

Summary of the week's work

Their effort summarized in the table of hours contributed to the various components of the project which were working to restore the Lake Allom barracks, and defining and clearing the former road sections of the George Haddock Track. These are set out in the table below:

	Clearing	Building	Survey
Day 1	16	6	0
Day 2	35	48	30
Day 3	33	48	20
Day 4	30	48	21
Day 5	30	24	0
Day 6	0	0	0
Total	144	184	71

The start on the George Haddock Track achieved an enormous amount in a working bee cut short by two days by a combination of bad weather and mechanical failure. Despite this the group managed to exceed that planned for average of 20 hours per volunteer (340 hours) by 49 hours yielding a total of **389 hours**.

The hours counted do not include time spent on travelling to and from Lake Allom sightseeing excursions and domestic chores at the barracks except for cleaning. The output would have been considerably more for the clearing and survey teams if it weren't for the heavy rains that marked the breaking of the drought that forces a change to the proposed work plan for Day 5 and abandoning all work proposed for days 6 and 7.

At the cessation of the work the Barracks building work was almost complete and the building structurally sound. The former generator shed was complete and secure with a new roof. The storage shed was complete around the walls although it is now known that a new roof is needed. The tank has been installed to supply drinking water for hikers but the tank-stand needs to have at least one stump replaced. The roof on the barracks is essentially sound but some minor works are needed to seal up a few remaining leaks and add leaf guards to the guttering. Two doors remain to be installed and the door locks fitted. This work will be carried out in June.

The barracks are now clean and habitable. Doors open freely and windows screens renewed. The clearing around the barracks is almost complete but a few overhanging branches need to be removed. The track is cleared enough to drive a vehicle to Lake Bowarrady and most of the track and route between Pine Hill and Lake Bowarrady is now clearly defined so that former road sections can be cleared. The main impediment to completing the whole 52 kilometres is that the tape on some sections where there was no previous road have been lost and some may need redefining. Overall there is confidence in completing the task by December 2014.

Friends of Parks

The George Haddock Track is a joint project of the National Parks Association of Queensland and the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation to extend the Fraser Island Great walk from Lake Garawongera to Arch Cliffs. This describes the first working bee funded by a \$25,000 Friends of Parks grant from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. It is the first of a series of working bees planned for 2014 on this project.



Jennifer McDonald's cleans a window beside a Friends of Parks sign. Harold Charles who has overseen all of the building renovation work is just checking.

Day 1 Sunday, 23rd March 2013 Brisbane to Lake Allom

The trip started very early for some as we converged to our appointed rendezvous. At 8.30 am though most converged and met up for smoko at the Yandina Rest Area. There had been some drama the previous eve with Chris having blown a tyre on his trailer.

As we proceeded north on a Sunday we explored many options for repairing the or replacing the tyre without success until we canvassed the option of the Car Wreckers in Maryborough. We were almost there when we saw bit of rubber peeling of the former spare. With three kilometres to go we limped into the Car Wreckers and hoped that we could replace the wheels. In the meantime another drama was unfolding. Su who was our victualler for this trip arrived back in Brisbane from Japan and discovered that the stupid Fearless Leader had left some boxes of supplies sitting on the bench. They contained breakfast cereal and biscuits, savoury and sweet. The conundrum was the 12.30 ferry deadline and the fact that there was only an hour to spare to resolve the two crises.

There was an excruciatingly slow time to identify the trailer wheels (Falcon) and then procure them with the minutes to spare rapidly dwindling. Then it was a rush to collect Pam and Eric and dash down to the servo to refuel and head for Mary River Heads. A quick stop at the IGA enabled us to make good some of the supplies deficit. As the last of our convoy of four vehicles and

two trailers backed on to the ferry the bow door was being raised. We had just made it.

The Kingfisher Resort is making its contribution to the George Haddock Track by providing free ferry service for the volunteers working on the project.

