

Diary

Working Party for the George Haddock Track

19th to 25th October 2014



Summary

Hours Worked

Building Work: **212 hours**

Track Work: **652 hours**

864 hours

Accomplished

Buildings:

The building complex has been renamed the Harold Charles Barracks.

The work on the barracks is now effectively complete although there will doubtlessly be ongoing maintenance required. Before opening up the Common Room for hikers on the George Haddock Track it is proposed to install a small solar lighting system. The remaining three bedrooms and shower room are available for use by researchers. The Common room has a new ceiling and some damaged wall panels have been replaced. There is now no evidence the water damage and the painting and

tidying have made the whole Common Room very presentable. Some refinements have been added including a blackboard for leaving notices, a new shelf in the laundry and a new bench top over the disconnected stove. A removable screen enables slide presentations in the common room at night.

The two sheds have been painted and secured and store all of the equipment necessary for future track work maintenance including the small tractor.

The surrounding environs have been cleared and were able to accommodate twelve tents during the working bee and will serve as some fire protection in future.

It is hoped to install a solar light in the Common Room and use the bedroom section for researchers pursuing projects in the least disturbed section of Fraser Island (Kgari).

Track work

16.7 kilometres of proposed walking track remain to be completed. Almost all of this requires native title approval before we can access these 13 sections. However 35 kilometres are cleared as well prepared walking tracks.

Lake Allom to Arch Cliffs: By sharing 4 kilometres of road 18 kilometres of the walking track can be used to traverse this section that includes Lake Bowarrady .

The clearing of the **Forest Walk** makes the walking track from Lake Coomboo to the Yidney Scrub trafficable to our Kubota tractor. This opens up more potential walking options on Fraser Island (Kgari) .

The two most incomplete stages are Lake Coomboo to Lake Allom where 3.8 kilometres are awaiting approval before work can proceed and about 8 kms between Lake Garawongera and Pine Hill. There are 5 kilometres to clear between M15 (Happy Valley-Urang Creek Road) and M16 (on the connecting road from Lake Garawongera to Yidney Scrub). This is the most difficult section remaining. 3.1 kilometres are all that separate M16 from Pine Hill and this includes a very attractive section through Yidney Scrub.

Now that Native Title has been determined, FIDO and NPAQ are now seeking Butchulla approval that would enable us to secure QPWS authorization to proceed with Stage 2 in 2015. Stage 2 aims to complete the 52 km track and establish a hikers shelter and toilet at Lake Coomboo.



Fearless Leader with the sculptured glass plaque of Fraser Island made by Harold Charles

**Preliminary
The Building Team at work**

Harold, Helen and Neville set off from Brisbane 48 hours before the main party. They wanted to have the common room ceiling replaced before the arrival of the main team. They also rightly predicted that it would be much easier for them to work without interruptions of 21 other people milling about.

Harold, Helen and Neville arrived on Friday prior to the main group.

Harold's trusty 4WD utility was fully loaded with all of the panelling needed for the job as well as additional timber and their own personal supplies. It was also crowded in the cabin but they had 48 hours before the arrival of the main contingent and set to work to capitalize on their freedom. They stripped out the old ceiling and insulation in the common room. Before the new ceiling panels could be installed it was necessary to replace or reinforce some of the rafters affected by the previous roof leaks. Happily they observed that the roof that had caused the problem has now been fixed. There was no sign of any leaks since the roof was sealed in June. However the roof leaks over some prolonged time previously had rotted out many of the beams and these required major structural work before the new ceiling could be installed.

They worked solidly on removing all of the damaged material and installing the new ceiling over the food preparation area. However after working hard for two days the other half the ceiling couldn't be finished before the main group arrived. However the messiest part of the job was done and the food preparation part of the Common Room could be used immediately the main group arrived. A trailer load of timber and insulation removed with the old ceiling was waiting to be removed to the Happy Valley dump.



Harold Charles beside the sign bearing his name. Harold organized and led the renovations and restoration of the barracks near Lake Allom. We are honouring Harold and helping protect the location with the name change.



The B team sets off to work Day 2 clearing a new circuit track, a distraction to the Great Walk

**Day 1,
Sunday 19th October**

Everyone was one there way from Brisbane by 7.00 am and headed north . It was 10.30 when two vehicles filled up at Tinana and 11.00 am when they collected Arnold. After a brief tour of the town to look at some heritage houses we were off to Mary River Heads.

