No 1. November 2014 (when considering purchase)

No 5. April 2021

No 6. October 2023

Lot 50–Kanyanyapilla, McLaren Vale

Bi-cultural Ecological and Cultural Regeneration

Newsletter No 29, Summer 2023

Hi Everyone

News

New Banner Image
New banner image above, number 6, which captures the colour of the Veld grass just before hay making and the wonderful biomass increase of the trees. See story later re hay.

November Rain
55mm over about 12 hrs in late November, bewdy. Second November in a row with unseasonally heavy rainfall, last year it was 44mm the day of the Queen's Jubilee planting. The long-term November average is 30mm, this year was 80mm and last year a whopping 104mm. Hmmm.

Feb, March & Dec last year were miserly at 3.4mm, 6.4mm & 5.8mm respectively. Fortunately, nothing as low this year (don't speak too soon, December not over yet). But there was a high of 140mm in June 22, the highest monthly rainfall since I've had L50K, against an average of 80mm, Hmmm again. Let's just say I'm getting more prepared for the fluctuations.

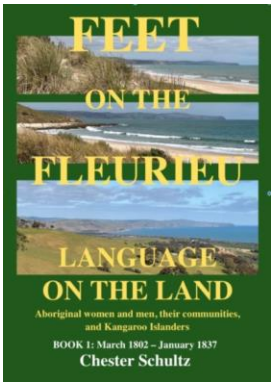
I pick up water off the Victor Harbor Road by the way the drainage was constructed back in 1973. Water flows along the drainage line past the shed and as you can see from image next page, I get a healthy flow, about 50mm deep. This water had all soaked into the ground before it reached the swamp. And not a drop flowed into the swamp from upstream Maslin Creek.

Molly gets a hoof soak

New Book: First Contact on the Fleurieu Peninsula

Chester Schultz's comprehensive book on the history of first contact on the Fleurieu Peninsula from 1802 until 1837 was launched on 25th November 2023. It's entitled *Feet On the Fleurieu, Language on the Land: Aboriginal women and men, their communities, and Kangaroo Islanders. Book 1: March 1802 – January 1837.* Chester has kindly made the book available for free and can be downloaded from the L50K website (27MB).

This 500-page book is the result of 15 years of forensic research and provides extraordinary detail of what happened prior to the formal colonisation of South Australia in Dec 1836. It is a must read for anyone interested in the colonial history of South Australia and bi-cultural relationships. It chronicles the *'violent abductions, a slave trade, brokered marriages, bi-cultural families, and a colony at Rapid Bay hosted peacefully for months by the 'Cape Jervis tribe'. This book studies the local geography, languages and territories of these people and their neighbours the 'Encounter Bay tribe' at first contact; their changing relationships with Kangaroo Islanders; and their contributions to European exploration and the beginning of settlement in 1836 as guides, interpreters and cultural mediators'*. Copies can be purchased by print order, $65 + postage. Contact me for details.



Book launch official party 25th Nov: Klynton Wanganeen, Jean Groome, Gavin Malone, Chester Schultz, Liz Schultz, Rob Amery, Suzanne Russell, Karl Telfer

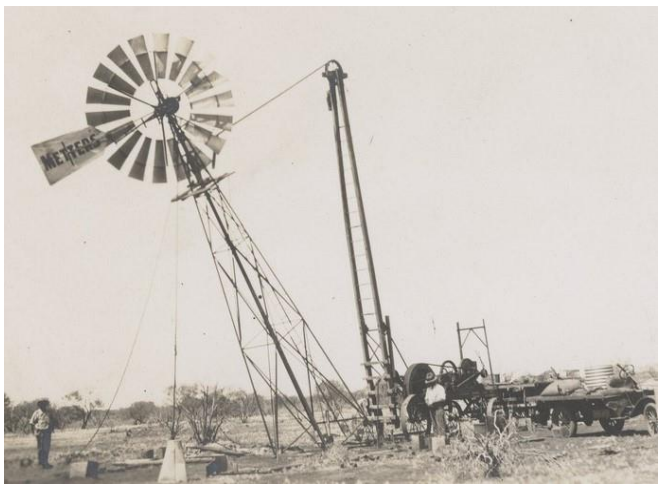
A Windmill Rises

After being horizontal and in multiple pieces for years, my windmill is now vertical. Thanks to the windmill erection team, five by 70 y.o. plus blokes. The windwheel however is too damaged to be used and many blades are missing so the wheel, the tail and gearbox will remain and displayed at ground level. The tower is also a viewing platform and will also host the 10 year time lapse camera which has to be shifted cos a tree grew in the way!!.