To gain time Jennifer had a cut lunch waiting for us aboard the ferry. We replenished our drinking water at Kingfisher and were in high spirits and high range as we crossed the dingo grid at exactly 2.00 pm. The next 20 minutes though were to prove very challenging as we negotiated the powder soft track out of Kingfisher Resort dragging two very heavy trailers. The challenge proved too much for Tahka and we were in the throes of extracting ourselves when a truck that had been watering the dry sand confronted us with a convoy of four unhelpful backpackers. They blocked our progress and stalled us while they prevaricated on where to go for almost an hour. Thus it was 5.15 pm by the time we reached our destination at the barracks.

We immediately unloaded Supe and the trailer and despatched, Chris, Peter and Bria to collect the urgently needed camping gear from Lake Coomboo. Then there was a frantic flurry in the rapidly dying light to clean up as much as possible for the tent sites. Within a short time all of the area in front of the barracks had been cleared of a mass of vegetation and there were two large heaps of bushes piled up near the entrance

There was a less successful attempt to get the lights working in the barracks. The circuits although looking ready to operate on the flick of a switch, failed to respond to the power coming from the generator. So we found some items from the larder and opened our wine casks and waited in the dark for the return of the Coomboo continent with the camping gear and lights that could operate independently of the barracks circuitry.

At 7.30, just two hours after dashing off on their mercy mission Chris and Co returned and soon the cleared area was sprouting tents and the barracks were alive with lights and Jennifer was serving up dinner. It had been a long and fascinating day full of adventure and discovery blended with lots of bumps and bounces. The evening discussion was truncated as everyone retired to their new abodes which nobody had really seen in the daylight.

**Hours Worked: Clearing: 16 hours
Building: 6 hours**

Day 2 Monday, 24th March 2014 Getting into the work

The morning dawned fine and everyone was awake and moving by 6.30 am. There seemed to be a sense of urgency in the air and without any urging or instructions everyone slipped into working mode. The designated clearing party were already finishing off the

night's work and were soon busy clearing the area around the shed where Harold and Neville had already started work.



Daylight on Day 2 reveals the campsite cleared in the fading light and the camp established in the dark.

The work was only temporarily interrupted for breakfast.

Chris and Greg O went to work loading and carrying off the first of six giant sized loads of removed shrubbery to remove a potential fire hazard from close proximity to the building.

In the meantime the Fearless Leader and Peter were anxious to be on the move because there were items to be collected at Happy Valley that may be needed for construction and additional supplies to make up for the missing items left in Brisbane. They also had a full load of rubbish being waste building materials that were removed from the two sheds and rotten timber from the tank stand where Noel and Eric were already assessing the best options to install the new 5,000 litre tank.

The fourth contingent was Greg Neil, Jane and Pam who were keen to start marking the tracks particularly in the sections now previously used by motor vehicles. They started work on section linking the Lake Allom to the Bowarrady Track.

There was a further element of anticipation because Bruce Knuckey of the Rainbow Beach QPWS was scheduled to arrive with the building material ordered though Gympie including roofing iron, building material and a tank. Bruce arrived and left while the Fearless Leader was away but advised on a number of issues to may work easier particularly for the Track Gang who had been unable to open the lock on the Bowarrady Track gate with the given key.

Building Program: The six builders quickly split into three teams: Harold and Neville went to work on the shed. Noel and Eric went to work on the tanks stand while Gav and Barry went to work on the roof and on levelling and stabilizing the verandah.

They worked from 7.00 am to 2.30 pm with a most impressive list of achievements. The roofs were

cleaned and the old guttering was removed. In the process it was discovered that once the leaves were removed from the storage shed there were holes in the roof. The roof needs replacing and this needs to be done in the next working bee. The shed was cleaned out and some termite damage discovered. Some boards in the wall were replaced and work begun on repairing the doors.

The sleepers contributed by the QPWS were put to great use in the platform for the new tank and by the end of the day stood ready to install the new tank that had arrived with Bruce.

Barry and Gav though having cleaned the roofs began work on the verandah that was surprisingly uneven and unstable. They began jacking and realign in the sections that had subsided and in bracing the verandah.

In the meantime Jennifer had begun the challenge of cleaning the place, sorting out the food and preparing the meals.

