

# Meandering down the **Mawson**

**with Di, Roel and Paihikara**



**An 1100km cycle journey from the outback  
to Adelaide in South Australia 2014**

## **Hello everyone!**

Australia has always been attractive to Roel and I, and this year we decided to take Pai across the Tasman to visit the Emu's and 'Roos. We had heard a bit about the Mawson Trail from members of the Girls on Top Team that competed in the XPD Adventure race last year and their course followed some parts of the trail. It starts at Blinman some 600kms north from Adelaide.

We arranged to ride with friends from Invercargill - Joe Sherriff and Jo Wilson and another mate of theirs, Sue Murray from Gore. We met up on Saturday 24th May at Auckland airport before flying out early on Sunday morning.

Roel and I had competed in the XPD Adventure Race back in 2007 so we were familiar with the riding skills Joe and Jojo, but Sue was a different story - she is a former world champion in cycling so we were unsure if we could keep up!!!

This is the story of our 17 day ride from Wilpena to Blinman and then to Adelaide following the Mawson Trail.

*Let's go!*



*Jojo, Di, Sue Joe, Roel and Jim with the Flinders Ranges behind*

## Arrival in Australia

Kay Haarsma had opened her house up for us after we arrived in Adelaide. Kay is a fellow Mountain bike orienteer who we have known for many years. She is well travelled and was in the process of organising the Australian MTBO Championships in Alice Springs. Sue had arranged for a friend to pick us up at Adelaide airport and shortly after landing Jim turned up in a borrowed car towing a trailer. On went three bikes and two BOB trailers. Kay took our bikes in her camper van and we headed off to her house. On the way there Kay took us via a bike expo. When we got there we were presented with the most amazing group of bike configurations you will see any where. Bikes made from all sorts of materials and in all sorts of setups. There was a good opportunity to look at styles of trailers and by the time we left I had decided to turn my munted Cannondale frame into a bamboo bike when I get home!

Jim had taken the other three directly to Kay's place and by the time we got there they had pretty much got their bikes together. Jim was still chatting away with everyone and it didn't take long before we had worked out that he was recently unemployed and that he would be keen to join us on the trail. We presented him with his ticket to ride - a Kiwi Cycling Company buff!

He shot off to get organised with an intention to meet back at Kay's place tomorrow morning for the bus trip to Wilpena leaving at 7am.



Roel, Jim and Sue putting the bikes together at Kay's place.



*We were given Paihikara (maori for cycle) from my workmates at Good Health and he has been travelling in his preferred place, on top of the panniers. He had his first overseas experience when he travelled to Europe in 2012 and came with us on our Northern Migration.*

*This time he's on the lookout for emus and kangaroos.*

*He quite enjoys being in the photos and hopes to feature frequently.*



## Day 1 Adelaide to Willow Springs



*Turning the trailer around at the end of Kay's road before heading up to Wilpena*



The bus arrived right on time at 7am and we loaded all the gear into the trailer and the inside of the bus. We had thought that the bus would be able to turn around at the end of Kay's road in the cul-de-sac but there was not quite enough room so we got out and man handled the trailer around so we were all pointed in the right direction. After recoupling the trailer we were on our way! The drive was estimated to take around 4.5 hours and we were taking a route that followed roughly where we would be riding on the way back. We could see the rail trails through the wineries and then the forest covered ridges we would be crossing as we travelled further north. We had a stop in Melrose for coffee and something to eat at the old bank which has

*Leaving Wilpena . . .  
outback - here we come*



recently been converted to a cafe and accommodation. We had a short bit of time to explore around and we all found our way to a well supplied bike shop. Melrose is known for its great mountain bike trails and the Fat Tire Festival due to take place in a couple of weeks time. Kay collected her car from Melrose and left us at this point to drive back to Adelaide.

The rest of us piled back into the bus after our stop in Melrose and continued on to Wilpena. We arrived at Wilpena Pound Information Centre at around 2.15 which was a bit later than we expected but we decided to push on to Willow Springs realising that we may be arriving at the camping area in the dark. Willow Springs is part of the Flinders Ranges By Bike route that we decided to take to get to Blinman. It gives us two days of back country riding to get to the Mawson Trail start and covers some great riding across a couple of stations until we arrive at Alpana Station on the main road to Blinman. The road out of Wilpena Pound was a good tar seal section but shortly we were turning left onto a gravel through road. The surface was smooth and fast but there was a bit of discussion about the direction as it seemed to be heading opposite to the direction we thought we should be going in. After a bit of discussion we had a steady climb up this road and then crossed over to a farm track after a short piece of tar seal again. By this time the light was dropping pretty quickly and we headed on with more urgency. The farm track was really typical Australian terrain and we had a few rough spots that caused Jim's bottle of wine to bounce out of one of his pannier bags. Somehow it survived!!

On the way to Willow Springs we saw plenty of kangaroos and emus and spied a wedge tailed eagle soaring through the skies at dusk. The bush comes alive in the early evening!





We got to the Willow Springs homestead and checked into the camping area with Sheree, a delightful character who works as a co-ordinator for the camping activities at Willow Springs. Sheree directed us to an ideal camping setup with flat tent sites and a sheltered kitchen for cooking. Brendon, the landowner and a farm worker, Andrew chatted to us as we cooked dinner. We were pretty thankful the first thing we had done was put the tents up as about half an hour after doing so it rained quite heavily. Quite a lot of water and wind appeared which meant our first night was a wet windy one.

## Day 2 Willow Springs to Alpana 60km



We were all up early and packed up in windy, drizzly conditions but on the trail at 8.30am. Today would be a long day with only rough farm tracks to be ridden. The weather dried up shortly after starting out so we had good firm tracks to ride on but there was a lot of ups and downs as we crossed numerous creek beds. There were incredible views over the hills of the stations and we ended up climbing a lot. Once we had passed over the main hills we dropped down to a flatter area that also presented us with a section of rather vague trails to follow next to a stream. The streams and creeks were all dry in the area and we chose to ride the section of vague tracks by basically following a fence line. Eventually this came to a gate and we returned to the track we needed to be on. Our aim was to



get to a shepherds hut for lunch that would provide a bit of shelter from the constant headwind. The hut was a small two room affair with a table and two benches so we boiled the billy and got stuck into some food.

After the break we continued on to the next overnight stop. This brought us past the impressive Great Wall of China - a ridge and a few knolls that have a rocky cliff top. When we had popped out on the main road north we came past the main view of the wall and decided to ride into the lookout area to take photos and for Roel and Joe to collect a geocache. We arrived at Alpana Station at 4pm and settled into the shearers quarters for the night.







The day had been a hard one with a constant headwind and we decided a trip to Blinman just 15km up the road was on the cards for dinner but no one was really keen to ride up there. Station owner Sally offered to take us up there in the station vehicle. On the way up she announced it was her birthday and so we had a celebration drink with her before dinner at the pub. 19 people inhabit Blinman and we had a chance to chat with a few locals. One was the owner of the local cafe who was keen for us to call in the next day to try his Quandong pies. Quandongs are a small fruit that grows in the outback and makes a nice sweet tart or pie.



### Day 3 Alpana to Brachina Gorge 32km

We had a good nights sleep on comfortable beds and woke to find a day that was a bit overcast with a couple of showers passing through.

This morning we had a later start and rode up to Blinman with only a light load as we would be passing Alpana on the way back and would collect the bulk of the gear then. The ride was a gentle up hill and as we dropped down to one of the creek beds we encountered a large Wedge Tailed Eagle dining out on a dead Kangaroo who had been hit by a vehicle the night before. It was a magnificent sight to see such a beautiful bird so close and as we got closer it took off and headed to a perch to wait until it was clear to go back and finish its breakfast.

Blinman is quite a historic place with the main feature being a copper mine from the late 1800's. In its heyday the town was pretty big but all that remains are the shafts, slag heaps and various relics of the past. We walked around the mine area and took in all the info from the boards dotted around the place. By the time we had completed the walk around the mine site the cafe was open so we all trundled in to try the much touted Quandong pies. They are a bright red fruit placed into a pastry case and presented as a type of tart with ice cream on the side.





By mid morning we were barrelling back down the road to Alpana to collect the gear and start the Mawson Trail proper. After the trail turned off the tarmac we were riding on pretty good dirt roads which then passed over some rolling hills before passing through Bulls Gap. This is a beautiful spot with massive gum trees hanging over the dry creek. It had a gorge feel to it as one side had some pretty steep rocky cliffs.

We took a side track out to Red Hill Lookout which involved a steep climb to a cairn with amazing views of the Flinders Ranges. During the ride we had several encounters with emus and kangaroos. After we back tracked from the lookout the terrain was sort of





undulating but gently climbing, and then we ended up with a fantastic downhill for about 8km as we rode in to Trezona Camping area. Jim had recommended that we carry on a bit further to camp by the river in Slippery Dip. He had been telling us that Brachina Gorge would have water in it and was very keen to show this to us. When we arrived at Slippery Dip it was dry and so we pitched the tents in the river bed.