It was an uneventful trip across to Kingfisher except that Roger wasn't allowed to become deflated until we reached the island. The trip across the island was almost trouble free but rough on Cornwalls Break. Luckily the track out of Kingfisher, particularly the softer sections had just been watered by the watering truck. We were able to make a quick stop at Stonetool Sandblow lookout but just after that our luck ran out and one vehicle that shall remain nameless became bogged and had to be towed out.

Those few delays were critical as the rapidly rising tide made the run up the beach to K'Gari more difficult with a fresh South-Easter and nearly full tide. We turned off the back on to the Woralie Track relieved to be clear of the beach but alas a nameless vehicle again became bogged. We were though at Lake Allom at about 4.00 pm. However the key we had hoped would let us in the gate wasn't where we had expected to find it and Len made a valiant race up to obtain another key from Harold to open the lock. The delay at least allowed enough time for a brief viewing of this beautiful lake while we waited.

Once we were on site at the Barracks precinct there was a flurry of activity. Soon the vehicles were unloaded, the trailers emptied and over a dozen tents popped up surrounding the barracks. Tools were being sorted and a supplementary shower and

toilet were established to cope with the size of the group. Another task was the installation of the sign to officially rename the barracks as the Harold Charles Barracks.



The Charlie Team sets to work with a will Day 2

It was a particularly celebratory time with Su quickly turning on some finger food for a memorable Happy Hour. There was during the Happy Hour an interruption to mark the unveiling of the name plate provided by Greg naming these barracks , some distance from Lake Allom as the Harold Charles Barracks. This will in future draw less undue attention and potential vandalism by helping to locate them with the name Lake Allom.

Harold responded with a very generous gesture by rewarding the Fearless Leader with a personally made hand-crafted glass presentation for his mantle at home.

It was a wonderful dinner prepared by Sue for the occasion.

Hours Worked

Building Team: Two days 3x9 x 2	54 hours
Other Teams: Unloading and sorting equipment, establishing tools for the morrow, briefings etc (24x 2)	48 hours
	102 hours



The Charlie Team during a break in their work.



A rearranged timetable allowed an inspection of Eli Creek

Day 2

Monday 20th October

The best laid plans sometimes go astray and sometimes go very much astray. That would summarize the outcomes of today.

It started very smoothly. We enjoyed a quick but enjoyable breakfast. By 7.00 am everyone was ready for action. In fact Harold had already started the action and was busy with power saw and nail guns before 7.00am when the 20 track worker set off to meet the rangers at Lake Garawongera who were going to open the chain across the existing Great Walk gate and daisy chain in our lock so that we would not in future require the special key to gain access to the walking track..

Robin had already set off in the tractor starting at 6 30, to get the tractor in place to clear the Forest Walk between Hidden Lake and the Moon Point Road.

With tools loaded in the trailer in the wheelie bins we set off. Alas it was a slow drive because Supe was stuck in Low range and lagged behind. Eventually we caught up to Robin who had problems with the carry-all when one arm on his three point linkage lost its pin. That slowed us further. The first big hiccup occurred when we reach the VC track to Lake Garawongera. Fearless Leader stopped for the others to catch up and to tie down the trailer. While this small task was being completed some were busy answering Nature's call in the bushes and Len was busy looking at something under the seat. The upshot was that unbeknown to the Fearless Leader not one person in the two following vehicles saw him take off down the VC track where he was already pointed and so when people finally emerged from the bushes and boarded the vehicle they took the Yidney Scrub Road rather than following Fearless Leader.

It was probably just as well Len and Roger followed the Yidney Scrub Road because they reached Lake Garawongera well before Fearless Leader who was delayed waiting for his entourage and when he finally gave up there were more delays when they had to make a detour around some fallen trees far too big to be dealt with by a small chainsaw. It was 10.00 am when they reached Lake Garawongera with TAHKA scratched and dented. After a very scant morning tea (the other half was left in Pauline's car we set off for our respective project with an understanding, at least in Fearless Leader's mind that we would all return to Lake Garawongera at noon for lunch and a swim. As it turned out the B Team had no time for lunch in mind and they didn't emerge from the scrub until 12.40.

