



Lot 50–Kanyanyapilla, McLaren Vale

Bi-cultural Ecological and Cultural Regeneration

Newsletter No 8, December 2017

Hi Everyone

News

Open Day and Drop the Lot

This season's open day is being held later than previously to be part of the History Festival in May 2018. It's likely we'll be open 2-3 times over the Festival and as soon as it is all sorted, will let you know.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, *Drop the Lot* open evenings will be held on the first Friday of the months February (2nd), March (2nd), April (6th), May (4th), 2018, 4.00 pm onwards. Same format as last year, will confirm details in the new year.

Other Stuff

A Week in the Life of L50K

Well, a fortnight really in late October which gave an unprecedented burst of spring activity:

- . Shaun, Dave and Kate from Wirra Bush Regen spent time weed-eating and cleaning up last year's woody weed debris along the Branson Track on behalf of Council. Council and I are working collaboratively to establish a linear woodland along the now closed road reserve.
- . Dave and Daniel, Wirra Bush Regen, then removed boxthorn and olives along Branson Track.
- . John and Daniel from Fleurieu Natives arrived to control weeds growing amongst the hundreds of sedge clumps, courtesy of NRM
- . Clint from CL Contracting mowed the pasture area, just over 2 ha, for this year's hay making; raking and baling following about 10 days later.
- . Paul and Steve came along one evening to help me burn the large amount of aged prunings, a cosy comfort fire.
- . Keryn, project archaeologist, dropped in to have a look around and discuss our collaborative work.
- . Hope, a Willunga based artist, called in to have a look around and collect reeds and other plant material for creative, floral assemblages she works on. L50K is on the corner of Branson and Pethick Roads, Hope is a descendant of the Branson and Pethick families.
- . Daniel back again for more weed control in the sedges.
- . Brenton, CL Contracting, slashed the rested hay pasture areas and other weed infested sedge beds too big for Toro.
- . Three blokes from DPTI, didn't get their names, spent half a day weed eating the Victor Harbor Road verge along the western fence line.
- . Some other blokes from DPTI came and went unseen by me for the second phase of feral olive removal along the Victor Harbor Road. Olive removal along that section now complete.

Meanwhile I spent about 40 hours over the fortnight riding the bull, mowing down the weeds and grasses over the rest of the land.

The Result: *Place the best it's ever been*

First time since I've had the place that spring slashing and mowing of the whole property has been achieved. And probably the first time in over 30 years that this level of land management has been achieved given that the place just sat around waiting to be sand mined with very little active management.

Thanks to the nearly 20 people who contributed over that fortnight, don't think I'll ever see that level of activity again. And thanks also to the people behind the scene who organise the on-ground; Jock (Council), Wayne (NRM) and Linnley (DPTI).

And a funny thing; the trees seem to grow rapidly when the mowing is done, anything from 10 up to 50 cms in an hour!!



Mowed all over

Hay Production

Hay production for cattle feed is one of the activities undertaken at L50K with about 4 hectares set aside for this purpose. We produced just over 200 bales of hay from about 2 ha this season, the other 2 ha being rested. Why produce hay?

1. Continuing (Agri)cultural Practice

Animals have grazed this land for many thousands of years; before settlement predominantly wallabies, kangaroos and emus; since settlement predominantly cattle and sheep. Providing animal protein for human consumption has almost always been part of the (agri)cultural practice of the land. Kangaroo, emu and goanna are now off the menu so beef is on.

But the cattle are off-site at Anacotilla Springs, Second Valley. Anacotilla Springs is a beef production and ecological regeneration project by Rob Malone and Pamela Wright. The property straddles the Anacotilla River and after a difficult fencing program, cattle have been excluded from the riparian zone for the first time in 150 years. Natural regeneration of the River Redgums is prolific and other species lost over time are being reintroduced.

2. Global Population & 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 of production continues at L50K.

3. Inter Property Offset

Rob and Pamela have made over more than 50% of their property to conservation; the riparian zone and catchment drainage lines, the most productive areas. So the L50K hay helps offset that loss of production area.

Undertaking the conservation role at Anacotilla required an expensive restructuring of the 62 ha (153 acre) property in terms of providing watering systems, not needed before, and fencing in very hilly terrain as well as improving pasture conditions in the grazed area.

L50K Pasture Management

Perennial veldt grass *Ehrharta calycina* (in flower, pink/brown tinge) is the main hay pasture species and was already there disguised in the weeds when the land was purchased. We are improving the quality through limited fertiliser application and weed management. A nitrogen fixing clover/medic may also be added.

About half of the hay area 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.

In case of interest, hay baling is a three step process over about a fortnight. First is the mowing, a long cutting arm extending to the side of the tractor, when sufficiently dry the hay is raked into lines by another implement, and finally the baler scoops it all up and spits out the bales, amazing machine.

It's all new to me and we will adjust our practices as we learn and the project evolves.



Birth of a bale

Is Carbon Neutral Possible??

Nick Graalman and Jamie Carter, a young couple, are seeing how far they can reduce their carbon footprint over a year. Is carbon neutral possible for them? Firstly, they are finding out more detail about the carbon cycle and their contribution, and how they can reduce their impact; their own research program. Then what are the daily acts they need to or can undertake to reduce? What changes are needed in their life etc., etc?

And they are making a documentary film to record and then share their experience over the year. Nick is a cinematographer who also runs Timelapse Adelaide which is sponsoring the ten year time lapse camera at L50K.

