



# THE BABBLER



## News from Gluepot Reserve Spring 2023

### 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations.

On Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> September, Gluepot celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

This occasion not only showcased what has been achieved at Gluepot over this time, but also acknowledged the dedicated volunteers who have made it all happen. The foresight and vision of the original committee has been followed, and current volunteers and Rangers display the same amount of enthusiasm and diligence that was present at the start, in 1997.

Participants were welcomed by Ian Falkenberg, the current Chairman. Ian acknowledged the great work that Gluepot's first Chairman Mr John English had achieved in the first few years of transitioning Gluepot from pastoral property to private conservation reserve (1997 to 2000). Dr David Baker-Gabb (keynote speaker, Previous Director of BLA and an original Gluepot Committee Member) gave an insight into how Gluepot became a private conservation reserve and the importance of Gluepot to bird conservation. Other presenters were John Barkla (previous Board member of BirdLife Australia), Ian Falkenberg (Gluepot Committee member 1999 - 2020 and Chairman since 2020), and Duncan MacKenzie (Gluepot Committee secretary 1997 – 2000 and Gluepot Chairman/Secretary 2000 – 2020).

Ian Falkenberg touched on the unique set of skills, characteristics and strengths that our volunteers bring to Gluepot that enables the Gluepot community to contribute and play a key role in protecting this important mallee landscape.

*Local communities have a culture that encourages and admires collective effort. We feel a responsibility to help each other, and things work better if we collaborate and all pitch in and help.*

*Gluepot collaborates at many levels, and we don't have many organizations of scale that can do everything by themselves. But, we can make up for that, and more, by collaborating and working together. It is the power of collective effort that makes the difference and Gluepot does this exceedingly well.*

*Gluepot has also been extraordinarily resourceful in its achievements. The key is to manage these areas on a landscape scale, in partnership with the community, Government agencies, neighbours and most importantly our volunteers, who are the backbone of Gluepot. Working together as a group will achieve much more and with less effort.*

During the morning session, Anne Morphett sang her (Gluepot) version of "What a wonderful World".

This was followed by the launch of the "**Gluepot Country Cooking**" Cookbook. The book, compiled and edited by Margaret Falkenberg, Anne Morphett, Duncan MacKenzie and Brian Donaghy, was published as part of this 25 year Anniversary.

Ian Falkenberg provided an insight into the development of the cookbook.

*Like any cookbook, Country Cooking has taken an enormous amount of work to coordinate and produce. Apart from the design and publishing, this entire book has been produced by volunteers.*

*A huge thankyou to Margaret Falkenberg and Anne Morphett. These two ladies have been instrumental in getting the book off the ground and embracing the idea of a cookbook.*

*Members of the Gluepot Management Committee and Friends of Gluepot have all made a significant contribution to produce the cookbook. The recipes are delightfully simple and a cuisine to suit all tastes.*

*Volunteers are the most valuable asset at Gluepot. The volunteers are the backbone of the reserve and the glue that holds this family together. The volunteers have made Gluepot what it is today – a truly special place.*

*At the end of a days activities in the field, there is nothing better than to gather with like minded people in the breeze way next to the kitchen. Here many stories are told about peoples experiences, knowledge and tales of events. The variety of menus that have been prepared in the Gluepot Kitchens is truly amazing and this book has become a way to recognize some of these unique recipes.*

*Our special thanks must go to the editing committee, especially Margaret Falkenberg and Anne Morphett for collating all the recipes that were submitted, and for their untiring commitment to put this book together. Thanks also to the members of Gluepot Management Committee who have dedicated time and assistance to make this book possible.*

A delicious lunch was provided by the hard-working Catering Committee, lead by Margaret Falkenberg. Our new well appointed kitchen, which is intended to support our volunteers, is being put to good use.

In the afternoon, visitors were given a bus tour of Gluepot to “show and tell” some of the important projects undertaken on the reserve, and also went on a walking tour around the Homestead buildings. During these activities, presentations were given by current members of the committee responsible for the running of these projects. This included information about prescribed burns, weed control, dam closures and revegetation, weed control, feral animal control, bird banding, insect surveys and Looper research and our Education Courses.

