

...THE... RADIO ACTIVITYNEWS BULLETIN....

For information of ex-Radium Hill Community and families

Official Organ of the Radium Hill Historical Association Inc.

February 2016

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This Newsletter is in keeping with the original style
used in Radium Hill and was produced by June
Kakoschke

The next Radio Activity News Bulletin will be
published in February 2017

Hello there,

It is now 110 years since radium/uranium was first discovered at Radium Hill by Arthur Smith in 1906. He pegged a claim on 20th March. The industry has certainly come a long way since then.

The mine closed some 55 years ago in Dec., 1961.

It is also **25 years since we held our first reunion at Radium Hill in 1991.** It was certainly a great event with over 400 ex-residents and their families attending. They came by bus, car, hitch hiked and bike.

Unfortunately quite a few of these fine people are no longer with us.

A big thank you to our many supporters including Government Dept's, organisations, volunteers and valued friends who have given of their time, services and donations to help us achieve our objectives.

Easter 2016 will be a memorable occasion where once again we may have overseas visitors joining us at Radium Hill. An exciting program of events has been organised for your enjoyment.

Happy reading, spread the word, keep in touch via letter, phone call, e mail or guest book on our website.

Best wishes to you and yours.

Kevin Kakoschke
February, 2016

BIRTHDAYS

Once again the 5 bed AIM Hospital was busy helping bring into the world another thirteen babies.

Amongst these newborns were, Jan Venema, followed by Linda Storm, Karin Stummer, Caroline Franklin, Margaret Gobbett, Brenton Paull, Christine Hanlon, Wilhelmus Schulte, Kurt Rackebrandt, Karen Rainer, Karen Grove, Anne Fleming and Morag McGovern.

Many happy returns to all of you on your 60th birthday. Some may say, 'Don't remind me'.

Carmen Gerke celebrated her 90th on 21/4/15. By coincidence, June and I visited her that day as her daughter 'Meg' was delivering the birthday cake. It looked delicious. Carmen played the piano for concerts and dances at Radium Hill in the 1950's.



Carmen, the 'birthday girl' and Kevin K.



“leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but photographs”



Norman Gilberthorpe celebrated his 90th birthday in Nov. 2015 and Des Rankine in Feb. 2016. Congratulations to you both. Jan Venema will be 96 this year.

Pre-Easter preparations

The four 'feeble fossils', Barry and Kevin Kakoschke, Rod Lawrence and Ian Husband went up to R.H. to mow the Cemetery grounds, get firewood, water the trees, install plaques and generally tidy up the place.



Ian Husband with his cable winding reel for the 200m long camp power supply from the distant generator. Makes the setting up job much easier now.

When we're away, the birds they play and take the opportunity to build their nests in all sorts of places at the camp.



This nest full of finch eggs was in the overflow pipe of the camp water tank.

Up in front of the Catholic Church, the plaque installed there took a 'belting', when someone who didn't watch where they were driving made it list 20°. Brute force straightened it up again. **Never mind, it will be alright in the end, and if it isn't, it's not the end.** The Church was officially opened 60 years ago, Sept. 1956. The first wedding in the church, (Ron Sumper and Joan Roberts) took place that same year.

In May when they were out at the Luxemburghs, they tried dry-blowing for gold. Kevin reckoned that from the research for his latest book, he knew of a likely spot. The result; **specks of gold dust** in nearly every pan of gold dirt. They brought two bucket loads back to the camp to be panned at Easter 2016.



Kevin and Rod using a generator and electric fan to separate the gold bearing dirt from the rubbish.

It is 65 years since Malcolm Butler surveyed the Radium Hill mining reserve in 1951.

Paul Tucker, a retired Lands Dept surveyor, has just completed re-surveying the Radium Hill mining reserve area to commemorate this event. Thanks Paul. A Trig point is located on the top of 'Rodgers Hill'. Sixty-five years ago in 1951, Les Roberts also surveyed the town layout.



Paul Tucker standing beside the Trig point on the top of 'Rodgers Hill'. The Maldorky hills are in the background.

EASTER 2015

During Easter, 2015, scores of ex-residents and their families made the pilgrimage back to the former uranium mining town of Radium Hill, **their sacred site**, to renew old acquaintances and relive the memories of yesteryear. The hair colouring amongst the elderly was now more than fifty shades of grey.