However there was a problem that there was no time in the mind of Pauline who had the lunch with her and alas when San and Matt, the two senior resident rangers turned up to have lunch with the crew at Lake Garawongera, the two teams had no lunch. When lunch had not turned up by 1.30 the Fearless Leader made an executive decision that since an army works on its stomach, it was essential to get food and since the nearest known food was in Happy Valley we headed off to there where we feasted on hot pies, chips and hamburgers.

The time to return to work at Lake Garawongera was 30 minutes but also entailed a two hour inland drive back to Lake Allom so a decision was made to abandon work and work a very full day tomorrow.



The work done by A (Tractor) Team was heading down from Hidden Lake but the progress was much slower than predicted and at the end of the day there was still a kilometre of track to clear to the T Junction to Pine Hill. There are still at least a couple of hours to do in the morning.

B Team had an apparently very productive day and estimated that they had covered almost a kilometre of the PMG track from the east. (We will see!)

Charlie Team started from the western end of the PMG Track and had advanced 470 metres along when they broke off for lunch and unwittingly for the day)

Back at the Barracks Harold and Co managed to almost complete the ceiling replacement and reinstall the lights. It looks surprisingly bright and shiny and with the new wall panel with the maps in place. During the day the teams had met with Dan Clifford and Matt Palmer who were most impressed by the work done by the various teams and especially the barracks.

After some anxiety everyone arrived back at the barracks in time for a very lively Happy Hour.

Hours Worked

Track Team A: 4 x 11	44 hours
Track Team B: 7 x 7	49 hours
Track Team C: 8 x 6.5	52 hours
Building Team: 4 x 10 hours	40 hours
	185 hours



One big obstacle confronting the A Team clearing the Forest Walk

**Day 3
Tuesday 21st October**

The day began with better organization and with a better understanding of the task ahead except for one notable exception that will be described later.

The building team had all of the rubbish for the tip loaded on the trailer. Fearless Leader tidied up the tool shed. There was great attention paid to the loading of the morning tea and lunch.

The building team worked with only a 30 minute break for lunch making the work of the barracks ever more friendly. The work included finishing the ceiling and replacing the temporary stud, all of which are now painted white in keeping with the finish for the Harold Charles Barracks. Other work included the creation of a new bench top over the

gas stove and the installation of a work-bench for the bench grinder in the tool-shed.

Three vehicles for the B & C Track teams set off for the beach to beat the tide heading down the beach via Happy Valley . The A Team though set off on the Northern Road before establishing the next step of work on the tracks north and south of M16 prior to setting off to Pine Hill where they had left the tractor. They had a bush bash in the car 800 metres up the track to one of the few big obstacles but they have successfully finished clearing the Forest Walk to be clear and trafficable from Hidden Lake to Yidney Scrub. They had lunch at the Moon Point Road and then headed down to M16 clearing many of the branches that had wiped off the car aerial earlier in the day.

The big news of the day came at lunch when the B Team confessed with much contriteness that they had spent full day clearing the wrong track going south east instead of north west. They discovered their error when they came out on the Great Walk and then eventually just prior to lunch found the correct track but they had advanced on the correct PMG track following the ribbons.

In the meantime the Charlie team had been making excellent progress and were wondering when they would encounter the team coming towards them when they would actually meet the B Team who were assumed to be heading towards them. The realization quickly dawned that it would not be today and maybe not even tomorrow. By lunch Roger had strode out 900 giant strides but that was extended in the afternoon. However the finish of the track is so good that it doesn't require a tractor to finish the job.

It was a day of great productivity even if some of it was misdirected. At 4 pm all of the teams working in the south headed down to the beach to race the tide on their way home. Alas there was one holdup when some amateur backpackers became bogged in front of us at K'Gari Camp.

Coming into Lake Allom was like coming home and it was a homely felling around Happy Hour on the deck and over dinner although many in the group retired before 8.00 pm

Hours Worked

Track Team A: 4.5 x 10	45 hours
Track Team B: 7 x 10	70 hours
Track Team C: 8 x 10	80 hours
Building Team: 4 x 10	40 hours
	235 hours



The A Team at work having cleared around the big log. They have reopened the walking track from the top of Yidney Scrub to Lake Coomboo.