My Metters Mingles Majestically

The windmill is a 20 feet Metters Master Nuoil with an 8 feet windwheel, or mill, and was manufactured locally at Mile End by Metters Ltd who also manufactured wonderful stoves. The design dates from c1920 but who knows when this one was made. It was donated a few years ago by a McLaren Vale bloke who was moving to Queensland. I don't know where it spent its working life. I'm thrilled to have it and it looks like it has always been there. Be great to have another with a working windwheel (but don't get greedy).

Old windmills in Penong – Nuoil in foreground



Getting a windmill vertical, Tarcoola c1930 (SLSA B48176)

If ever travelling west there is a fantastic windmill museum at Penong with Australia's biggest windmill, a Comet named Big Bruce. A group of local blokes, the Windmill Warriors, got together and created something special, retrieving windmills in all states of repair from all over the place and then just getting them working again. Good onya (and I'm not overlooking the women involved but it really is the blokes).

Other Stuff

Hay Production

Just under 4 hectares, or 25% of the land at L50K, is set aside for hay production. There are philosophical and practical reasons to produce hay for cattle feed. We've produced an average of about 340 bales each year but this is quite variable with seasonal conditions and demand. This year we upgraded to produce the large rounds, 24 of them weighing around 300Kg each giving us about 7 tonnes of hay. This meant greater use of tractors and a semi-trailer to transport. Why produce hay?

1. Continuing Practice – Producing Animal Protein

Providing animal protein for human consumption has been part of the (agri)cultural practice on this land for several thousand years. Kangaroo, wallaby, emu and goanna are now off the menu, but beef is on instead. But the beef cattle are off-site at Anacotilla Springs, Second Valley. Anacotilla Springs is a cattle production and conservation project by my brother Rob Malone and his partner Pamela Wright.

2. Inter Property Offset

Rob and Pamela's property straddles the Anacotilla River and since purchase in June 2012 they have made over more than half of their land to conservation; the riparian zone and drainage lines, the most productive areas. After a difficult and expensive fencing and water supply upgrade, cattle were excluded from the river for the first time in 150 years or so. Natural regeneration of the River Redgums is prolific and other species lost over time are being reintroduced. So, the L50K hay helps offset that loss of productive areas and supplements summer feed for their herd of about 25 Murray Grey, plus offspring.

Implementing the conservation role at Anacotilla required an extensive and expensive restructuring of the 52 ha (128 acre) property in terms of fencing into smaller paddocks, providing water tanks, pipes and pumps, not needed before, and cattle exclusion fencing in very hilly terrain as well as improving pasture conditions in the grazed area and planting paddock trees, difficult when excluding cattle. See https://www.anacotillasprings.com.au/:for further info and you can even stay there in very comfy farm accommodation (which I recommend).

3. Global Food Demand

There is an increasing global demand for animal protein and an increasing global population and middle class. If primary production areas are taken out of the system here, then they will be compensated for elsewhere, i.e., threatened forests or grasslands. So, a miniscule amount continues at L50K.

4. Regeneration Resources and Future Climate Change Demands

It is expensive, both time and money, to regenerate land and I've always been at the limit of my personal capacity. With the hay, Rob meets the contracting costs for baling and transporting, I provide the land and day to day management. Financially we are both slightly better off. But importantly, I also believe that this 4ha of land may be

required for intensive food production into the future as a result of climate change. And I don't want to revegetate land for it later to be removed. It is future planning.

It has been said that as a rule of thumb if 25% of land in the food producing areas of Australia had not been cleared, we would (obviously) be in much better position with biodiversity and ecosystem health. I'm just reversing the statistic and producing food from 25% with 75% to conservation (that is, regeneration).

5. Carbon Cycle

Haven't fully got my heard around this one. '*Hay and pastureland tend to have high carbon inputs because perennial grasses allocate a large portion of the carbon in the root system'* (Silveria, 2012)

Above ground *'Hay is more Carbon (C) by dry weight than anything else. When we feed hay we are also adding carbon to the soil in addition to the Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorous (P)… Hay is typically between 40-50% Carbon … The digestible part of the hay is utilized by ruminant livestock as their primary energy source. Maintenance quality cow hay may be as low as 50% digestibility while high quality 'calf hay' may be close to 70% digestible. The C from digested material is incorporated into body tissue or expelled as CO2 … It is the non-digested plant material that contributes to building soil organic matter through dung returned to the soil. Manure on the ground does not contribute a lot to 'soil armor', but it contributes to feeding soil life … The bottom line is, each ton of hay fed will contribute about 400 to 600 lbs of C to the soil as either hay residue or manure (Gerrish, 2019).*

The Australian Government Clean Energy Regulator administers the Emissions Reduction Fund which includes a component 'Sequestering Carbon in Soils in Grazing Systems'. The science and economics for this is hard to work out so I'll be content in knowing that is it there. And I'm not getting into any carbon credit system. Then there are the emissions of grazing cattle, methane (CH4) is the main greenhouse gas generated in ruminant grazing systems. But there is a debate on the nett greenhouse gas impact for whole of life competent cattle grazing through management practices which again, I haven't got my head around. I'm not a grazier.