Jim was keen to take us further into the gorge so we set off and climbed up over a ridge and dropped onto the twisting road that took us into the gorge. This is a beautiful area of Australia and during the ride we found a large group of Yellow Tailed Wallabys crossing the road in front of us. They are such a pretty coloured animal and it was a pleasure to watch them as they headed from the gully up the side of the ridge. There was one very small "puddle" along the river that still contained water which really pleased Jim as he was pretty sure there was going to be plenty of water when every other water course we encountered was dry!

Roel and I decided to attach the "gear shed" to the tent and try that out. It proved to be the most valuable item we had taken



with us as we could stow all the bags and wet gear in it and have plenty of space to get in and out of the tent. The new Hubba Hubba tent was great throughout the ride and is a perfect replacement for our 20 year old Macpac Olympus which we retired after the Europe trip two years ago.

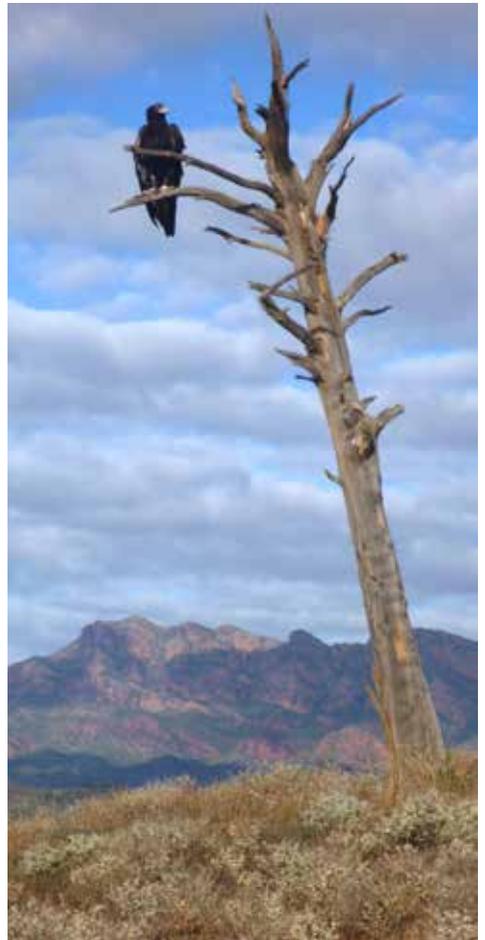




#### **Day 4 Brachina Gorge to Rawnsley Park Station 60km**

We got away from the campsite at Slippery Dip by 8am and rode a short distance back to the trail proper. The day was beautifully fine and sunny as we rode the tracks. There were plenty of creek crossings with their sharp ups and downs to test the legs. We had some stunning views of the Flinders Ranges as we made progress back towards Wilpena Pound that we had departed from 3 days earlier. As soon as we crossed into the National Park we noticed a significant change in the vegetation. The gum trees were basically replaced by conifer type pine trees that looked like they were well tended as the undergrowth was almost non-existent.

Probably just the way the vegetation grows and the kangaroos probably keep the grass down.....

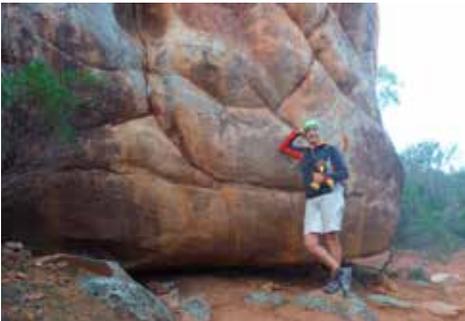


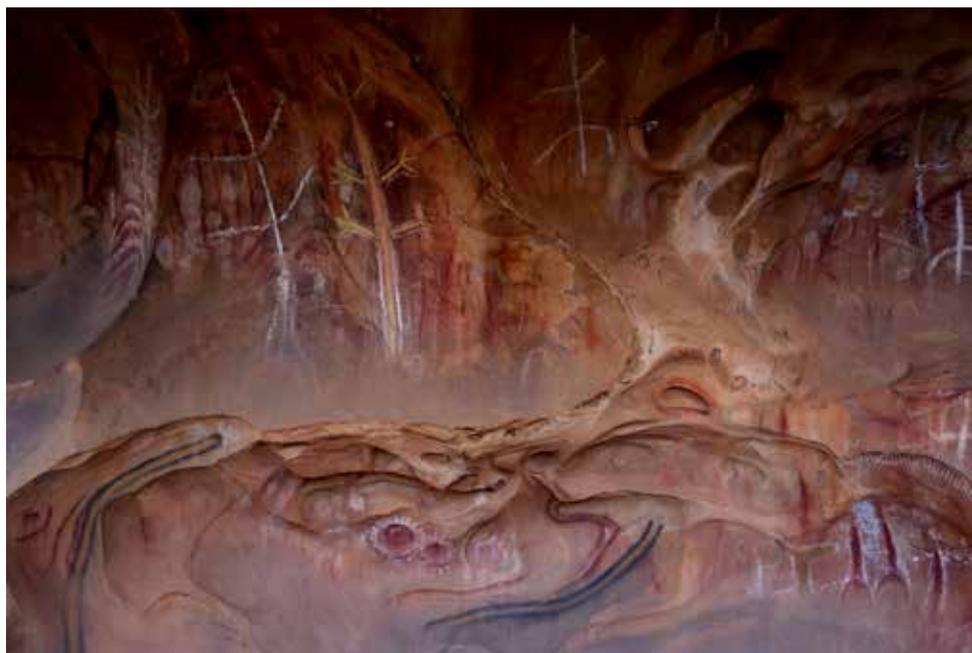


As we headed down to beautiful Bunyeroo Gorge we came across another eagle perched high in a dead tree. I got reasonably close to it to get some photos with my basic point and shoot. The ride down to the gorge was very steep and Jim cautioned us about going too fast and losing control on the gravel road. Shortly before Wilpena Pound we were diverted on to the Heysen Trail which is the walking and tramping track through the same areas we were riding. This meant that we had to ride some pretty technical narrow tracks and at this point poor Pai bounced off the front rack on Roel's bike. It was the first time this had happened to him and so we had to bundle him back up after he landed at the bottom of the creek bed and secure him with his scarf!

A steady climb took us to Wilpena Pound and we got stuck into pies, sandwiches and coffees. The pie thing was the start of a trend that was to continue for the rest of the trip! Joe and Jojo headed off to collect a cache and Roel, Sue and I headed down the road to Arkaroo Rock to look at the Aboriginal paintings. Jim stayed at Wilpena to catch

up on some computer based work he had. The ride from Wilpena to Arkaroo Rock was downhill on tarmac so we covered the 15 or so kms very quickly. A short ride off to the side on a gravel track took us to the carpark and we hid the bikes before starting the 1.5km walk up to the rock. Arkaroo Rock is an important part of the aboriginal history and culture, the paintings are related to the aboriginal mythology (Dreamtime)







and some of them are dated 5000 years old. The rock which forms the ceiling of the cave is named after ancient serpents Akurra (or Arkaroo), who (apart from everything else) played an important role in the history of the Wilpena Pound. According to a legend, two Akurras surrounded a group of hunters who were preparing for an initiation ceremony. After the long and desperate battle, hunters managed to kill the snakes whose bodies petrified and formed walls of the Wilpena Pound. Two highest peaks in the northern part of the Wilpena Pound – St Mary's Peak and Beatrice Hill – are heads of these serpents. In the cave you see many images of people, snakes, waterholes, plants and birds painted by charcoal and ochre of red, yellow and white colours, and it is believed that these images tell a story of Akurras and Wilpena Pound.



This is a beautiful area and as we were exploring around Joe and Jojo turned up to find the cache at the rock. On the way back down to the bikes Sue and I had a close encounter with a roo. It was a couple of metres from us and I was in the process of getting out the camera when Joe appeared sneaking up on it from another track. It hopped away before I got a shot but Joe got several nice photos.

All five of us departed the rock area together and as we turned on to the main road again Jim came rolling down towards us. We had a short discussion about the route through Kangaroo Gap camping at Rawnsley Park and Roel and Joe took the trail route (a bit longer and more ups and downs) while the rest of us headed down the far easier tarseal to the camping ground. We got the tents set up and by the time Roel and Joe arrived the campsite was pretty much organised. While cooking dinner we heard about how Joe managed to jettison his BOB wheel. Quite a remarkable feat but they were riding a lot of creek crossings, and knowing these two, they were probably doing it pretty quickly!





## Day 5 Rawnsley Park Station to Mt Little 67km

We had the blessing of a downhill on tarmac start this morning. We were also well stocked with food and water as the plan was to be free camping tonight. I could really feel my legs from the hard ride yesterday. Distance wise it wasn't that long but we had some pretty big climbs along the trail and I wasn't as fit as the others at the start so 5 days of solid riding was taking its toll.