There were tours of the comprehensive library, the telecommunications infrastructure, state of the art solar power system, weather station and the general layout of the Homestead area. While many people had to leave after the days’ proceedings, there was a good attendance at the dinner where people were entertained by a captivating presentation by Chris Grant.

The progress that has been made at Gluepot is truly amazing, and leaves one in awe of the dedicated volunteers who made it happen.



*Ian Falkenberg*



*Dr David Baker-Gabb*



*John Barkla*



*Duncan MacKenzie*

*Photos by Ian Williams*



**Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Gluepot Reserve.**

*Photos by Ian Williams*





## News from the Management Board

### Retirements

This year we have had 3 members retire from the Management Committee.

**Don and Chris Lill** have volunteered at Gluepot since the beginning in 1997. They have been major contributors to setting up the Bird Atlassing Sites and Malleefowl Grids, the Visitor's Centre, the Bird Hides and troughs, the Walks, and the Campground Toilets.

They were also founding members of the Friends of Gluepot Reserve, taking on various executive roles within that group.



They have spent endless hours undertaking weed control and revegetation projects, checking bird atlas sites, helping to coordinate the annual Malleefowl surveys, and participating in the Biodiversity studies.

Don was the Welfare, Health and Safety person on the Committee.

Chris took responsibility for the Gluepot merchandise that is on display for sale at the Visitors' Centre. She upgraded the Plant List for Gluepot, and is the presenter for the Plant ID Education Course—"A Beginner's Guide to Mallee Vegetation at Gluepot". Another example of her contribution was the book she compiled as a tribute to Duncan MacKenzie on his retirement.

Gluepot has benefitted enormously from their involvement. Appropriately, the Bird Hide on the Emu Tank corner is named the "Don & Chris Lill Bird Hide". They were both always happy to share their extensive knowledge about all aspects of the environment



### **John Gitsham**



John initially volunteered at Gluepot in 2001, and then became a committee member in 2003 and served on the Committee until 2018, returning again in 2021.

His philosophy has always been - "Conservation through Education".

He saw a need for Environmental Education and suggested that Gluepot hold Education courses. His idea was embraced by the Committee. Consequently he applied for a Grant and in 2003, 5 courses were advertised. The shearing shed was converted to a multifunction building, hosting the courses.

Up to 13 courses a year have been held since then, and John always presented the popular course on "An Introduction to Birds and Birdwatching"

He took up the mantle of Vice President of Birds SA in 2014, then President from 2017 - 2021. He continued to promote Gluepot through Birds SA. Due to his association with both groups, he was able to facilitate the affiliation of Birds SA with BirdLife Australia.

### **In Memory. Don Gobbett.**

Don first became involved with Gluepot in 2001, as an Assistant Ranger with his wife Estelle.

He volunteered to write the history of Gluepot, and in 2006, his book "Gluepot Remembered – from Sheep Paddock to Conservation Reserve" was published. The book was launched at 2 events, in the SA Museum, and in Waikerie.

Born in Barmera on 11/3/1938, Don was brought up in Berri, and educated at the Adelaide Teachers College and the Adelaide University. He became a secondary school teacher, and spent from 1964 to 1972 providing teacher education in Rhodesia. On return to Australia, and living in the Adelaide Hills, he published an anthology of 60 of his own poems titled "A reed at the water's edge".

Sadly, Don passed away on March 1<sup>st</sup> this year. He was always hopeful that someone else would write the next chapter in Gluepot's History.



## Current Gluepot News.

### Grants

We have been successful in our applications for various Grants over the last 12 months.

- **Invertebrate studies.** A Friends of Parks Inc. “Small Grant” has meant that we now have equipment for gathering and storing insects, moths etc. to increase our knowledge of the invertebrate population at Gluepot. It is hoped that this will lead to the identification of the Looper moth – whose caterpillars have been devastating the Eucalypts at Gluepot and the wider Mallee region.