We produced 7 tonnes of hay which is 40-50% carbon. Each tonne of hay will contribute about 200 to 300 kgs of C to the soil as either hay residue or manure (based on above guide) but that is at Rob's place. So, in summary I'm allowing the small amount of 1 tonne CO2e sequestration per ha per annum. I'd be pleased to hear from anyone who can assist in refining this calculation and my understanding.

6. Pasture Management

Perennial veldt grass *Ehrharta calycina* (in flower, pink/brown tinge), a southern African species, is the main hay pasture species supported by medics and clover. They were present at purchase of the land and I've selected the best bits to retain and rejuvenate. Rob and I are improving the quality through limited fertiliser application (worm wee) and weed management. The hay area is divided into six 'paddocks'. About half of this is baled each year allowing the other half to rest. The rested area is slashed to allow the growth to breakdown and return to the soil and reseed.

This year we produced large rounds for the first time instead of rectangular bales. Twenty-four was the outcome equivalent to 360 bales. It's also about 7 tonnes of hay. Previously we couldn't handle the rounds but Rob now has a tractor his end which can unload and move them so this will save the dozen or so trailer loads as well as fuel and time transporting to Second Valley. One semi-trailer load this year, job done.

7. The End Product – Steak and Sausages

We've never tasted the beef from our hay nor have Rob and Pamela from all the cattle they have sent to market. The market /abattoir structure has just prevented this. But this may change. Rob is part of the Fleurieu Community Co-op's $3.5 million project to get the Strathalbyn abattoir up and running again after it closed in 2020 which as well as providing for local meat processing will allow individual beasts to then go to private butchering. One day.

Step 1, mowing the hay. Neighbour Clint Ledgard (CL Contracting) at work (16.10.2023)

Step 2, raking the hay into rows after drying out (26.10.2023)

Step 3, baling the hay still with a touch of green (28.10.2023)

And a bale is born with 23 siblings

Step 4, getting ready for transport (29.11.2023)

Step 5, loading (CL Contracting semi) (30.11.2023)

Step 6, and finally, Rob unloading at Anacotilla Springs – job done (30.11.2023)

Aged 17, I wanted to go to Art School but circumstances didn't facilitate that. Aged 39, I quit the public sector to get to Art School. Aged 71, I never thought that I would be producing hay rather than painting it like Vincent!! Thanks to Susan for pointing out the similarity, not my painting ability, just the aesthetics of the pastoral, or is that pastoral aesthetics and the principles of bioethics?

Beefsteak and Burgundy, Sirloin and Shiraz

Van Gogh *The Haystacks* 1888 (National Museum, Stockholm, Sweden)

And in wrapping up, I just like being a part of the agricultural economy, even in a miniscule way. It is very satisfying to see the hay, firstly as a colourful crop dancing in the wind, then the baling process and the rounds or rectangles sitting in the paddock, then leaving the property and finally, the cattle keenly consuming in summer.
Part of my genetic and cultural heritage.

References

Silveria, M., 2012 *Pasture Management for Sequestering Carbon* University of Florida, Soil and Water Science Program
Gerrish. J (2019) *Feeding Hay to Improve Your Land – Part 6* American Grazing Lands Services

History Snippet

The A, B and C of Mining

Susan and I were in Broken Hill for three nights in October, heading out to Boolcoomatta and Mutawintji with Keryn Walshe, archaeologist, and Peter Sutton, anthropologist. It was great to just wander around and have a yarn about this and that. We also went to Bell's Milk Bar, dating back to 1892 in one form or another, for a milkshake or a thick shake. Can't go to Broken Hill without a visit to Bell's (and bringing home a few bottles of their syrups or cordials).

Broken Hill is a fascinating place, the wealth that has been created, the founding of BHP, the Big Australian, (the B) Consolidated Zinc, now Rio Tinto, (the C) and the aftermath (the A), the overburden heap dominating the town, known as the Load of Line hill, the absolute intertwining of purpose, people, place and profit, and the hard life and death for many extracting, transporting and smelting the ore.

And even more fascinating are the cross connections, the layers and mini flutes of history, the ripple effects going this way and that. We all use mining products, so this is not finger pointing, just making the connections. Corrugated galvanised iron, just love it. And mining needed huge amounts of native timbers to shore up the shafts. I use Native Pine *Callitris* whenever appropriate, I'm a sucker for our native timbers as feature building and furniture material. My Shelter Shed has a Native pine frame and galvanised iron cladding.