The Happy Valley inspection proved very useful with an evaluation of the task awaiting to deal with the Abrus problem and evaluate the most useful treatment that seems to be spraying with Glycophosphate, a process that will require regular repeating. In the area that was cut and dug, a few roots were missed and in just over four weeks had grown metre long vines radiating from the stumps. The rubbish was dumped and the salvaged material from the tip including three long plastic pipes were loaded up.

The observations of dead and dying trees was particularly distressing. While most of the trees in the forest were succumbing to the drought, there was a section between Eli Creek and Happy Valley where 90% of the Pandanus had been killed by infestations of Jamella.

By 2.00 pm when the Fearless Leader returned with the back of his Landcruiser dented when his load in the trailer moved forward, it was to a transformed landscape around the barracks and the barracks were a step closer to being habitable.

There was a suspension of work at 2.00 pm approx. when almost everyone went for a swim at the Lake but when they returned there was a lot of cleaning up done. Of particular interest was the failure to be able to use the generator on the installed electric outlets and lights inside the barracks. After some tentativeness, a team of men led by Gav discovered that the barracks were wired to take power from the Generator Shed and not through the specially provided plug in power socket

That situation was soon amended and to everyone's relief and applause the lights came on in the barracks and it was then indeed a much happier Happy Hour.

Hours Worked: Clearing: 35 hours
Building: 48 hours

Survey including the Happy Valley survey 30 Day 3 Tuesday, 25th March 2013 Buildings and Bowarrady Track

It was a much more subdued start to the morning with most people missing the spectacular blood red sunrise. The work though was waiting and soon the respective teams were at work with the track gang tidying up around the barracks and the builders resuming their respective self appointed tasks.

It wasn't long before Eric and Noel had the tank in position, the guttering in place and they plumbed it in. Meanwhile Barry revelled in squirming below the deck as he and Gav brought it back to level and stability.

While this was going on Harold and Neville methodically worked away on the storage shed and soon the doors were trimmed and the shed could be secured although we have plan to replace the roof at the next working bee.



Neville works on the doors of the storage shed that was almost overgrown before our arrival

Soon the survey team and the track workers were off to explore their work and the tasks awaiting them on the Bowarrady track. Because our key inexplicably doesn't fit the gate lock we had to leave the gate dummy locked as we went off. We inspected the "Dump Road" where about 500 metres await work and then drove on to the Telstra Tower on the highest point of the island having missed the turn-off where the Bowarrady Track continues. To our astonishment, we were followed by two other vehicles. These were not unauthorised interlopers, but technicians there to install some QPWS communication equipment on the tower. Unfortunately they were unable to suggest how we could communicate with Telstra about establishing a mobile phone transceiver on the tower because they had found it difficult themselves to communicate with Telstra on their project.

The track gang was left at the turnoff and proceeded to open up the track from the corner to Lake Bowarrady. They thought it was going to be a breeze but then met

some big fallen timber and had only gone 1 kilometre before it was time to return for lunch.

The survey gang was then dropped off at the Woralie track and then marked out the route towards Block 14 and then back to the barracks.



Pam, Jane and Greg N marking the route with plastic tape for the track clearing gang to follow up.

In the meantime the Building team was busy. Harold and Neville had finished off the storage shed doors and had started to consider what to do about the generator shed. Gav and Barry stabilized the verandah and it was looking quite solid after much fine-tuning to get the levels right. Noel and Eric had plumbed in the tank stand ready for the first rain. It has been raining all week with flimsy showers and very light drizzle and rain is needed to put water in the tank to anchor it to the stand especially as we don't have straps to hold it down.

After lunch Fearless Leader decided to take everyone to the Eastern Beach for an afternoon excursion despite the inclement weather. Some people including Harold and Neville, Pam and Eric and Chris who was suffering with some lurgi and laying low remained back in camp.

So while the majority were checking out the Maheno and Eli Creek the builders continued working to erect the roof on the generator shed and Harold fixed the stairs with a much better bottom step and a hand-rail. After the R&R crew had finished their ice-creams and/or beer, they returned to find the impressive progress in their absence.

During the morning Jennifer continued to clean up focussing on walls and cupboards.