On the way out Joe collected a couple of caches so we had a few breaks early in the ride. The peaks around Wilpena Pound looked spectacular and were to be the main backdrop for the morning riding. After 14 km we turned North west on to the dirt road that is Mordana Scenic Drive. The road was in good condition and made for easy riding as we passed around the south west side of Wilpena Pound. It was largely flat or undulating so it made for much easier riding than the previous day. It was also sunny and warm





*The fly problem .....and two ways to solve it!*





which can be a problem if you don't have a fly net! Jim had one which he had pulled out earlier and while we had stopped at Wilpena Pound the day before Joe, Jojo and Sue had purchased some of these items from the store at the info centre. Joe had not looked at his one prior to purchase and presented himself resplendent in his "fly burka" that was a surprise to all of us - bright orange!! I offered to sew sequens onto the top that had a patterned fabric with flies all over it....

As we passed the side of Wilpena Pound we turned along the valley with the Elder Range to our left. Not quite as high but it provided plenty of rolling hills for us to ride. The road was still great and we made good progress. We came across an old historic race that was one of the bullock queuing yards where the bullocks were assembled for connecting to the wagons. There used to be lots of these dotted around the place and this set has been restored so tourists get an idea of days gone by.

The end of the Elder Range was a very distinctive pointed arrow shape and we simply rode around the top of it and turned left onto a 14km tarseal section. By this time we



were starting to get a bit “peckish” and decided to stop at one of the memorials to the surveyors that explored these areas in the late 1800’s. The memorial still had a few of the old telephone lines that had been used for communication. The lunch was an all out war with the flies as we tried to make sandwiches with assorted ingredients. Cheese and salami wasn’t too bad but when Sue introduced a can of tuna you would have thought someone had died as we were besieged by the horrid things. Sitting out in the wind reduced the problem but everyone had to share their food with the flies at some stage - they even got inside the “nets”. As we left I used my Kiwi Cycling buff to cover my nose and mouth, and Jojo lent me a spare pair of sunglasses to cover my eyes as we had a tailwind and the flies just hitch hiked on us. It was the only time I thought “I really need one of those nets”! Even Roel was muttering obscenities as we rode along.



Chigwidden Dam was our next target in the foothills of the Elder range. It involved a steady climb along a farm track up to a water hole. It surprised us all when we got there to be full of water considering to this point everything was very dry. We continued along to Mayo Gorge (Mt Little Station) via a four wheel drive farm track that was heavily pockmarked by cattle. During this rough ride Jim commented on how bad this could be if the red clay had a dose of rain.... The clouds were getting a bit darker and about 5 minutes after his comment a loud clap of thunder rumbled through. A bit of urgency to get to the camping site Jim had seen on a previous trip to the area started to appear in the group. A few spits increased the tempo even more! As we pulled in to the three sided shelter at Mayo Gorge it simply poured down and we were treated to a thunder and lightning show for the rest of the afternoon.

The shelter was large enough for us to store all the gear undercover and erect the tents so nothing was getting too wet. The roof was recycled corrugated iron and so there were

a few spots where it was leaking which meant we all put the tent flies up instead of only the inner tents. With the rain there came a pretty severe wind and fortunately this was coming from the side that had the door and not the open side. Jim put his ground sheet up over the door which was only an open hurricane wire fence gate to break the wind and rain coming through and we were pretty comfy for the night!

As the evening developed so did the size of the puddles around the back of the building and next minute we were shuffling the tents around to avoid the rapidly developing water courses coming from behind the building and flowing through the setup. The storm was at its worst for about an hour but we had all the gear sussed out and ended up having a pretty reasonable night after all.





## Day 6 Mt Little to Hawker 21km

During the night we were continuously battered by torrential rain and high winds and we appreciated being in the shelter. Heaven only knows if we would have survived the night out in the open!

Jim chose to ride the easy route around the sealed road and arranged to meet us in Hawker. We decided that the weather system had passed and we would ride up over the Mernmerna Hill which has a steep section towards the top. The ride from the shelter to the bottom of the hill was fairly gradual climb that was quite rocky so we didn't encounter much clay on the way to the bottom of the steep section. The steep section was about 250 metres of pushing the bikes. At the top we had a short break to get our breath back and then traversed across to the Wonoka Station road. The track up here had been completely sodden from the previous nights rain and within metres none of us were riding but now endeavouring to push our bikes along the track. The wheels just seemed to suck up the clay and it completely clogged up the bikes so they were impossible to push and too heavy to carry. A good stick became a necessity to be able to clear enough of the clay so the bikes could be pushed a few metres further before needing to "de-clog". The track down to the dirt road was about 5kms but the problems with the clay meant we had a frustrating couple of hours as the conditions really tested our patience. Roel and I have done enough adventure races and mountain bike races in the Coromandel area back in New Zealand to know that you can get through this sort of thing and that you just need to persevere and get on with it. Roel figured out that taking a chance and pushing the bikes through the bushes with the thorns meant that the wheels did not clog up quite so fast and so we made more progress, although we



couldn't avoid all the "sticky" areas. The risk was that the thorns we had been warned about would cause endless punctures but I think the thorns were waterlogged and not as effective as when they are dry.

Eventually we got to a point where we were going down and weather conditions were improving enough to start drying the track which enabled us to ride fast enough to flick the mud off. It was a great relief to go through the gate at the end of the farm track and on to the better gravel road to Wonoka. We wanted to continue following the



Mawson Trail route but when we turned on to another farm track we were not prepared to go through the clogged up bikes again and reluctantly returned to the tarmac road to Hawker. The weather was also deteriorating as we arrived in Hawker and we were cold and wet again. The local store owner was quite happy for us to hose off the bikes - by this time there was no shortage of water!

We had also caught up with Jim who announced he would have to leave us and informed us his mother had passed away the previous day. His brother Peter was on his way to Hawker to collect him and to go back to Adelaide. It was sad news and after 6 days of riding with Jim we were going to miss him - especially his ukelele and singing, oranges, wines and all the other treats he seemed to produce from his panniers. We assured him we would keep contact with him as we progressed down the trail and promised to catch up with him in Adelaide.

At 1pm, and after coffee and hot pies we decided to call it a day. The weather was still cold and wet so we went off and found a large motel unit for the night. I had broken a spoke on my front wheel during the day and so the first thing I needed to do was replace this with a new one. I always have spares and had the new one in reasonably quickly.

The day was a short one but physically challenging for all of us. Joe and Jojo shot into town and had a meal at the local pub while Sue, Roel and I cooked our meal at the motel. The locals at the pub were saying the rainfall over the 24 hour period was the most for the last 30 years so we had certainly coped with quite a bit!

## Day 7 Hawker to Willmington 108km

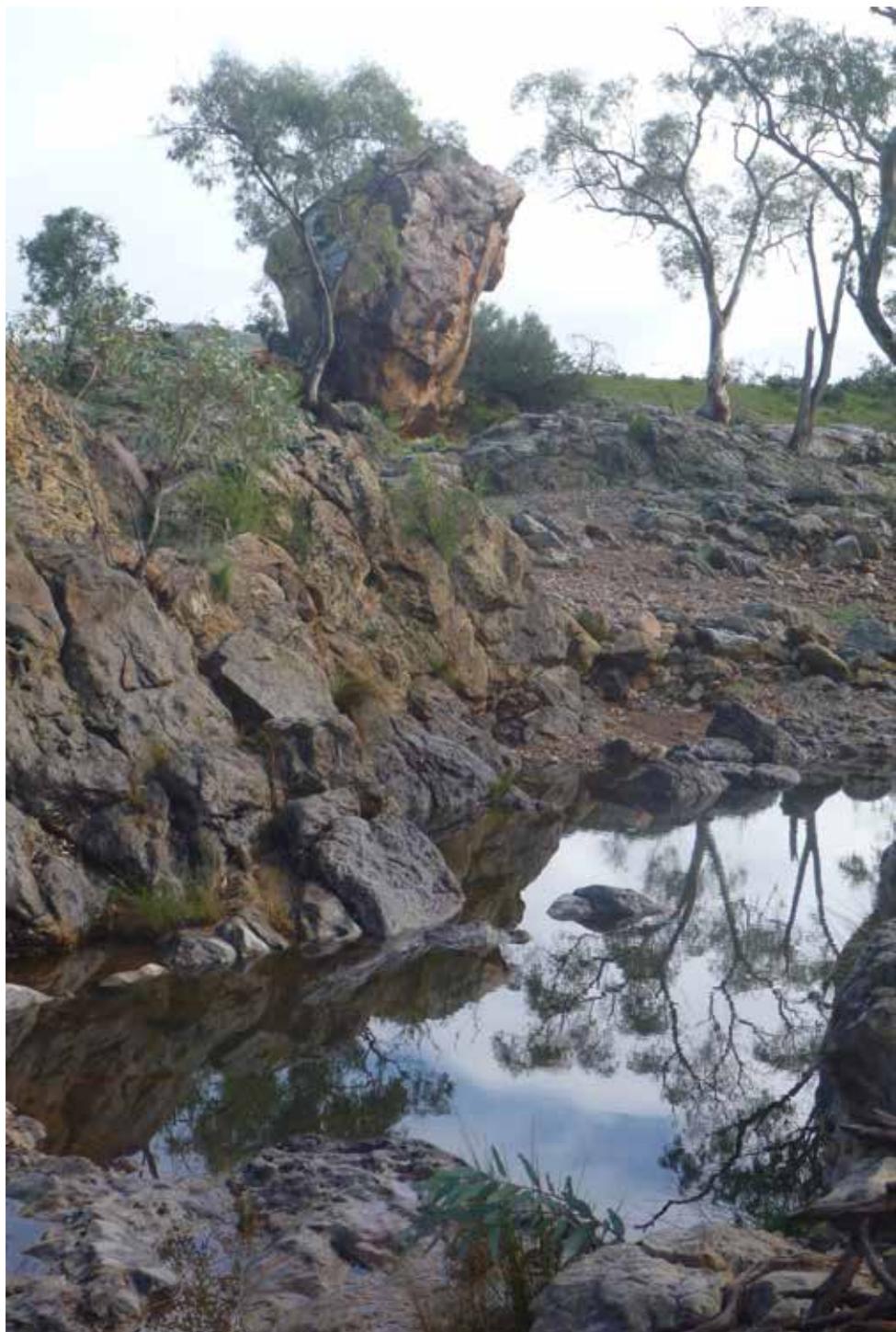
After a night in the motel with a good sleep we left in heavy fog and there was lots of water still around. Apparently the heaviest rainfall in 30 years! With all the excess water on the ground we decided that the clay tracks would not be an option today so the decision was made to stay on the tarmac and ride 66km down the road to Quorn. The route also meant we didn't go through Craddock. Quorn was our target for morning tea with the plan to head on to Melrose at the end of the day.