In 2013, 84 y.o. ex-miner, Leith Singe 'the swaggie', had hitch-hiked all the way from Lightning Ridge carrying his 35kg swag to join in the festivities. Now at 86 years of age, Leith sought the assistance of his daughter and nephew Arthur, to transport him and his camping gear as he reckoned that he was slowing down a bit.

PS. They were to also told to keep him out of getting into trouble.



'Swaggie' Leith coming down 'Tank Hill' with his 'Matilda' on his back.

Members of the Fenton family from Broken Hill also returned.

Maurice Francis and some family members from Oulnina Station also attended. Maurice's father Bryan, had fought in the trenches at Gallipoli and extracts of his letters home are contained in my book, 'Off The Barrier Highway'.

Caravans, tents and swags soon dotted the camping area at the old school grounds as the 'Aussie flag' fluttered from the flag pole and welcoming smoke curled from the wood stove and BBQ. The long drop dunnies only just catered for the crowd, especially first thing in the mornings.

FROM GERMANY WITH LOVE

Harry Gohn and family made a special flight from Germany to join in the festivities. Connie, their eldest daughter was born in the Broken Hill Hospital in January, 1960. The **mothers to be** were not allowed to give birth to their first born at Radium Hill in case of complications during delivery. Due to similar circumstances of being the first born, the Kakoschke twins were also born in Broken Hill at the same time and it was a great get together for these "youngsters" to relive their early memories of Radium Hill.

HISTORIC PLAQUE

On Friday, April 3rd, Kevin Kakoschke unveiled a plaque on a rise about 4^{1/2} km from the old railway station, at a site near the road and railway line embankment

where the water (if it rains) will either flow North to Lake Frome and Lake Eyre or go South to the river Murray.

The plaque is a historic geographical monument.



The drainage and accident plaques complete with seven rail spikes depicting the seven men plus a pickaxe beer bottle.

He also unveiled another plaque as a memorial to Mr. Edward Dunn who died and to those who were injured in a terrible railways accident just 110m from this spot towards the Radium Hill railway station.

It happened at 8am on Wednesday, March 24th, 1954. A railways 'flying' work gang of 15 men from the Cutana siding camp on the Broken Hill railway line, was travelling out to Radium Hill loaded with rails, oxy cylinders and cans of paint to put the finishing touches on the railway building when the trolley being towed by a Fairmont motor and

carrying seven men 'jumped' the rails, threw the men forward and then careered over the top of them. There was paint, blood, paint splattered bodies and materials strewn all over the place.

After the injured men's conditions were stabilised, they were flown in the Flying Doctor's plane to the Broken Hill Hospital.

Full details of this terrible tragedy can be read in Kevin's book, 'OFF THE BARRIER HIGHWAY'.



The first train into Radium Hill was called 'The Atomic Comet', arriving at 10.30am, Oct.2, 1953.

ANZAC COMMEMORATION

At twelve noon on Saturday, it was up to the Radium Hill Pioneer Cemetery for the ANZAC Commemoration service. Pam Barratt conducted the touching service. A beautiful wreath crafted by June Kakoschke and team, comprising a centre of gum leaves circled by red poppies and bordered by sprigs of saltbush was laid at the Cemetery cairn by June whose grandfather had fought at Gallipoli.

Danny Fleming had pre-recorded the '**Last Post**' and '**Rouse**' which he had played on his harmonica. As the flag was lowered and then raised, the haunting music from the harmonica rolled around the amphitheatre of low mulga covered hills, moistening the eyes of the gathered crowd.

A very moving moment.



The ANZAC commemorative wreath laid at the Cemetery cairn.

A headstone and cameo photo plaque was then unveiled for Douglas Kakoschke. He had survived the Korean War only to be killed in a premature underground mine explosion in the Orlando Gold Mine at Tennant Creek, N.T. He lies next to his brother Horton who was permanently maimed by a premature underground mine explosion in the Radium Hill uranium mine. The Flying Doctor worked on Horton most of the night, removing rock from his torn and shattered body, before flying him to the Broken Hill Hospital next morning.