Happy Hour was a more lavish affair as we located more nibbles. It also was a much louder affair. As everyone retreated to the verandah but most were in slumberland well before the lights were extinguished at 9.30 pm.

Hours Worked: Clearing: 33 hours
Building: 48 hours
Survey work: 20

Day 4

Wednesday, 26th March 2014

Very little rain and exploring the fens

The inclement weather has settled in. It was a windy and less welcoming dawn although little water has yet been delivered into the tank.

By 7.30 am again everyone was pursuing some project or another except for Chris who is still recovering from some sort of lurgi.

The Track gang set off wog for Bowarrady determined to make it through to the lake. They pushed and shoved and cleared the track for a further 1 kilometre when they came to a huge fallen log extending far into either side of the proposed route. At that stage at about 12.30 they abandoned the task for the day and decided that they would finish the way through to the lakeside without the vehicle support on the morrow

Two of the carpentry crew (Noel and Eric) secured the roof to the generator shed. Neville's attempt to paint the shed doors were foiled by an untimely light shower that washed some of the freshly applied paint off. Harold though was busily ticking off lots of smaller jobs including fixing the insect screens on the windows, and covering the holes in the ceiling caused by water damage. Gav and Barry fixed the flashing on the roof ridge and then determined to stop further water damage by lifting the sagging ceiling with a stud in the middle of the main living area. This is only temporary but may need to be permanent next trip to stop further leaks into the walls and ceiling.

Gav punched every nail on the deck while Barry went to work on the door to the living area. So that it would cease jamming on the floor. There was great but less obvious progress in making the barracks both habitable and presentable.

The Fearless Leader took the Survey Crew down to Lake Coomboo to better define the route between Coomboo and Lake Allom. With careful navigation by Greg they located part of the route and bush-bashed their way through to almost the end of the road. They then resolved that on the morrow they would be dropped off at the northern end of this section on the Woralie track and define the way through to be collected by the F.L at the southern outlet. Furthermore the F.L volunteered to start clearing the track marked up the hill towards them. They then returned to check out Lake Coomboo and noting how low the water level was and the number of dying trees near the barracks as a result of the drought. They also came to a consensus that the best site for the Coomboo Shelter on the George Haddock Track would be the disturbed site adjacent to the Barracks on the northern side.

Meanwhile back at the Lake Allom barracks the team had received a visit from the Natural Resource Ranger for the northern part of the island Jim Kellaway. He had noted that FIDO's working party in December resulted in many dingo scats under the barracks and wondered what this renovation may result in. He was also able to provide a little more of the history of the barracks and that he was the person who installed the existing steps.

After lunch the outing was to the fens and Moon Point. The weather was overcast and we were depressed as stories rolled in of very good rainfalls "Elsewhere" and a man drowning in a Sydney flash flood but so far in our first four days the total rainfall would not have amounted to 10 mm of rain. It is so dry that trees are dying including some large Scribbly Gums however the most common trees to be observed dying are Monotoccas, Brush Box, Banksia, particularly *B integrifolia*.

In the Fearless Leader's vehicle the occupants composed a Haiku inspired by the drought:

*The trees are dying
Climate change and pests are rife
Life's ephemeral*

The group ventured briefly into the fens and then went on to Moon Point where some became immersed. There was a brief diversion to see the mangroves of Yidney Creek on the return to camp.



There were afternoon field excursions. This intrepid excursion group briefly visited the Puthoo fens

The Happy Hour was particularly happy. When everyone returned from the fens outing, the stay behinds were queueing up waiting for the casks to be presented.

Hours Worked: Clearing: 30 hours

Building: 48 hours

Survey work: 21

Day 5 Thursday, 27th March 2014 The Drought Has Broken

Overnight the tank was filled to overflowing and Lake Allom rose by 150 mm. The rain poured, leaks were discovered in the roof of the barracks despite the extensive work done. The water poured down the road and left the Generator shed awash. There were several sodden campers.

As the bedraggled volunteers waded in for breakfast it was quickly decided to move to Plan B for the day. The Survey team abandoned their proposed survey. The builders however were not deterred until it was discovered that the generator that had worked perfectly up until 9.30 pm refused to fire up enough to operate any power tools.