The roads out here are long, straight, slightly up hill and today the wind was from the front! Along the way we stopped at Kanyaka ruins and Death Rock. This is a water hole that the aborigines knew would always have water. It is a pretty place and indeed there was plenty there and the reeds and green vegetation indicated that it was a pretty permanent supply. The rock itself was a large, tall boulder and there were several groups of large boulders in clusters in the immediate area. Once we had had a snack



and wandered around the creek we continued down towards Quorn. Sue was having a turn on the front and we were cruising along at a good speed. Not long after setting off there was a crunching noise followed immediately by an expletive from Joe which brought everyone to a stop .....except Sue. Calls to her were unable to penetrate her concentration and we could only stand and watch her diminishing form continue on the long straight road to Quorn! The initial thought was that Joe had broken his hanger and so Jojo decided to go and alert Sue we had stopped. Now we watch two diminishing dots in the distance!

Joe's plight became more serious when it emerged his derailleur had completely disintegrated and was effectively useless. Joe set about the task of single speeding his bike but it was proving problematic getting a suitable gear and alignment. We spent a lot of time trying to sort it out but when a ute with three guys stopped and offered Joe a lift we took it. The only problem was that these guys were in a hire car after hitting a kangaroo the evening before and they only just had enough room for Joe and his bike. This left Roel and I to get Joe's BOB trailer to Quorn. Roel couldn't take it as he had his



*Joe works on trying to single speed his bike after his gears decided they had had enough. Not long after he hitched a ride to Quorn.*



*The other two images are from Death Rock area.*



own trailer so I hitched the BOB on the back and started off on the 27km ride towards Quorn. It was pretty heavy with all my own gear and the trailer and I took a while to get the balance completely under control.

About 5km down the road we came across Sue who had heard from Jojo of our plight and was waiting for us. Jojo and Joe decided that they would carry on to Quorn to try and fix the bike. I had kind of hoped Joe would have caught up with Jojo and turned her around, or swapped with her, and come back to relieve me of the BOB. Unfortunately they had not thought about doing that and so it was a long ride to Quorn. When we



arrived in Quorn we found Joe's bike parked against a tree and the local cop came and advised us they had gone around the corner to a cafe. We headed to the first one we saw but no sign of the other two. Eventually we found the Jo's at a cafe further up the road.

Joe had managed to get his bike in a state that he could ride it and so he and Jojo decided to continue on another 40kms to Wilmington. I was really tired and wanted a break to recharge and have a coffee. Roel, Sue and I were having a good break and then realised that we had 40kms to ride to catch the other two but it was 3pm and we would need to get going straight away to be in Wilmington before dark. We did consider staying in Quorn instead of carrying on but then thought we should make the effort to catch up with the other two. I was really tired and seriously thought of just camping by the road but we did get to Wilmington before dark.

While Roel and I were pitching the tent Joe came and invited us to dinner at the pub which was really appreciated as I didn't have the energy to cook either. The camp owner was great as he ran us down to the pub in his car and returned us to the tent after dinner. It was a good feed and I looked forward to bed and resting a very tired set of legs!



*Sue and Di about to tuck into a dessert in Quorn...  
We had already consumed the pies!*



## Day 8 Wilmington to Melrose 23km

We slept in this morning and left the camp about 10am. I was keen to have a look around the town as it had an interesting museum and some sign boards on the bike route into town. The town was known for the agricultural machinery developed in the early 1900's. They had a lot of rusting relics around the place. One of the big developments was a "stripper" and we came across a fine example that had been preserved in a shelter. The town was pretty quiet and the only thing open was the local store where we brought an "average" coffee before heading out towards Melrose. Joe had left early so he could get the bike sorted in Melrose and left Jojo with the BOB. She rode over with us and we stuck to the main road until Roel found a track that went inland a bit and followed along parallel to the road but through the Mt Remarkable National Park. Sue, Roel and I turned off as Jojo had arranged with Joe to ride on the main road to Melrose.

The dirt road took us down towards Kookaburra Retreat that was next to Mt Remarkable National Park. Along this drive way were several bikes that were precariously parked in the trees! Eventually the road petered out at the retreat and a friendly dog came and greeted us. After a chat with the retreat owner we continued on through the park and rode some nice trails that came out at an old dumping ground for a few of the stripper machines we had seen in Wilmington. They were just left where they stopped and were in varying states of disintegration. We came out on the main road again and were surprised to see Jojo trundling along with her BOB. We had about 3kms to go to get to Melrose where we went on a hunt for Joe. It appears he headed off down the road to find



Jojo but it came out that Jojo had decided to try some of the back road we had been on and Joe must have passed her going the other way while she was out of sight. Eventually he returned to Melrose and caught up with us at the cafe where we were tucking in to coffee and pies. The best pies are made by a lady named Eve and they are available at the old bank cafe! These scored a 12 out of 10 with Sue and I and became the benchmark for all pie tastings as we progressed down the trail.

We set up camp and then had the afternoon to look around the town. Sue, Roel and I went down to the old courthouse and had a wander around the old compound and learned a lot about the policing in the area from the late 1800's.

The fine weather of the afternoon turned to a chilly drizzle by evening as we settled in for the night.



## Day 9 Melrose to Jamestown 78km

We were on the road early today and started with a long uphill. About 5km out of town we came across an old quarry with some interesting fossils. The soil contained fossilised sand ripples in amongst the rock. Joe collected a cache from the site and we continued on. We came to the turn off to the Wirrabara Forest but 100 metres along the track and we were clogging up again so we beat a hasty retreat to the road. We headed down



to “Lone Pine” and down the tar seal to Wirrabara. We stocked up with coffee and pies (not nearly as good as Eve’s) and reviewed the route up into the Wirrabara Forest. The local cop was having a coffee and informed us that the rivers were up and that the ford at Stone Hut was not safe to cross. Roel also had contact with Jim who advised not to go into the forest as the tracks would be ugly! The only alternative was to take some of the back roads and stay on the tar seal for the day. The dirt roads were well formed arterial routes even though they are gravel surface. We were getting into lots of farming - sheep or crops. The country was really green after the several days of rain that had passed through. We were well away from the rocky outcrops of the Flinders Ranges and now entering more cultivated areas of rolling hills. The weather started off overcast, but thankfully not with the headwind, and improved as the day progressed.

Over the past three days or so I was starting to feel like the riding was really heavy on the legs and had noticed a small rubbing of the brake rotor on the front wheel which was actually annoying me and I had kept forgetting to check it out. Made a note to self to look at it the next day.

The local Hotel was a bit of a dag.... they had a VW beetle car parked in the verandah of the first floor, an alligator over the door and various other nick nacks stuck to the roof over the footpath.

Tomorrow we hope to get into the Bundaleer Forest and have more riding off road.