During the plaque unveiling, the song 'True Blue' was played. The poignant words of this song caused eyes to fill with tears and moistened the cheeks of many at the gathering.

TAG-A-LONG

On Saturday afternoon a tag-a-long to the old Luxemburg gold mines witnessed a demonstration of 'water divining' and the locating of a displaced gold bearing reef.



Kevin Kakoschke with the crossed divining wires which indicated an underground supply of water.

A sample of water from a shaft when later tested, gave a reading of only **168ppm of total dissolved salts with a dash of gold**. The reading wasn't a mistake. It's as good as bottled spring water. Mains water usually contains about 600ppm of total dissolved salts. Pity the underground stream isn't big enough to supply Broken Hill.

GHOST TOWN CABARET

On Saturday evening, the 'Ghost Town Cabaret' was sensational. It's amazing how a group of people can dream up fabulous individual acts, just like in the 'old days' when there was no TV or wireless to entertain a crowd.

The sound system was organised by 'Victor Harbour's Rock A Billy star', Ian Husband. His easy to listen to singing style was enjoyed by one and all. He is good.

The group dressed as Red Indians performing 'Running Bear and Little White Dove' was fantastic. A big thank you to Lois Harvie for designing and making the brilliant costumes.

Better to lose a lover, than to love a loser.



'Running Bear' with his Indian tribe before he met 'Little White Dove'.

Ann Do and team, did a fantastic job with blue strips of sheeting which were waved to symbolise the **wild river waters** which engulfed and drowned the love struck 'Running Bear' and 'Little White Dove'.



The 'wild river waters' in full bore. Josie Bennetts from Canberra, delighted the crowd as she floated around the bitumen 'stage'. She was poetry in motion, twisting and swirling, bobbing and weaving to the music and words of the song, 'Johnny be good', sung by Ian Husband.



The grace of Josie frozen in time

'Donald Where's Your Trousers' was performed by Kevin Kakoschke who showed just what was under the kilt, much to the merriment of the audience. The crowd roared when June

Kakoschke grabbed a stout log of wood and belted "Donald" fair on his "padded" bum with it. Ouch!

The many and varied entertainment items were followed by a natural phenomenon, **the total eclipse of the moon.**

It was a marvellous spectacle in the darkened star studded sky that night.

A Sunday morning 'Thanks Giving Service' conducted by Pam Barratt in the old Catholic Church ruins was a well attended event.

Leith Singe installed a plaque at the site of his old cubicle, **A block, number 12.** It was the away from the other cubes because he had a big blue 'bitzer' biting dog which would bite the fellows going past on their way to the ablutions or main mess at his former more convenient cubicle site.



Leith Singe fixing his cube number plaque in 'A Block'.

In the afternoon a four wheel drive to Maldorky Gorge and Lake Maldigo proved to be an exhilarating experience for the overseas visitors. Hundreds of wild goats, kangaroos and emus had them wildly clicking their cameras to show the folks back home.

Kangaroos had dug holes up to 700mm deep in the Olary Creek

sand to obtain cool, clear water, untainted by the smelly goats.

No amount of education will develop common sense

It was interesting to note that only a few people who glowed at night were those who sat too close to the campfire or 'wined' too often. Film clips of the '1950's Camp Concerts' and the '2000's Ghost Town Cabarets' shown in the re-incarnated 'Drive-in' picture theatre at night, certainly had the audience in fits of laughter at some of the past antics which were screened.

Part of this display was on view in the Radium Hill Heritage Museum during 'History Week' in May.



"Camp Concerts" to "Ghost Town Cabarets" Museum display.

With a tear in their eyes, it was 'auf wiedersehen' as our friends from Germany bade farewell.

Darkened skies and the threat of rain saw the camp site nearly deserted by Tuesday.

Nobody wanted to get stuck, on a muddy dirt track, 25 clicks from Tikalina.

(Some of the **background history, stories and yarns of Radium Hill,** is contained in the 398 page book written by Kevin Kakoschke, titled, 'OFF THE BARRIER HIGHWAY'. The names of hundreds of the early pioneers in

the north east of S.A. including the names of the men, women and children who had lived in Radium Hill are listed. The book is available at Yunta BP, Peterborough Steam Town Museum and also from Kevin. For those wishing to purchase a copy, the price is \$39. (Historic plaques are purchased from the proceeds of the book).