- **Cameras.** A Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board grant has allowed us to purchase motion sensing cameras. These are placed in the field to monitor bird hides, fox baiting stations, Malleefowl nests and spots along the Electric fence. We also have a Bore Camera to check for activity inside the pygmy possum boxes.

- **Fire Management.** A previous grant from the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board has allowed us to update fire fighting equipment as well as install new information signs regarding Fire Management, and new directional signs.

- **Native Grasses.** Using a Linking Landscapes Grant, we are setting up a trial of planting perennial native grasses in one of the closed dam areas. This should support our birds and improve feeding and foraging habits.

**Revegetation.** Also, as part of the Linking Landscapes Grant to rehabilitate filled in dam sites, 130 seedlings have been planted at Old Gluepot, Final Dam, and Whistler. A willing group of volunteers planted, guarded, mulched and watered these plants and have committed to continue the watering programme. Unfortunately, feral goats have been attracted by the water, and the guards have been strengthened. The Judas goat program is being reinstated to control an increase in feral goat numbers following a few good seasons. Hopefully we can win that battle!



### New Amenities



Photo Mark Thistelton

We have started the process of replacing the old outdated amenities at the Visitors Centre and the 3 campgrounds. These amenities will be disabled friendly, and will meet the demand created by an increase in visitation.

The Visitor Centre and the Sitella facilities will be completed in November 2023. The new amenities at Babbler and Bellbird will be completed in 2024 subject to funding. Many volunteer hours have already gone into this project. Thankyou to everyone who has contributed.

### Track Maintenance

We recently called for volunteers for a Weed Blitz. Patches of ice plant near the



homestead were sprayed, but due to a lack of rain, there were not a lot of other weeds to be dealt with at this time, so our attention turned to track maintenance. The Grass Wren walk, which was becoming overgrown, has had a really good tidy up.

L Photo Dave Georg

R Photo Sandy Dickson



## Recent Rangers

### **Martin and Janet Toland**

Martin, often together with his wife Janet, has been coming to Gluepot from New Zealand to volunteer as a Ranger since 2001. On his last 2 visits, Martin has been instrumental in creating the new kitchen out of a disused storage area. He has used his carpentry skills to the long term benefit of Gluepot.

Thank you Martin for all your recent hard work, and to you both for your longstanding commitment to Gluepot



### **Deidre and Ian Kerr**



Ian and Deidre first visited Gluepot in 2015. The Rangers at that time were Jock and Ros Bromell. It so happened that the next Ranger was unable to come. Ian and Deidre were inducted as Assistant Rangers by Jock and Ros, and then, after consultation with Duncan MacKenzie, they became the Rangers for the next 2 months. To this day they feel it was a privilege to be inducted by such wonderful and professional Rangers.

They now call themselves “Gluepot Tragic’s”. They love the environment, and enjoy the fact that there is always a challenge, with issues coming out of left field. The variety of work ensures that they exercise both mind and body

## **Future Happenings.**

- Our next **Working Bee** will be in April 2024. Keep an eye out for this event as we firm up our dates.
- The **Education Courses** still to come this year are :-
  - Studying Insects at Gluepot 4-5 November
  - Getting to know Reptiles 18-19 November
- The **Christmas Bar-B-Que** will be held on Saturday 11th November.

## **Merchandise**

Our newest addition to the publications in the Visitor’s Centre is the “Gluepot Country Cooking” Book.

The entire book has been produced by volunteers. Recipes were submitted by Rangers, Assistant Rangers, volunteers, Friends of Gluepot, donors and supporters, researchers, the women from pastoral properties and many other community members. It is a unique publication, and has many stunning photographs of the birds to be found at Gluepot Reserve.

This is a great buy at \$30 a book, and an excellent way to support Gluepot Reserve.

This Newsletter is only available electronically. We hope to collate about 3 a year.

Please contact Sue Nettlefold (jdsnet@gluepot.org.au) or Bronwyn Mart (gibbart@bigpond.com) if you would like to contribute.