*The weather was still having an effect on track conditions. We were beating a hasty retreat after about 100 metres on this one when the tires clogged up very quickly!*



*Having lunch before tackling this one. Just past the puddle it got very boggy!*



*Bush fires earlier in the year had raced through this area and there was evidence all around of the devastation these cause.*



## Day 10 Jamestown to Spalding 69km

We hoofed it down the road this morning to the turn off in to Bundaleer Forest. Shortly after turning off we came to the camping area where there were several trails in various directions. At this time I decided to check the front wheel and the rubbing brake. There was no apparent problem and so I came to the conclusion I was just tired and probably not recovered from towing the BOB. Made a check of the back wheel to find that the brake there was more than lightly rubbing and realised I had been riding with the rear brake effectively on. This led to an hour of stripping brake, changing the pads and re-aligning the calliper so the wheel was running freely. Wow ... what a difference! The others all noticed that I was going along a lot quicker and the legs were no longer screaming at me!

Roel and I took a ride around the trails while the others rode off to get a couple of caches. The trails were really nice and wound through some nice groves of trees. These groves



*The ride along the aquaduct was a flat one but it was well used by livestock and we had lots of gates to go through.*



*It also tended to wriggle around a bit and switch back on itself.*

had green carpets of oxalis weed which made my son Nigel's battle with the dreaded weed in Taupo so insignificant. One of the trails has some interesting sculptures along the track which seemed so odd - they just appear in the middle of the bush!

We continued along the trail which was taking us through more sheep farming country. We dropped down to an old aqueduct where we stopped for lunch. The open channel was no longer in use but it was an impressive structure that still stood proud. The reservoir is now serviced by large pipes above the ground.

After lunch we climbed up the hill past the reservoir before turning on to the old aqueduct canal. This open cement structure was an engineering marvel and we continued to follow it all the way in to Spalding. It offered a flat ride but it did tend to meander around all the sides of the hills and it seemed to take us forever to get anywhere. The track along the side of the ditch was quite rough as it is used by cattle and the grass was quite long so I felt I had been riding on one of those tools used for digging up roads!

We arrived at Spalding and found we could put our tents up at the back of the pub. They were pretty wet from the dew the night before and we had a reasonable opportunity to get them a bit dry before climbing into them for the night. Our tent has been performing



so well. The inner tent has been very dry. We were setting up camp when the publican turned up with a couple of tables for us on the back of his ute. It made cooking a lot easier and after dinner we shot into the bar for a drink. The way in took us past an exhibition/ collection of barbed wire! Apparently he had got this from some fellow who had been collecting samples of all sorts of barbed wire and fencing implements. It was actually quite interesting and featured wire from the wars as well as from farming.

There were a few locals at the bar to share stories with but the best part was the fire going flat out! Today was a good day as we were able to stay on the trail and not have to deviate around mud or water for a change.

## **Day 11 Spalding to Old Mt Bryan East School**

We had another fine day but the temperature was pretty low! There was a lot of condensation in the tent flies again and so they were packed up wet. I have been keeping the inner tent separate in the panniers so it stays dry and this is proving a good move.



Today we had two big climbs on the ride over the North Lofty Ranges. Jim had suggested we take the direct route through to Burra but having spent so much time short cutting the trail due to the weather we were pretty keen to follow the trail route. We decided to get to Hallett and then decide. Jojo was beginning to feel the effects of continuous days of hard riding and the speeds we were going at was a bit faster than she had anticipated at the beginning. With my brakes not impeding my pedalling I was probably the worst culprit! We did agree that the hill climbs were more comfortable to ride at each persons preferred speed and that we would get together at the tops of the climbs. By the time





*Inside the Spalding Hotel.*

we got to Hallett Jojo had really had a hard day. We stopped at the local general store and had a coffee and a discussion about how far we would continue for the day and tried to sort out a plan to make the riding easier for Jojo. The end result was that we would continue to Mt Bryan East School, which was a school no longer in use and had been converted to a tramping hut on the Heysen Trail. It is also used by people doing the Mawson Trail as it is one part where the two trails overlap each other. The school was a single building with 4 rooms - a large bunk room, a small bunk room, a sitting room and a kitchen with a fire. Quite a nice place for the night! We took a room each and set out our sleeping bags. The weather was fine so we got the wet tents out and dried the gear. At some point my tent went "flying" and I rescued it just before it got to the fence.

While we were busy getting organised the custodian came and introduced himself - Mr Simpson - who proved to be a friendly fellow who chatted with us for a while



about the school, politics and everything else.... He offered to stock up the firewood supply but we had the fire going and enough wood for the night.

The area around here is very cultivated and high production area for crops. We were never really sure what was being grown but there was quite a mixture of crops. On the way to the school we stopped and watched a huge harrow being run over a paddock. This large tractor and plough (with number plate "oversize") was doing in minutes what would have taken a horse and plough in the old days hours to work.

A house just along from the school had been abandoned and left to the elements which made me wonder why someone would just pack up and leave. Mr Simpson said that working the land was hard work and expensive and that many people in the area simply





couldn't survive economically. Really sad when you think about it. Generally Australian morale is quite low in the outback areas. It was not the first instance of people saying life was tough at the moment!

Sue had booked the small bunk room for the night, and as it got later some of the nocturnal inhabitants of the school began to appear. One very large Huntsman spider appeared in the kitchen which had Sue in a bit of a pickle. This was nothing compared to her terror an hour or so later but Roel despatched the spider to the outside to keep the peace inside. When we settled down for the night Sue ventured into her room where she found two cousins of "Mr Huntsman" next to her sleeping bag. There were several expletives and then Sue simply told us she was sleeping with us in the sitting room - there was going to be no negotiation! I think the decision was made when she shone her torch at the spiders and their large eyes reflected back at her.... it was all a bit too much!



## **Day 12** Old Mt Bryan East School to Burra 55km

Overnight Joe and Jojo had decided that the speed we were riding at was a bit too quick for them and they wanted to take the shorter route through to Burra. They set off at the same time as us but we headed in the opposite directions. Sue came with Roel and I and we continued along the trail. We were in for a few tough climbs today and had a mixture of forested hills and large sheep stations. The hills were pretty steep in places and stations seemed to be running Polled Merino sheep with heaps of lambs around the place. The Aussies have their lambing season in the winter as the temperatures are more suitable and with more rainfall they have better grass for grazing. At one point along the road we had a group of sheep and lambs that insisted in running along in front of us. They were so dumb and we had a real job to get past them.



We encountered plenty of Kangaroos in the forested areas but we haven't seen any Emus for days as we have got into the more populated agricultural areas.

Today presented plenty of creek crossings that were steep in and out and a good percentage of the creeks also had water in them. The roads were pretty good but we still encountered the odd section of wet red clay which slowed us down but didn't create the problems we had had to cope with previously.

The temperature was quite low and so our food stops were pretty short. The farmed areas offered very little in the way of shelter from a cold wind and we guzzled down some food bars in the lee of a small raised edge on the track.

We passed a conservation area which didn't look any different to the farm areas around either side if it. It was a fairly recent development and seemed to be focussed on protecting some of the smaller sized plants that were being pushed out by the introduced grasses.

We arrived in Burra which is a beautiful old mining town. It has a copper mine similar to Blinman which was closed down and then re-opened in the 1970's only to be closed again when the mine just couldn't make money. The town has many fine period buildings and a heap of history. We found the Information Centre and they had booked Joe and Jojo into the local motel so they were able to direct us to where we would find them.



While we were having a coffee we banged into Joe who advised us he had booked a room for us all to fit into. Shortly after that Mr Simpson came in to the cafe so we had a chat with him about how the day had gone for us.

Roel and I were happy to tent as it is a lot cheaper so we headed for the camping ground across the river. We were able to also do clothes washing which was not



available at the motel. Once we were set up we rode over to the motel where we found out from Joe that the room was very small and could only really fit a couple. Probably very annoying for him as he thought he was paying for a family unit. The camping ground had wi-fi facilities and I finally had a chance to clear e-mails which was nearly two weeks after we had last done so.

Sue, Roel and I had arranged to go to the Hotel in North Burra for dinner on the recommendation of the camp hosts and the hotel sent a car down to pick us up and bring us back to the camp ground. The old pub was flat out and we had a very nice meal there. The locals are very friendly and we are finding that the camp kitchens or the local watering holes allow us to share stories with the local folk. We had an interesting chat with people heading off to do a section of the Heysen Trail during the weekend. It was Queens Birthday so these people were going to get three days tramping in.

The nights are pretty cold but we are keen to keep camping. I might have to review the sleeping bag next time I go camping in the middle of winter! The light weight XPD bag does not quite have the warmth to be really comfortable and the three season one (back home) is very bulky to carry on the bike.

### **Day 13 Burra to Auburn 70km**

We had a later start today as Joe and Jojo continue on ahead of us. We departed the camping ground at 8.45 and continued down the Mawson Trail route after a couple of U turns. We took a route out of town that seemed to go through a few back roads. Some of the signage had us bit confused but we were soon clear of the houses and in the rural area. We had a bit of a rude hill climb soon after starting and as we turned on to a red clay track it was starting to drizzle lightly. We were all a little anxious that we might have "one of those days" but it didn't eventuate.