Plan B meant that the Fearless Leader brought forward the proposed trip to the Happy Valley dump and cleaned up the area and took a small team for a run down the beach. The track had firmed up enormously.

A stop to check on the monitoring at Lake Allom revealed the extent of the lake level rise. However the monitoring stations registered no sediment flowing to the lake. The Dibing monitoring station on the road showed significant deflation around the monitoring station and this resulted in the station being moved about 60 metres to the east on the return.

At Happy Valley there was a further and closer inspection of the Abrus area and a review of the spraying that Greg Orr had done there. Then it was to the dump where the rubbish was unloaded and the FIDO shelter to consider the placement of the Abrus Poster.

The vehicle was refueled (\$2.20 per litre for diesel) and some Biblical wine and bread procured before returning to the barracks to learn that all efforts to entice the generator into full power failed. Without power the productivity of the group would diminish to zero as the weather had stopped the planned outdoor work

With the weather forecast predicting another two very wet days and not being able to achieve any productive output once all the power tool batteries were flat and the weather forecasts predicting more rain, it was resolved that we would break camp in the morning and suspend the working bee.

In the meantime Noel and Eric proceeded to execute Harold's plans for the doors to the Generator Shed. They worked on it all day and at the end of the day had a beautiful pair of door finished and hung and the empty generator shed finished and secure with locks etc.



Noel and Eric using up the last of the power to complete the doors to secure the Generator shed

People tried to find work scraping down the doors and preparing them for painting. However some leaks were found in the roof with a few drips to be found dripping on to the living room floor. These are inconvenient and will need to be fixed in finer weather.

The heavy overnight rain that had filled the tank added a 5,tonne load to the tank-stand and this caused one of the stumps to subside. This is a matter that will be rectified in the next working bee in June when other work including some tree lopping and gutter guards will be dealt with. .

After lunch Chris led a small contingent to Lake Coomboo to reinstall the rain gauge on a new more solid foundation, a large sleeper instead of a polythene pipe. Unfortunately they had left the spirit level behind and needed the laptop to switch it on. So the Fearless Leader returned to fine-tune the gauge and to activate it. That turned out to be just as well because by the estimates at Lake Allom there were another 100 mm of rain overnight and the rain-gauge records will be very useful in assessing the impact of this major fall and other rainfall events.

Then the rest of the afternoon was spent packing up and tidying up except for the door makers. Luckily we were able to locate a gas light that were able to illuminate the barracks in the absence of electricity.

Despite having to call off the working bee two days early a huge amount had been accomplished in a very short time and it was a very Happy Hour as we reviewed the week, cemented new friendships and made future plans. All were enthusiastic about the prospects for this walk.

Hours Worked:

Clearing: 30 hours including Happy Valley trip
Building: 24 hours **Survey work: 0**

Day 6 **Friday, 28th March 2013** **National Parks Day**

After continuous rain during the night whole camp stirred at 5.30 am to pack and load ready to exit. Two vehicles were booked to return via Maryborough to drop off Eric and Pam and search for Maurice's phone. They were scheduled to depart for the three hour drive to Kingfisher Resort at 7.00 am but there was a short delay. The Fearless Leader couldn't find his wallet with the barge tickets. Eventually a very sodden wallet (without the barge tickets) was found on top of the gravity feed water tank and the group departed at 7.15. The other party left soon after and were able to make a smooth uninterrupted run down the beach, have coffee at Eurong and be in Rainbow Beach at 11.00 am when the other vehicles still hadn't reached the mainland.

There is little more to describe as the group were delivered to their respective homes or vehicles dodging heavy falls between patches of sunshine on the way home with luckily not enough water across the roads to stop us at any stage. We were all home by 5.00 p.m.

Hours Worked: Clearing: 0 hours

Building: 0 hours

Survey work: 0



The tank-stand had a new deck made up with sleepers that formerly flanked Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora)'s shores. When the 5 tonnes of water were added one post wouldn't carry the full load and subsided a little

NOTE: 29th March marked the 6th anniversary of George Haddock's death in 2008.