

Report on Station History Recording associated with the  
Wardilba Project at Hillside, Bamboo Springs and Warrie  
July 19 to July 22, 2004

Participants: Research Officer Bill Day, Aboriginal Liaison Officer Greg Tucker, Consultants Bonny Tucker, Beverley Tucker, Brian Tucker, Georgina Bobby, David Black, Weston Tucker and Henry Long.

Monday, July 19, 2004: Depart Tom Price 3.30pm in the GAC vehicle plus private vehicles SW1339 and 9EC382. The party met again at Auski and continued to Shaw River Crossing near Hillside Homestead to set up overnight camp by 7.30pm. Our plan for the morning was to film at Warrie Station.

Tuesday July 20, 2004: Drive to Hillside Homestead where owner Greg Stoney was preparing for a helicopter muster in the Warrie area. He asked to avoid the Warrie road until Wednesday. We then decided to film at Old Shaw tin mining settlement and Bamboo Springs homestead. At Old Shaw we toured the ruins of the Aboriginal camp and the shop where the people cashed in their tin, worked in the laundry, watched picture shows and bought supplies. On the video camera Bonny explained the significance of the objects lying around the old camp and how the people lived amongst the vehicle bodies which remained at the site. It was the first time the group had visited the area since they left in the 1970s.

From the Old Shaw turnoff, near the Hillside homestead, we drove to Bamboo Springs homestead where we met Judy Leete, the wife of Terry Leete whose father used to own Bamboo Springs Station (since incorporated into Hillside). Terry was not due to return until Wednesday night, but Judy gave us a tour of the old buildings and cemetery before we continued to Gap Well where Greg Tucker worked with Percy Tucker as a fencer. (As Greg describes it, the White cliff pool is where Brian received his totem as a fish. Greg bashed a fish against a rock at the pool, before Brian was born and the mark was later visible on baby Brian's head.) The track continued to White Cliff Well and waterhole where we cooked a kangaroo for a late lunch. We

considered visiting Mud Spring on the old road, now unused, as it is a site of significance; however, time and fuel consumption did not allow this. Instead we camped in the Shaw River at GPS 766372E; 7555537N (see map). Our plan was to drive to Warrie homestead the next day and return to Bamboo Springs in the evening to meet Terry Leete

Wednesday July 21, 2004: After breakfast in the Shaw River, we drove back to the Hillside to Bonney Downs Road and continued eastward looking for the turnoff to Warrie. Greg Stoney had told us to turn in at a windmill track past Bamboo Springs homestead, and then follow the fence line for a few hundred metres to the right to meet up with the old Warrie track. Fires burning in the surrounding countryside had attracted bush turkeys. One bird was shot before we turned south onto the Warrie track. Fortunately a CALM vehicle had driven to Warrie a few days before, making the track easier to follow in the creek crossings which had been washed out. The three vehicles stopped at the site of the original Bamboo Springs homestead at the actual springs (see map), where only a low stone wall and a paved area remains. Bonny conducted the traditional greeting ceremony at the shady springs which were running with clear water.

On the track to Warrie we passed an old sheep yard where we saw a group of nine dingoes. Greg changed a tyre while Bonny and I filmed the yard where she and her parents once worked. We then continued to the ruins of Warrie Homestead which were documented on video. Bonny was disappointed not to find her maternal grandmother's grave beside the creek near the homestead. (Note: I am in contact with Frank and Glenice Parker in NSW who used to own Warrie after the retirement of their father. Also Valerie Heath [nee Parker] who was born at Warrie).

From Warrie, we set off for Emu Springs, where Henry Lee was initiated. At the Hillside-Bonney Downs boundary we left the track from Warrie to Bonney Downs and headed north along the fence line. At 12.30pm we stopped for lunch in the upper Shaw River (GPS 787922E; 7544813N) where Brian and Georgina demonstrated on video how to cook a bush turkey in coals. There was no way into Emu Springs, so we continued past herds of donkeys back to the Hillside to Bonney Downs road near Trigg Hill. Mustering fires were burning along the road as we approached Bamboo

Springs again. We set up camp by 4pm and used the Leete's shower while the ladies prepared a dinner party. After Terry Leete returned by sunset we all sat around a long table under an awning to share a sumptuous meal. Many yarns were shared by Terry, Brian and Bonny of the days when Aboriginal workers lived on the station, including Bonny's parents, extended family and later her husband, Percy Tucker, and their children.

Thursday July 22, 2004: Terry and Judy Leete gave us a guided tour of the buildings. The old mud wall homestead had been burnt down by a disgruntled caretaker. Along the track to the cemetery the original homestead and out-buildings which were used by the Aboriginal employees and their families still stand. The original owner is remembered in the small graveyard along with several members of the Leete family (see the video of the headstones). Bob Withnell and several Aboriginal people are buried in the unmarked graves. More information is available from Bill Quin of Shenton Park, whose father owned the station before the Leetes. Terry described the workings of the old woolshed (see video) which was sadly burnt to the ground by a previous owner who claimed insurance on the impressive timber-floored structure, according to Terry. The shearers' quarters have likewise been burnt but the brick walls still stand.

By 8.45am we were ready to leave for Auski. After farewells and promises to return, we headed towards Hillside, stopping briefly on the road 7 kilometres from Bamboo at the nearest point to the track of a Wardilba snake. It is said that the snake track is as clear as a cut road with parallel rock formations on each side, of a type common in the region. Greg Stoney has an aerial photograph which shows the formation. Brian described this snake as Kadjuragada. At 10.20am we passed Woodstock, 104 kilometres from Bamboo, where the road rejoins the new Marble Bar road which bypasses Hillside, about ten kilometres from the Great Northern Highway. At Auski, I waited until 3pm for Larry Softley who was travelling through to Port Hedland for meetings that night and on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> August. The remainder of the party returned to Tom Price in the three vehicles.

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