

FOS and GVD Cantara Homestead campout

Over the Anzac Day long weekend 40 people attended our inaugural campout at Cantara Homestead in the Coorong National Park.

The attendees were from Friends of the Simpson Desert (FOS) and Friends of the Great Victoria Desert (GVD) and a number of the attendees were joint members of both groups.

The main reason for organising the campout was to catch up with members who can no longer attend our annual working bees, but who are still keen caravaners and campers. It was planned to be a social event and it certainly worked in achieving that goal, with many members of both groups renewing old acquaintances.

The consensus from the group was “let’s do it again next year”.

We had exclusive use of Cantara which is a great venue with lots of lawned space to camp and the ability to accommodate the non-campers within the homestead. We had showers, toilets, a kitchen, community BBQ and every night, in perfect weather, we had a community campfire.

Apart from lots of socializing, here are some photos of some of the weekend’s activities.



Cantara Homestead. The group did some work during our stay and some of the workers can be seen in this photo cleaning up the front of the homestead. We also removed lots of weeds around the homestead and cleared vegetation from the steps leading up to the sandhills at the rear of the homestead.



View of the homestead looking southeast from the sandhill. We had 18 camp groups with lots of space for many more. Whilst there were ample comfortable beds in the Homestead only 2 were used.



The photo on the left shows some of the crew who cleaned up the garden beds in front of the house.

The second photo shows the group led by Bill and Richard who cleared the dead creeper from the old meat safe, straightened and reinforced it for further restoration by the department.



On Saturday evening the 2 groups provided a BBQ meal for all the attendees.



The real action in providing the meal on Saturday night was in the kitchen and in the top left photo we have Margaret, Shirley and Susan preparing the salads followed by Lynton and Dean on Chef duty.

Finally we have some of the gang collecting the BBQ goodies.



A lot of socializing occurred around the campfire late afternoon and into the evening. Many thanks to all who brought wood for the fire. We even had some guitar back up from Bill Dowling for a sing along around the campfire.



Apart from general clean-up work we were able to enjoy the walk along the track behind the Homestead and across the sandhills (around 3 km return) to the Ocean. We also enjoyed a morning walk at 42 Mile Crossing across the sandhills whilst Ron chose the “easier” option to drive across with Karen and Helen as his sidekicks.



The dining room area of the homestead where some gathered playing cards and board games in the evenings when it got too cold to be outside. It was very cosy with the slow combustion heater.



For those who wanted to really relax with a book in comfort there was a lounge area.



On Anzac Day we held an impromptu Service complete with the Last Post being played and the Ode being read. This was followed up with a hearty breakfast and finished with a large assortment of Anzac biscuits. Many thanks to those who provided the biscuits to share.

The 4 wooden outdoor settings were all sanded and stained during our stay. Before we left Helen Bainger gathered a willing team to wash and clean all of the homestead windows both inside and out!

Thanks again to all who attended.

Cheers

Barry Barber – President Friends of the Simpson Desert

Lynton Huxley – Vice President Friends of the Great Victoria Desert