We crossed the main road south and headed up the Wheelbarrow Ridge for the first



climb of any significance for the day. The farms are still large up here and continue to run a mixture of sheep and crops. Once we got to the top of the ridge we had a long descent to Swampy Flat. There was a pretty soft track at the bottom of this ridge which had a patch of water that we had to push around. This was the only time we had pushed our bikes since the ride from Mt Little to Hawker. The other feature along this bit of the track in the swamp, was a paddock with an old wagon parked out in the middle of it. Quite bizarre to see such an old relic of the past sitting abandoned where it was last used. The amazing thing is that these old farm implements don't seem to rust away as fast as they would back here in New Zealand. Not much further along the track we found another wagon beside the track in the same state of repair.

After getting through the swampy part we then moved on to the big climb of the day over the Camel's Hump Range. At this point we have been travelling through farms and so we had to get through plenty of gates which were sometimes continuations of electric fences. Roel was getting pretty good at opening and closing the gates until one where he had a slight loss of concentration and carefully closed the gate without bringing his bike through. No one realised his dilemma until he went to get the bike from against the fence to find it on the wrong side! Put Sue and I into hysterics and we had a good laugh while he went through the process of unlatching everything to get the bike.

We made good progress and arrived in Clare at 12.45pm to see Joe and Jojo coming



out of a bakery. We headed in to get a coffee and some food. It was cold outside so a warm shop was very inviting and this one had some particularly nice looking food. Roel was having trouble getting his front gears to change so I decided to check these before we continued and discovered the cable was connected by only one strand. We quickly replaced the cable outside the post office and were ready to get on our way - but not before banging into Mr Simpson again!

We had now crossed over the farming communities to the wine growing area of the Clare Valley. As we left town we travelled down the 35km Riesling Trail which is a disused railway from Clare to Auburn that has been converted to a cycle way. It is really great

as it is completely flat! With the name you can guess that all along the trail are dotted vineyards with open cellar doors. The trail has numerous sign boards with information about the area, activities and local heroes. There are a few pockets of the natural bush that have not been converted to grape growing areas and these offered sanctuary to many birds. As we rode through these bush parts the birds were pretty noisy.

There are quite a few churches along the route and we stopped at St Marks church in



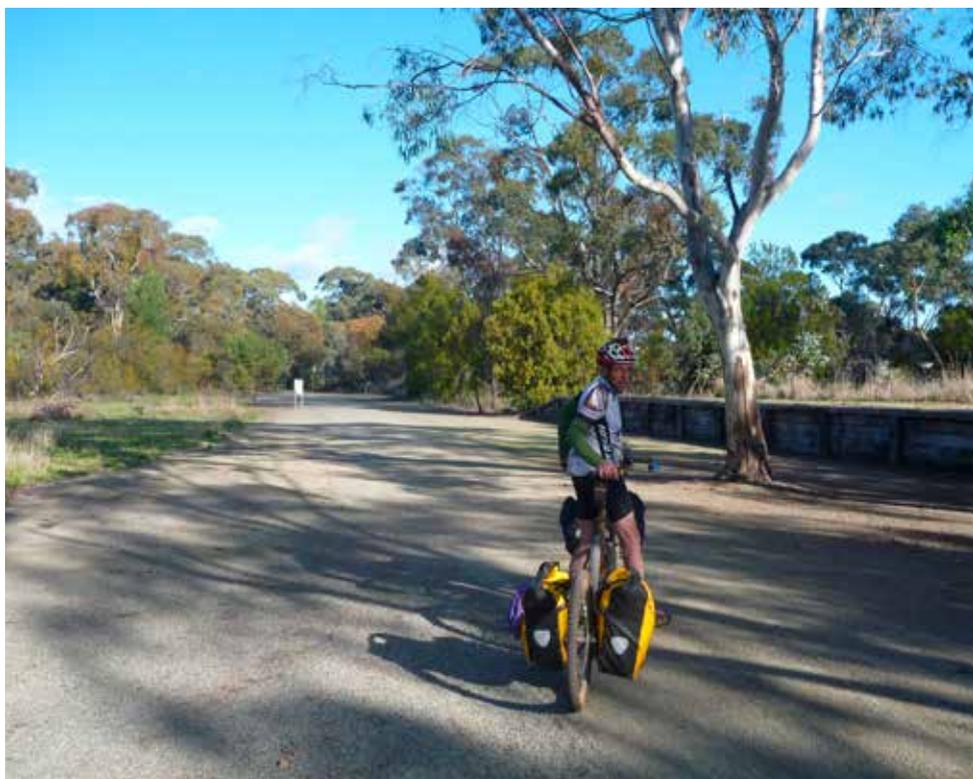
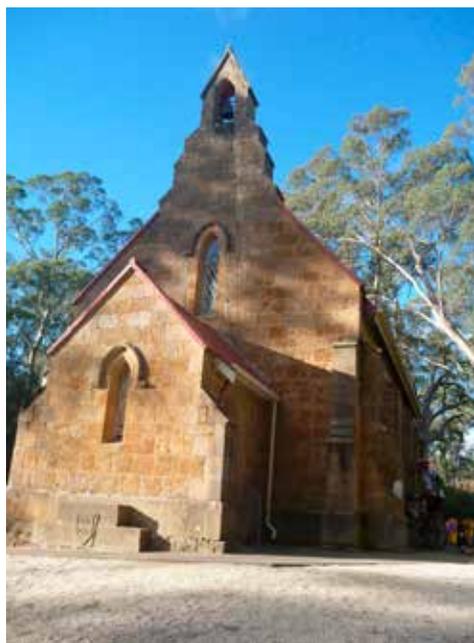
Penwortham. The church itself was not open but we wandered around the graveyard where several generations of the early settlers were buried. These settlers have been here since the 1860's and it was quite something to be working out that some people had several wives, some died young, some died very old. This cemetery was a genealogists heaven really. The people buried in it seemed to be related to each other in some way or other! At one point Sue looked like she was directing traffic as she endeavoured to connect the corpses while she worked out who was related to who.

There was one part where there were just simple, rusty steel crosses which appeared to indicate a person was buried there but there was no reference to the person's identity. I suppose the church registries may have contained information about these but it seemed a bit sad that these graves had no names.

John Horrocks was a local identity and settled in the area. When he first arrived he lived in the stump of a large gum tree which was clearly seen from the track. Later he built a cottage which still

survives but we had ridden past it further up the trail. His story was an interesting one of exploration in the area but his life was sadly short when he accidentally shot himself when the camel he was riding lurched while he was out hunting during one of his expeditions. He too was buried in the St Marks cemetery.

From Watervale the trail tipped slightly downhill so we had a fast ride in to Auburn. The camping ground was on the south side at the local sports oval and we met up with Joe and Jojo at this point. They seemed to be happier travelling without the pressure to keep up which was good see.



## THE RIESLING TRAIL

### From Track to Trail

The Riedling Trail extends the length of the Clear Valley along a pretty unbroken landscape that carved through the hills for a railway line. The Trail follows the former 'backbone' Clear Valley railway, following well-worn routes to bridge what would have been one of South Australia's most extensive horse paths.

The building of the 42 km railway line did not end on a locally elected plan, being awarded by public, a grant was received through public subscription and eventually sold to the state.

**1876** An idea of a railway line was first devised.

**1878** public meetings in Clear and Auburn and support in the railway line emerged.

**1881** a Royal Commission recommends the railway for a rail.

**1883** the State Government only consented to be granted with a guarantee of support from the local community.

**1884** George Butler is awarded the contract to build the line from Auburn to Clear.

**1885** work on the line was to begin 10 March, however conditions were so poor that work was suspended for many days and weeks. Two months later they were then 10 shillings, but not the 400 and 50000!

**1886** the first night train between Auburn and Clear was run to that station.

**1887** goods train for that time commenced.

**1888** the first passenger train of August.

**1889** the 100 passenger freight train from Clear.

**1890** passenger train was officially opened on the 1st of Clear station.





The final leg of the railway through 100 shillings was added by commercial investors and private members, but this was finally completed in 1883, seven months after work had begun at Florence.

The total length of the line was 42 miles, 14 miles shorter than the 56 miles cost £200,000 to £3,000 per mile. The first public rail passenger service did not run until 1888. This service was not until 1904 when it was reduced to a few trains from Melbourne to Adelaide.

As road transport began to develop, freight companies in South Australia had the government and continued to run at a loss. An attempt was made to save the line as a tourist attraction between the industries and the community support. The closure of the line was announced by a notice in 1985, ending all train services.

To take the track into Adelaide and 10,000 tonnes of steel rail were to be delivered and 1,000 tonnes of steel rail were to be delivered and 1,000 tonnes of steel rail were to be delivered.

