering this area we began to cross small dunes which were much easier to tackle than those in the Simpson Desert. David spotted another wrecked camper trailer in the bushes, stopped for a thorough ▶

▶ examination, but did not find anything worthy of salvage. About 4 pm we made camp at Anne’s Corner, named after Len Beadell’s wife. Firewood was scarce but we gathered some nearby transporting it back balanced on the roof or, with smugness and enthusiasm, towed behind Wayne’s car. I put about 30 litres of fuel from jerrycans into the car to get nearly a full tank. A couple from Cooma, in the NSW Southern Highlands, stopped for a chat in passing. This was the only other vehicle we saw in the two days since leaving Coober Pedy. The wind dropped to a gentle breeze allowing us to enjoy dinner and campfire banter. At dinner Stephan baked a muffin like cake as his first try on coals. It was served warm and tasted quite good. I set up my HF radio station with the antenna wire slung through low trees and bushes, hearing stations from Japan, USA and the Eastern States but I could not contact them with my low power. During the evening cloud cover rapidly increased until the moon was no longer showing. I wondered if it might be wet by morning. **Daniel Bedo**

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