Day 4

Wednesday 23rd October

It was a very eventful day for each of the track teams as they set off. There was real drama crossing Eli Creek that was much deeper than anticipated. There were gasps as water went over the bonnets but Len in the third vehicle didn't get the message and ran into a below water rock and stalled. Some quick thinking though got him moving again much to all the onlookers' relief. The drama of the loss of the Fearless Leader's phone at the Happy Valley dump was much less traumatic. Roger rang and John Early was standing almost beside it when it went off and also recovered a pen. Meantime the A Team on their way to work cut through a fallen tree on the Northern Road where a well-worn detour has been in use for several months.

A Team went down to M16 and took up the challenge of clearing on the Yidney Scrub side of the VC track. They had a hard job with some heavy cutting but the track has now advanced 275 metres down hill and 35 metres past the turn-off proposed by the July Survey. The A team reported that there was still potential to clear the road further down the slope but they needed to keep their rendezvous. Greg began the long haul back to Lake Allom and on the way on the Forest Walk noted that the Pine Hill turnoff was 1.8 kilometres from the Happy Valley-Moon Point road.

The B Team think that they were working on the right track and they estimate that at the end of the day they had advanced about a kilometre. However, working from the other end of the PMG track the Charlie team reckoned that they had covered 2 kilometres by lunch time. After lunch though when FL drove the track to the end of the clearing it was discovered that only 1.3 kilometres had been cleared. After lunch another 300 metres was cleared

by 8 people in 1.5 hours. It leaves another 1.3 kilometres still to be cleared.

One solution being proposed to cover the much slower rate of progress than planned for is to base workers nearer the job. The productivity was greatly reduced because working on the PMG track involves at least an hour and a half of travelling each way from Harold Charles Barracks. If we gained permission to base a group at the Lake Garawongera hikers cap for a week with a contract to clear the remaining 1.3 kilometres this would finish the most remote section of track from Harold Charles Barracks with greater productivity.

Meanwhile back at the barracks, Harold and Co were busting to put the finishing touches to the barracks. A blackboard is now in place so that messages can be left. A new shelf in the Laundry allows it to be kept much tidier and more efficiently. They also made a screen that was used after dinner for a slide presentation by FL to provide some entertainment.

Hours Worked

Track Team A:	4.5 x 9	40.5 hours
Track Team B:	7 x 10	70 hours
Track Team C:	8 x 10	80 hours
Building team:	4 x 9	36 hours
		226.5 hours

Day 5

Thursday 23rd October

The Fearless Leader declared this a day of difference. It involves only half a day of work and half a day of recreation with the whole 24 people assigned to working on the track between the Awinya Track and Lake Bowarrady. The day had special significance for Pauline who was spending her 15th wedding anniversary with us on Fraser Island over 300 kilometres away from her husband and children.

It was a beautiful clear Spring day and the whole group except Neville who remained behind to paint set off at 7.45 am for the Awinya Track to work their way up to Lake Bowarrady. It was a far less frantic start to the morning and the road was new and not so rough but something must have affected the vehicles because at lunch-time it was noted that the three vehicles that had worked on the PMG track were all missing their front number plates lost somewhere in the wilds of Fraser Island.

There was a pleasant surprise waiting for FL at the start of the track work. There was surprisingly little clearing required. The whole mini army prepared for action advanced in anticipation of some thick barriers but this wasn't to be. There were three large logs across the track that couldn't be moved.

One has been there for at least 25 years and steps were cut in because it was difficult to get around. However the thick regrowth of Hops Bush, Monotocca and wattles were not to be found and for the most part only light trimming was required.

The decree was to be back at the vehicles by 11.30 and so after 2.5 kilometres, just as the group was almost up to a major but manageable tree fall the team had to return to the Awinya Road. They had though been able to view Lake Bowarrady through the trees. All the team were impressed by the beauty of the place and what an attractive walk it presented. It is a great part of the George Haddock Track.



FL & Su walking in to Lake Bowarrady during the day's operations to clear the track from Awinya Road

Back in the vehicles the group continued up the Awinya Road to the end where the lead vehicles almost became submarines as they plunged into the ford across the estuary where the tide still had a little to fall. It caused quite an adrenalin rush.