The Clear Valley Railway Trust Committee has been set up to coordinate the work of the railway and to provide a service to the community. The committee is made up of representatives from the State Government, and other community groups. The committee is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the railway and for the provision of a service to the community.

[www.clearvalleyrailwaytrust.com.au](http://www.clearvalleyrailwaytrust.com.au)

**TRAILS SA**  
For more info visit us at [trails.sa.gov.au](http://trails.sa.gov.au)








## Day 14 Auburn to Kapunda 67km

The Riesling Trail turned in to the Rattler Trail at the point we joined it in the morning. The Rattler was a lot newer and the surface was pretty good to ride on. Joe and Jojo left us about 3/4 hour earlier and we caught up with them at Riverton for coffee. Riverton was another quiet town and the only shop open was a sort of dairy where we bought take away coffees that were not the greatest.

We carried on out of town and headed for the North Mt Lofty Ranges and towards the bottom of the big climb for the day. During a sharp turn in the trail Roel made a rough gear change which seemed to affect how his gears changed so we stopped to try and resolve the issues. This was proving problematic and Sue decided to ride ahead and catch up with Joe and Jojo. Once we had the gears shifting reasonably well we carried on. We missed a turn on to a side track but this meant we had a slightly shorter ride to Cornvale. We got into a nice forested area at "Black Hill" and decided to stop for something to eat and dry the tent fly. Roel boiled the billy as well and we had about an hour relaxing on the side of the track. Just as we were getting ready to move on the other three turned up. Quite a surprise because we thought they were well in front of us after we spent so long fiddling with the gears. They had stopped for lunch further back on the road.



Along the way we heard frogs in the billabongs that were now fairly full. It was quite a surprise to hear the frogs.

We rode for a while with the others but they were stopping for geocaches and so we carried on ahead. We crossed more farms and after several gates we were confronted with a short steep climb to the top of



a hill. All the weight on the back end of my bike meant I fought to keep my front wheel on the ground. I ended up pushing the bike the last few metres to the top. The view from up there was great and we could see deep into the valley where we would be riding shortly. The ride down to the bottom was really fun and we then entered a roller coaster of rolling hills until we reached Kapunda. Very energy sapping!

We got to Kapunda in good time and set up camp and cleaned Roel's bike to try and free up the gear shifting a bit more. The temperatures are getting lower as we get further south so we are tending to ride in more of our warm clothing. At the camping grounds the locals tend to make fires in old 40 gallon drums cut in half lengthways and sit around them in the evening chatting and drinking. They are always happy to have us gate crash their parties in an effort to get warm.

## Day 15 Kapunda to Tanunda 30km

Today was REALLY cold when we got up! It was dry and overcast but the wind meant we were pretty cold all day and never really warmed up, even when pedalling! Roel and I shot into town as we had heard about a bakery where we thought we could get a hot breakfast and warm ourselves up a bit. The bakery was attached to a supermarket and only had sweet items or bread.... no cooked breakfasts here. We settled for a coffee and a muffin but at least it was a little bit warmer than outside!

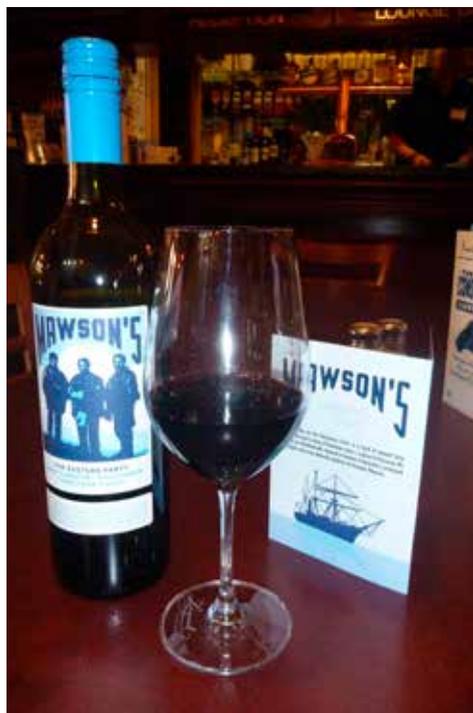
We rode back down to the camp ground and caught up with the other three who had hired a cabin for the night. Joe and Jojo headed off ahead of us again with wineries on their list to visit. It was nice and warm in the cabin while we waited for Sue to pack up and we discussed the possibility of taking a detour out to a quilting shop with a connected winery so we could do some tasting there.

We thought today was going to be a short flatter day but at some point we had to cross over the North Mt Lofty Ranges again. Should have looked at the profile for the day!

We arrived in Nuriootpa late morning, to find the only shop open was the local fried chicken outlet. We each ordered quarter chicken meals with peas, chips and gravy. These were huge and I felt really bloated when we left. Heaven only knows how I could still reach the handlebars!

We headed off down the road to Anguston where the quilting shop is located. No one was really sure where it was but about 4 kms along we came across it. The shop was in a very old building that had been lovingly restored but there was still large cracks everywhere. The lady running the store was a real enthusiast and had everything you would need to make quilts. It wasn't too long and the three of us were looking around for the wine tasting bit of this cottage industry. Unfortunately the lady's husband had been in charge of that and had sadly passed away 6-7 years ago (she wasn't too sure about that) so we got the warm room but no wine! She chatted away to us for some time and after a couple of purchases we headed back down the trail. I was tempted to advise her to update her advertising based on the fact the wine tasting was no longer available.

The ride from the quilting shop to Tanunda was flat and we arrived in the town at a good time. Roel and I looked at the caravan park but decided the temperatures were really cold and so we rode down to the



local Hotel and enquired about a room. They had one available so we checked in and spent the rest of the day in a warm environment. There was internet connection there too so we caught up with a bit of the mail from home. It was a treat to have a room as Roel and I had been in the tent for a lot of the trip. The bar had an appropriately named bottle of Mawson's wine which we tucked into. After the massive chicken meal at lunchtime we had a soup and a dessert at dinner time. The bikes had been chained up in the outside courtyard so we were able to get away reasonably early the next day.

## Day 16 Tanunda to Mt Pleasant 65km

Today was the penultimate day on the trail and featured a climb that had been playing on some of our minds for a number of days. The profile indicated a particularly steep section early in the ride that was a couple of kilometres long. We bid the Barossa Valley goodbye as we climbed up Steingarten Rd past one of the large wine making facilities. As we turned onto the road to Trial Hill we hit the steep section and each one of us took our own time to get to the top. The view at the top was really spectacular. We could see right up the Barossa Valley over lots of wineries and farms. The road undulated a bit as we progressed across a well groomed farm with a small vineyard area attached to it.





The weather was perfect and we were also enjoying a tailwind for the first time in 10 days! The undulating farmland continued until we reached Mt Crawford Forest with its extensive pine plantations. We turned onto the forest roads at this point and had a nice ride through the pines. Joe had planned ahead and booked us in for the night in some cabins at the back of the local pub in Mt Pleasant. The stay in Pt Pleasant meant we had a detour of about 4kms down to the township but the rooms for the night made it all worthwhile. These were nice units each with en suite facilities. We were able to dry out the tent which was still damp from two days previous.



Roel and I went for a wander around the town and found a hotel down the road so popped in for a wine. These country towns are very quiet. Not a lot of activity and the locals that we do see are mainly the guys that are working the land. Most make comment, when we do chat with them, about how hard it is making a living in Australia and appear to look with envious eyes at our situation in New Zealand.

We have several freeze dry meals left so Roel and I cooked up some for our last night on the trail. The remainder of the meals will most likely be left with Kay or eaten while we are at her place.





## Day 17 Mt Pleasant to Adelaide 65km

We had a good rest in the cabins we booked for the night and headed back up the road to the track junction in the forest where we re-joined the Mawson Trail proper. There we turned south again and rode plenty on undulations to Birdwood. Birdwood was an interesting place if you are into cars! Across the road from the National Car Museum was a cafe where we got a coffee. The museum was not open as we reached Birdwood at 8.00am, but it occupied the old bakery building and the hotel opposite the museum had got into the car theme of the town by mounting a vehicle up on a pole outside.

We continued down to Loebethal for yet another coffee stop at a bakery. We were watching an old fellow cleaning up around a large boulder and when a large group of motorcyclists pulled in we went down to move our bikes, which would enable them to use the picnic table. At this point we started a discussion about the boulder which featured a cricket bat and ball. Loebethal was the home of cricket bat manufacturing for quite some time and this was now the only remnant of the large business. The gentleman described how he is a fourth generation German whose family originally came to Australia in the 1800's as they fled Napoleonic Prussia. We had an interesting discussion about how they landed in Adelaide and then moved north to settle.

We had a set of steep climbs up to the Cuddle Creek Mountain Bike Park. There seemed to be a lot of interesting trails but none of us was really keen to go and explore. At the start of the park we were joined by a cute little black dog called Seiko, who seemed to be happy to show us the way.