MUSEUM

The 'They Served - Their Stories' display in the Radium Hill Heritage Museum to commemorate the Centenary of ANZAC looks terrific. The names of 367 men and women of Radium Hill who served, are listed together with the awards that they received which included two VC's. The decommissioned rifles were donated by Les Westaway.

In May the S A History Month display in the Museum certainly added to the memories of yesteryear. This was borne out by a letter we received from Terry Best where he wrote, *'We had a look in the Museum and travelled out to the township. We were literally staggered to see how extensive Radium Hill had been in its heyday and it must have been so sad when it was forced to close.'* You have done a fantastic job of accumulating all the memorabilia and erecting the signs and photos. *We could almost feel the presence of the residents and it must be great to reminisce on your get-togethers.'*

A number of people have previously said that they could

almost 'feel the presence' of the past residents around the town. I wonder?

CEMETERY

The young trees at the Cemetery are being ravaged by big black beetles. Not only do they eat the leaves, they also chew off the bark. We have tried a number of different sprays on the **big black brutes** without much luck. Even when you try to squash them with your heel, they just seem to sink into the dirt and pop-up again when you remove your foot, damn. Success though. Confidor spray now seems to have fixed them up?



The big black 30mm long Cemetery gum tree eating beetle. It seems that they fly into the area in Spring, breed and all the while chewing the 'living daylight' out of the gum tree leaves.

HUNG 'ROO

In September when Bob Mansfield was 'relaxing' at R. H., he checked out the Cemetery. 'Lo and Behold', there it was on the Cemetery fence, **a hung roo**. He touched it and it was still warm, having just died. Apparently it must have been eating the young shoots of the gum trees, had a gut full of leaves, misjudged the height of the fence getting out, and bingo, he was hooked up. He desperately tried to claw his way free but only dug a hole in the ground. He was well and truly hooked, poor thing.



Don't under estimate the height of the hurdles in life or you may finish up like the hung roo.

OBITUARIES

Regretfully a number of our friends have passed away since our last newsletter including;

Buzza, Victor Andamooka SA
Baker, Phyllis England
Daniel, Lois Adelaide SA
Dumont, Graham Goolwa SA
Firmani, Pat Massachusettes USA
Franklin, Max Durack Qld.
Harratt, Rita Salisbury SA
Gorostiaga, Jose Kapunda SA
Greenhalgh, Basil Christies Downs SA
Gerke, Carmen Adelaide SA
Mitterer, Hans Dundas NSW
Munn, David Adelaide SA
Scarff, Shelley Adelaide SA
Scullion, Margaret Adelaide SA
Wade, Patricia Whyalla SA
Wilkin, Dora Booleroo Centre SA

At age 96 years, Dora had been a great supporter of our Assn. She had been born in a tent out on Bimbowrie Stn all those years ago. Her knowledge of the region was outstanding. Pat Wade was 94yo.

To their families we offer our deepest sympathy and condolences for their loss.

WORKING BEE

At the end of May, the 'four feeble fossils' were joined by Colin and Irene Peryman, Tony Hanson with his friend Reeves and Wain Fimeri to do a few jobs around the place. Tony had also fixed up the bad wash-out on the 'mad mile' with his earth moving equipment. Thanks Tony.

They installed a new '**Drive-in**' picture screen frame to support a 7ft x 6ft screen which hardly compares to the old "Drive-in" 1950's Cinemascope screen, which was 32ft x 30ft.

A nine course high building to house the power generator was also constructed by Ian Husband and his 'labourers'.

A concrete grave surround and headstone base were laid at the Cemetery for future use.

Another wild cat 'bit the dust' =24. The birds are happier now.

A working bee in December saw Kieran McCosker mowing the Cemetery bindyi lawn with the new lawn mower which he has donated. It's now ready for "playing outdoor bowls". Thanks Kieran.



Kieran with the 'mowing job' in front of him.

CACTUS GRUBBING

Perhaps the most soul destroying job was that of digging up the prickly cactus 'Boxing Glove Cholla'. **What a job.**

Even when wearing leather gloves, the cactus spikes penetrate the leather and stick into your fingers. Both Rod and Kevin grubbed out a full trailer load before 'throwing in the towel' after being nearly pricked to death. BBQ tongs help prevent getting pricked too often. The cactus nodules get caught in the fur, wool or hair of kangaroos, sheep and goats as they brush past them only to fall off later on and germinate after rain by rooting through their spikes.