Cross Connection - The Washpool and the Pebble Dune

Many of you will be familiar with the pebble dune, below, at Silver Sands between the Washpool and the sea.

Well, it was mined for the mines at Broken Hill, the stones used for ore crushing. *The Register*, 8 September 1917, reported '*More than 200 tons of pebbles have been dispatched from Sellick's Hill to various mining companies in other States during the past three months*.' Historian Tom Gara also has an interest in this, and his research suggests that perhaps 10,000 tonnes may have been mined between about 1915-1924. That's 16,000 cubic metres or 1,600 truckloads. At a guesstimate, that would raise the dune by about half of what it now is. And thanks to Tom for the following photo. Also note the post and rail fence, imagine how much timber was used for the hundreds of miles of such fencing in the Willunga Basin. And the bald hills in the background.

SELLICKS BEACH: The 'Pebble King' of Sellicks Beach 1920.

Photo caption: *Many tons of the pebbles from Sellicks Beach were sent by rail to Broken Hill to be used for crushing ore. Back row: Ted Button, Perce Leaker, Jack Sheriff. Front row: George Fraser, Bob Herrick, James Sinclair Heathersay (the Pebble King), Vidi Shepherd, Walter Gordon*. (SLSA B-55417-5)

Cross Connection - The Fleurieu and its Stringy Bark Forests

So now head down to Myponga and beyond. That country supplied big timber for the shoring timbers in the mines, thousands of acres were felled by Consolidated Zinc. Where would all the timber needed in Broken Hill come from in 260mm rainfall country? From somewhere where it rains.

Recently the Zinc Corporation Limited, which is represented in this State by Messrs. Bewick, Moreing, and Co., acquired a forest about five miles east of Myponga, embracing about 2,000 acres. A large up-to-date sawmilling plant has been imported and will be at work shortly. When cut, the timber will be conveyed from the forest on a tram road, and afterwards will be transported on large motor lorries to Willunga Railway Station for dispatch to Broken Hill.

Adjoining the property secured by the Zinc Corporation is a tract of heavily timbered land of about a similar acreage, which is owned by Messrs. Backhouse & Co. The last named intend to allow this to remain dormant for the time being, while they operate on a forest of about 8,500 acres, about seven miles from Second Valley, which is owned by Glenburn Plantations, Limited. Messrs. Backhouse & Co. have acquired the timber rights over this and an adjoining area. From this district thousands of tons of well-grown stringy bark, suitable for mining and general trade purposes, will be cut. To deal with the timber from this land a large sawmill is being erected alongside the Second Valley Jetty. The utilization of this timber is expected within the next six months to provide employment for about 50 men, and a similar number are expected to be engaged by the Zinc Corporation Limited. (Register 11 August 1916, p.6)

A view of the Zinc Corporation Sawmill at Myponga. c1917 (SLSA B-55417-129*) A Tug-of-War competition at the Zinc Corporation Mill sports day in 1917* (B 55417/131)

When my son Kris was in primary school, we went on a school footy trip to Broken Hill, a biannual exchange. We were treated with a trip to the depths of a mine, 22 levels below ground as it was back then, digging deeper not then possible because it was just too hot. And we went into this giant cavern, a machinery workshop. Once a machine went below ground down a lift shaft in bits and was reassembled, it stayed there. The mechanics were sitting around playing cards. Smoko you think? No. Our guide said 'These blokes are on bonus at the moment. Can you figure why?' Nup. 'Look around then,' said the guide. 'What's here?' Well not a lot really. And that was it. There was not one single machine awaiting repair or maintenance. 'That means everything is working, and when everything is working the mine is producing and these blokes sit around on bonus'. OK, after a laugh us visitors all saw the Broken Hill logic of it all.

Logic and logical. It is no longer logic or logical to fell timber for semi useless purposes. Yes, we must value add to this resource and steward it with all care and based on science. Save the Tarkine is still a very active campaign.

Strange how a trip to Broken Hill has a maze of connections, right to our doorstep here in the Willunga Basin. History ought to teach us lessons. We need depth and nuance but too often get surface level promos and propaganda.

That's a Wrap for 23

Thanks to all for your continued support and interest in L50K, particularly the several regular volunteers, much appreciated. Lot happened again this year but I'm more so feeling I can take the foot off the pedal a bit, the place is looking good and on track for the 10 year anniversary in February 2025.

Plenty to do still in 2024 so come on down if you can. All the best to all for 2024.

Cheers *Gavin*

View of the swamp from the windmill, Dec 2023. Bewdy

Contact and Information

Gavin Malone: gavindmalone@gmail.com Website: lot50kanyanyapilla.com

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