She shot along in front of us for a long time. At some point I offered her a drink as she had been running with us for a while. This was gratefully accepted and then she shot back out in front of us again. She was obviously not going to let us go and eventually we

managed to catch her at the end of the forest section and phoned her owner (number was on her tag). Her owner was unhappy that she had come with us and that we should have turned her around. Pretty hard to do when the dog was out the front! Apparently she does this often when cyclists come past. We were given instructions to growl at her and tell her go home. Poor Seiko couldn't figure out how her new friends could become so grouchy and she sadly looked over her shoulder as she began her journey back home.

The views from the top of the hills down to Adelaide were awesome. It still looked like we had quite a bit to ride but it was all downhill. From the top of the hills and the reservoirs we had a very steep descent to the main road. The Torrens River appeared at the bottom and we joined the main road for the ride through the gorge. This road was narrow and busy with lots of trucks moving in both directions. It was good to get off this section and on to the Torrens River cycle way that takes us to Kay's place. The cycle way runs along both sides of the river and there are plenty of bridges to get from one side to the other. It fits in an area that is considered a flood plain and is a sensible use of the area.



We arrived back at Kay's house in mid afternoon (Wednesday) and started the process of cleaning gear for the return to New Zealand. Joe and Jojo were to fly up to Alice Springs for the Australia - New Zealand MTBO Challenge on Friday, and the same day Sue was to return home to Gore. Sue had been concerned about packing up her bike for the flight home as her partner had packed it for her when she left New Zealand, but we had it all boxed up on Thursday night ready for her departure on Friday morning.

Jim came and caught up with us on Wednesday night and we ordered in some takeaway food that was delivered by the shop. We had a lot of fun filling Jim in on the ride after he had to leave us in Hallett. He sounds like he is keen to come over to New Zealand at some stage and we hope to be able to catch up with him here and show him around.

Friday morning Joe, Jojo and Sue left us to catch their planes to Alice and Auckland and it brought our adventure to an end. It had been a great trip for us and although there were moments that tested us all we came through it.

Pai is back on the side board at home and looks forward to his next adventure.





Roel and Di



Joe and Jojo



Sue



Pai



Jim

Roel and I had a couple of extra days to spend in Adelaide and we planned to ride the Torrens River Trail through to the coast on Friday but the weather was not that great. It was raining persistently all morning but we decided that after lunch it was not so bad and we set off to the coast. It was about a 25km ride. We enjoyed the ride into the city and then on to the beach. We had a coffee at the local surf club before realising that the time was ticking on and we would probably be riding back in the dark!

We followed the trail back and rode sections on the opposite side to the one we came down. As it got darker we got faster and ended up going flat out at the end. It was a nice ride though and worth doing if you are in Adelaide.

Jim phoned and invited us out on Saturday to go wine tasting. We were going to take the bikes but by this time they needed to be cleaned and packed - and the weather was not looking that great for the next day either! He borrowed a car and picked us up the next morning and we headed out to McLaren Vale and the wineries in this region. It was still wet and quite cold so it was nice to move around in the car. We stopped at a small township for coffee, passed through a place with a market and had lunch in another place that had lots of chocolate shops. We also stopped at wineries and did a bit of tasting. It was a nice day out and about and we came home to Kay's and cooked up a frittata from all the left over food for dinner. Jim left to return the car and we proceeded to pack up all our gear for our departure to New Zealand.

Our holiday had come to an end. The Mawson Trail had presented us with the complete experience and been a great route to ride. It would be fair to say that to do this trail you do need to be fit and have a sturdy bike. I certainly would not recommend anything else than a mountain bike with knobby tires. We had decided to ride in May/June due to the temperatures, and the competition the Jo's were heading to just after we finished, in Alice Springs. We didn't have any issues with water which can be a problem in the warmer months.

Joe had brought with him his Spot tracker which is a small device that emits a signal to indicate our position. It allowed friends and family to know where we were as there was very limited phone and internet access. This device also has the capacity to alert emergency services if required.

A gear list of what Roel and I carried is included at the back.

**TRIP CHECK LIST** Black is items per person - green indicates items we shared.**Clothing**

2	Cycle shirts	left rear pannier
3	Pairs of cycling shorts	left rear pannier
1	Long merino bottoms	left rear pannier
1	Long sleeve merino top	left rear pannier
1	Polar fleece top	left rear pannier
1	Rain jacket	right rear outside pocket
1	Overpants	right rear outside pocket
3	Pairs of socks	left rear pannier
1	Umbrella hat	Pannier
1	Kiwi Cycling Buff	water bottle holder on front right bag
1	Merino gloves	inside jacket pocket
1	Cycling gloves	Handlebar bag
1	Helmet	

**Casual Clothing**

1	Zip-off pants	left rear pannier
1	Long sleeve shirt	left rear pannier
1	T shirt	left rear pannier
3	Pairs of underpants	left rear pannier
1	Day Pack	Handle Bar Bag

**Sleeping Gear**

1	Sleeping bag (in nylon bag)	left front pannier
1	Sleeping bag liner	
1	Inflatable pillow	
1	Thermarest mattress and repair kit	vertical pocket, left rear pannier
1	Tent (in nylon bag)	right front pannier
	Poles (in nylon bag)	right front pannier
	Pegs	vertical pocket, right rear pannier
1	Ground sheet/Gear Shed	

**Cooking Gear**

1	Three-quart pot (non-stick)	bottom of right rear pannier
1	Pot lid	on pot, on side away from bike
2	Knife-fork-spoon set	handlebar bag

2	Cups	
2	Plate and bowl	
2	On bike bottles	
1	Cutting Board	
1	Sharp knife (Leatherman)	handlebar bag
	Matches/Lighter	handlebar bag
1	Gas stove (in nylon bag)	vertical pocket, right rear pannier
2	Gas canisters	vertical pocket, right rear pannier
1	Rubber Spatular	vertical pocket, right rear pannier
1	Tea towel	
1	Dish washing sponge	
	Daily food	

### **Spare Parts**

2	Tubes	left rear outside pocket
1	Lube	left rear outside pocket
	Extra spokes	Seat stay bike
	Spare brake and gear cables	left rear pannier
1	Rear axle	in tool bag or handlebar bag
	Spare bottle bolts etc	
	Spare brake pads	
	Hanger	

### **Tools** (bag in the right rear pannier)

	Multi Tool	
	Pump	
	Chain tool	
	Spoke tool	
	Tire levers	
	Tire patch kit	
	Duct tape	
	Spare nuts, bolts, brake pieces	
	Candy Pedal rebuild kit	
	Crescent	
	Chain wip	
	Zip Ties	

	Bike cleaning rag	
<b>Personal Supplies</b>		
	Toilet Paper	
	First Aid kit (Joe)	
	Chamois cream	
	Water purifying tablets	
	Mylar survival bag	
	Scissors	handlebar bag
	Hand mirror	handlebar bag
	Comb	handlebar bag
	Toothbrush/toothpaste	handlebar bag
	Dental floss	
	Towel	
	Face cloth	
	Chap stick	handlebar bag
	Suntan lotion	left rear outside pocket
	Liquid soap/Sterilizing	left rear outside pocket
	Baby wipes	left rear outside pocket
1	Headlamp (petzyl)	Handlebar bag
<b>Odds &amp; Ends</b>		
1	Bike lock	left rear vertical pocket
	Needles and thread	handlebar bag
	Pens	handlebar bag
	Compass	toptube
	Map board (Roel)	
	Small wallet with ID, credit cards	left pocket on shorts
	Maps	in watertight pouch

## FOOD

### Basic Foods (A Food Groups Reminder):

Meat, Beans/Legumes, Peanut Butter,

Eggs (real, dehydrated)

Nuts (especially pre-opened Sun Flower and Almond), Other,

Fruit (Dehydrated, Natural, or Canned), Especially Bananas

Vegetables (Dehydrated, Natural, or Canned, Green and Orange)

Cereal, Granola, Oat Meal, Energy Bars

Trail Mix (different kinds fit different categories),  
Pasta, Rice, Potatoes (Instant, Real)  
Bread (Loaf or Baguette, usually not processed/white)  
Soups (dehydrated/Instant)  
Oil (Usually Olive Oil for Cooking, can mix with Vinegar)

**Optional Considerations:**

Salsa, Salad Dressing, Tartar Sauce  
Lemon (Juice / Flavour)  
Vinegar (Usually Balsamic),  
Dehydrated Packets of: Sauce, Gravy, Food Mix (Brownie Mix!)  
Dehydrated Meals

**Other Common Travel Foods:**

Mac and Cheese, Brownie, Jerky  
Trail Mix with Almonds and Chocolate Chips

**Water:**

Water Bottles, Start Trips and the Day with Full Bottle  
Water Bladder

**Beverage:**

Coffee, Tea, Milo  
Juices / Powerade  
Milk (Powdered)

**Condiments:**

Sugar  
Salt and Pepper

**Freeze Dry Meals:** 13x two serve packs