EASTER 2016

Once again the program for 2016 is shaping up to be fantastic. Bigger, brighter and better than ever. Remember, **first in best dressed** for the choicest camping spots. Overseas visitors again?

Friday afternoon, panning for gold, especially for the kids and the not so young.

Bring gold pan, magnifying glass and small clear glass container for the gold. Only one shovel full of gold dirt per person to start with. (Use the 1000 to 1 microscope to inspect the beauty of your gold nugget and insects?).

Saturday 9.30am heritage tour tag-a-long, town/mine areas.

Saturday afternoon to the Luxemburges for more gold and see where Albert Parker and Evelyn Lively got married in 1916, (100 year ago). Albert and his brother

Walter had just arrived back from WW1 war.

7pm giant raffle.

More raffle items needed.

Ghost Town Cabaret 2016

Including the "Limbo Rock", (get your gear on) "Rock-a-Billy" star Ian Husband, June, Margot and Ann, the singing larks, Lois and her dancing troupe, Kevin on his guitar, a stand-up comedian, **plus your act and a 'helluva' lot more.** Maybe a rocket engine demo?

Sunday, Sunday Easter service 9am, followed by the Cactus extermination hunt (Bring gloves, digger and BBQ tongs).

PM The Maldorkys and Maldorky magnetite site tour.

Great flicks Sunday night at the new "**Drive-in**".

MEMORY JOGGERS

*Please contact June, our secretary if you change your address or hear of any ex-Radium Hill resident who may have passed away.

***Fill up with fuel** at Yunta or Broken Hill. A fridge is at our campsite for food and drinks, plus a stove, BBQ and shower facility.

*Order your **iron-on Radium Hill monogram**, just \$5 ea. which includes postage. More Radium Hill Videos of "**The Way We Were**" now available for \$25ea thanks to Peter Harratt.

Write a comment in the guest book section of our web site.
View it at www.radiumhill.org

The Olary Oasis Hotel host is Sam McLeod, 08 8091 1856.

Dianne Highet hosts the **Mannahill Hotel** 08 8650 5904 and Ryan Esam is mine host at the **Cockburn Hotel**. Call in, have a chat and a look at some of the artefacts and memorabilia which they have on display.

* Sign the visitors book at our Museum, pick up a track map and information sheet before heading out to Radium Hill (**no speeding** on the track).

*Pick up your RH site map and **heritage trail brochure** from the map box at the R.H. bitumen.

*Bring along your **UHF set** (we communicate on channel 30), prospecting pick, binoculars, bathers, cameras etc. (40 chairs on site).

* Sign the register, pick up and **pin on your name tag**, (it helps 'break the ice').

***Rubbish**, you bring it in, you take it out. Leave the camp site neat and tidy (its appreciated).

*Contact Andy Treloar if you want to stay in the shearer's quarters at Easter.

*If unable to contact June or myself, please leave a message with Margot Binkowski who will pass it on.

If you intend calling into Radium Hill other than at Easter, please write or phone both Andy Treloar, Tikalina Stn. via Olary, Ph. 08 8091 1529 and Maurice Francis, Oulnina Stn. via Mannahill, Ph.08 8650 5901.



Kevin Kakoschke as 'Cheeky' Donald. R to L, 'Running bear' (Barry Kakoschke), 'Little White Dove' (Pam Barratt), 'Hey Donald, where's yer troosers'? Rod Lawrence, Kevin Egel, Margot Binkowski, Lois Harvie, Madere, Ann Do



'THEY SERVED, - THEIR STORIES' Commemorating the Centenary of ANZAC, display in our Museum.



The girls get together L to R; Maria Drazil, June Kakoschke, Margot Binkowski, Janet Lindo(Pengilly) and Sandy Dumont.



The twins, Karen & Debbie Kakoschke, Connie Gohn with daughter Anne.

See you at Radium Hill, Easter 2016, (Good Friday, March 25) for more adventure, excitement and entertainment.
Thank you for reading this Newsletter. Cheers.