L50K is assisting their project by providing 1 hectare of land for a carbon offset program. Nick and Jamie are looking after the revegetation for a year; planting out, weeding, mowing, slashing, watering etc. But this also involves making numerous visits over the year; so as much as they can they are coming by bike, a three hour return ride. This part of the project also involves researching what is the carbon absorption potential of the one hectare of grassy woodland?

I'm pleased to have them use L50K and it certainly helps me to have a hectare off my hands for a year.



Nick and Jamie, on the carbon canvas

Public Talks

By way of interest, four public talks on L50K have been given.

The first was to the Friends of Port Willunga AGM last January which propelled me to prepare the ubiquitous PowerPoint. But once done it is easy to update. In July Keryn Walshe, Project Archaeologist, presented to the Yankalilla and Districts Historical Society on the post-contact archaeology with me providing a project introduction. In September I spoke to the Willunga Trees for Life and in October, the AGM of the Friends of Willunga Basin.

It is heartening that there is an evolving awareness and interest in the L50K project. Keryn and I are happy to speak about the project.

Bite You on the Bum, Mum

Sometimes it can actually be nice when you get bitten on the bum, if it's Mum. When a horse wants to be scratched where it can't reach, it nibbles on that spot on another horse which duly reciprocates. In spring when they are losing their winter coat horses get a bit itchier, so they nibble each other, rub against things or roll in the sand.

When Susan was grooming Mum, Mum nibbled up and down Susan's back and bum, it was fun to watch.

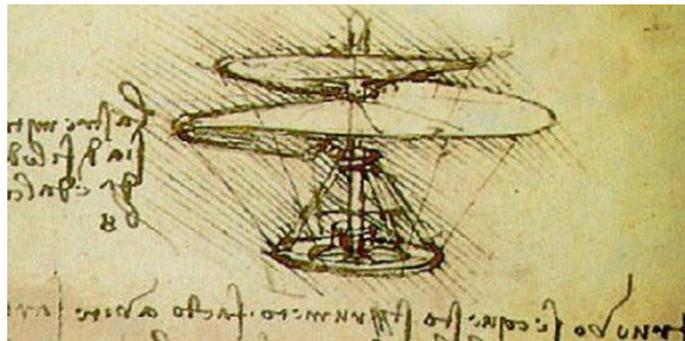


Mum is just showing Susan her appreciation

Happening in the Hood

Powerlines Aerial Survey

There are some jobs I wouldn't mind having for several months. One is being a powerlines aerial survey inspector, close to ground helicopter flying over the State's power line network. They were in the hood recently. I reckon Leonardo da Vinci wouldn't mind the job either; proved his aerial screw theory *'If this instrument made with a screw be well made – that is to say, made of linen of which the pores are stopped up with starch and be turned swiftly, the said screw will make its spiral in the air and it will rise high.'* And some great landscape paintings to boot.



Blues going higher, no yellow & orange

History Snippet

House and Dairy

Going recent and local this time, next door in fact. I mentioned last time the dairy box we uncovered under the almond tree when we pruned it. A few hundred metres to the east along Branson Road was a dairy and immediately opposite the L50K entrance gate was a red brick house, both now demolished. The following photo, looking east from L50K, shows the house on the left and the dairy, in the centre, in 1993.



Dairy, 1993



House and Dairy, 1992-95 (looking north)

In the 19th Century, the land on which these structures were located was owned by Richard Logan, part of his holding of five 80 acre sections. It was he who built the house, now in ruins, just to the north of L50K. When he died in 1883 he bequeathed his estate to the Catholic Church, with "Section 184, with the house and tenement thereon ... for the purpose of Catholic education, either as a convent or as a seminary for priests as the Bishop may judge expedient for the welfare of the Diocese of Adelaide". The Church still owns the land today. For the past 130 years the land has been leased out for various agricultural, now viticultural, pursuits and the house and dairy were part of a former activity. In 1998 the land, along with the rest of the Logan estate (five original sections) was leased long-term to Mildara Blass, now part of the Treasury Wine Estates group, which has developed the vineyards.

Logan, a devout Catholic, and his wife Margaret had five children who all predeceased them, succumbing to consumption (tuberculosis), a tragic story. Margaret died in 1877 and when Richard died in 1883 the Church was the beneficiary. There's more to the story but that will wait for another time.

In the late 1980s Indonesian student Haryanto Basuki was living in the red brick house and painted the reed swamp from the front veranda. Willunga resident Gina Kellett was a friend of Haryanto and ended up with the painting. She recognised the location and donated the painting to L50K. Mt Terrible is the highest point on the range in the background (RHS) and the grove of Redgums is in my neighbour Clint's place.



Maslin Creek reed swamp, 1988, Haryanto Basuki

Curious thing. 17 years ago I approached the Catholic Church to see if I could buy the two houses. The plan was to live in the red brick one whilst restoring the old stone one. The response; the roof was ripped off the red brick house within a few weeks and it was demolished within a few months. So when I ended up getting the swamp next door 17 years later, there was a loop back in time which ended just short of the former target, one of the time machine valves was faulty.

And to finish the year, an aerial photo of L50K and surrounds 28 years ago, house and dairy just visible at the top.



Photo thanks to neighbour Trevor

All the best for 2018 Cheers

Gavin

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Project Partners and Supporters



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