Roger's Navara crossing Awinya Creek

The ever-efficient Su organized another wonderful lunch while most of the party revelled in a swim in Hervey Bay. Then it was on to continue north to the territory of the very shy Beach Thickknee. However a lot of time was spent marvelling at the remnants of

an ancient rainforest evident on a long stretch of beach between Awinya and Wathumba Creeks.

They had just reached the turn-around point and FL had just spied one of the rare Beach Thickknees when Greg reported over the radio that Supe had just lost power. It turned out that although he thought he was drawing fuel from the Reserve tank the changeover had not worked and that he had drained the main tank dry. There was some consternation but an all male team deliberated as only males do and eventually the fault was diagnosed and rectified.



On the western beach apart from Supe running out of fuel, the highlight was discovering these ancient relics

Heading south they stopped to admire the Yathon Cliffs of coloured sand with one stream of white sand cascading down the slope like a waterfall. They also admired a dingo and a sub-adult Sea Eagle feeding on a large number of sardines that had been washed onto the beach.

It was an early time to be back at the barracks but the fuel problem with Supe meant that there was a rush-trip to Cathedral Beach to get more fuel because the reserve tank fuel is not apparently available.

Fearless Leader presented a slide show of "No More Beating About the Bush" describing the environmental degradation that he had observed in the last quarter century

Hours Worked

Whole group on Track work:	3 x 21	73.5 hours
Building team:	Neville painting	6 hours
		51 hours

**Day 6
Friday 24th October**

What a wonderful day. The weather continued to be fine and sunny with pleasant temperature. It provide the perfect environment for a celebration.

After a relatively relaxed start for the day with a pleasant leisurely breakfast, 14 of the group set off for a three hour drive to Kingfisher Resort. Harold, Helen and Neville were not planning to return. They were fully loaded and said their farewells to Harold Charles Barracks. The convoy made a brief stop at the Puthoo Fens to let people see these interesting and unusual features of Fraser Island. The route down to Poyungan Creek was surprisingly smooth and better than anticipated.

There was just enough time after arriving at Kingfisher Resort to buy an iced coffee and get around to the ceremonies occurring near the Sandbar and jetty where 400 Butchulla were there to celebrate and there appeared to be at least the same number of non-Butchulla. The dancing, smoking and welcome to country took up the time between 10.00 and 11.00 am sharp when the Federal Court convened and submissions were made and Judge Collier delivered her judgement that passed all of Fraser Island with only five excised sections (Eurong, Happy Valley, Sandy Cape lighthouse reserve, Moon Point freehold area and Kingfisher Resort) to the Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation.

It was a day of interest with everyone renewing old friendships and forming new ones. After the hype we retreated to the resort's retail area that was virtually empty and had a great lunch. Fearless Leader was contacted and interviewed by Richard Glover from ABC Sydney local radio and then we made our way north for a much more comfortable and speedier trip back to barracks via the Ocean Beach at dead low tide

long walk and then completed clearing the track through to the cleared track coming up from the south.

After dinner of barbequed sausages Fearless Leader provided another screen presentation using the removable screen that Harold had provided.

Hours Worked

Track Team: Storing equipment	8 Hours
	8 hours

**Day 7
Saturday 14th October**

Because of the 8.00 am high tide, it was a planned to wait at the barracks for a 10.00 am departure. However everyone was ready and waiting by 9.00 am and the barracks were cleaned and shipshape for departure.

We went down to Lake Allom, some swam, we all had morning tea in the most pleasant surrounds in delightful weather and then we headed for the beach. On the way we encountered 10 vehicles headed towards the lake.

Despite the track getting softer there were no problems and the flat sea made beach travel to Happy Valley so much easier. At Happy Valley we unloaded all of the rubbish and left behind all of FIDO's hand tools that we had borrowed.



Fearless Leader catches up with his old mate, Joe Gala at the Butchulla Native Title determination

The group at the barracks had been occupying themselves during the day. Robin took off to continue the work of yesterday to finalize the section. He also drove Joyce to the start of her long walk to the Bowarrady Telstra tower but he had a



At Eurong we stopped for lunch and still so much ahead of schedule we had time to take in the natural beauty of Wangoolba Creek at Central Station before proceeding to the ferry.

We said our formal farewells at Mary River Heads as we began our dispersal. The Brisbane members had reached home by 8.00 pm.