

Mt Ive Station & Gawler Ranges Trip

Report by Frank Austin, photos Pat Austin.

A week of activities from Friday 1st May to Friday 8th May 2015 organised by Mike Fewtrell for the Australian Camper Trailers Group <http://www.campertrailers.org>.

The Gawler Ranges are a range of stony hills in South Australia to the north of Eyre Peninsula. The Eyre Highway (Ceduna – Port Augusta) skirts the south of the ranges and the Stuart Highway (Port Augusta – Glendambo – Alice Springs) is to the east. The Gawler Ranges National Park and Gawler Ranges Conservation Reserve are in the ranges north of Wudinna and adjacent to Mount Ive Station. This is also adjacent to Lake Gairdner which is the fourth largest salt lake in Australia being over 160kms long and 48kms wide; the salt is over 1.2 metres thick in places. People travelled from New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia to participate in the week long event. Altogether 27 trailers and caravans turned up and talk about wimps. Most of the units hooked themselves up to powered sites.

Members of the SE4WD Club had been invited earlier on to participate in this event. Three members with camper trailers had registered to attend the week. Mt Ive Station is 129 kms north west from Iron Knob. Pat and Frank Austin travelled up to Iron Knob on the Thursday and stayed at a free camp site for the night. Margaret and Jim Biggs travelled up on the Friday straight to Mt Ive. Paul Bullough was originally coming until his wife arranged a surprise holiday at Peterborough while Paul was being registered for the Mt Ive trip.

Scenes of Iron Knob



The road to Mt Ive is very demanding and badly corrugated for the first 30 kms. Tyre pressure definitely needs to be dropped for both vehicle and trailer. Speeds varied from 50kmph, to 60kmph, 70kmph, and finally 80kmph. We met up with a few other camper trailed enthusiasts at Iron Knob at travelled in convoy. The road is not shown on most Eyre Peninsula maps as it is too far north. Pat found an old RAA map “Upper Eyre Peninsula & Far West Coast (Map Number 11 May 2006)” which showed plenty of details of the road to Mt Ive.

On the road to Mt Ive



Entrance to Mt Ive Station



The staff at Mt Ive try their best to look after you. Hot water is provided by burning wood 24 hours a day in “Donkeys”. The camper trailer group were provided with 3 large mallee stumps to burn in our camp fire. We now know that it takes less than 24 hours to reduce a stump to ashes.

On day 2 Jim and Frank used their 4WD recovery skills to position the next stump on the old fire using rigger's chains to drag the stump with Jim's 4WD.

How to move a stump



Tracks and Drives around Mt Ive

There is a \$50.00 charge to access the tracks on Mt Ive Station and for this you get a booklet with information of what there is do in the area and a key to get through the locked gate on the road to Lake Gairdner.

2X2 Tracks

- Lake Gairdner – 70Km – 4 hours (need key from Mt Ive)
 - Salt Lake 168km long and 40km wide
 - Organ Pipes – The Castle
 - Embankment (stone dam) built 1896
- Organ Pipes – The Pillars - 28km – 1.5. hours
- Wombat Holes – 10km – 1 hour
- Ross's Grave Yard – near homestead

4X4 Tracks

- Flight Path (includes The Lookout) – 29km – 4-5 hours
- Billy Can Drive – 29km – 2-3 hours
- Horse Shoe Loop – 19km – 1.5 to 2 hours
- Mt Scott – 14km – 2.5 hours
- The Lookout – 14km – 1.5 to 2 hours
- Mt Ive Summit – 8km – 1 hour

Mt Ive Summit



Flight Path (at Heaven's Gate)



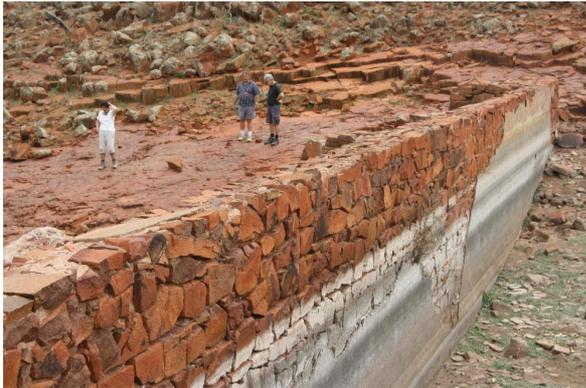
Flight Path (Organ Pipes)



Lake Gairdner



The Embankment



Tour of the Gawler Ranges

We did a day trip as a group around the Gawler Ranges National Park. It was a trip of over 230km so it pays to have a good map of the park so that you can find the campgrounds for toilets. We stopped at the Chillunie Campground for a morning rest break. We then explored the Kolay Mirica Falls and drove onto the Old Paney Homestead for a picnic lunch. And yes there were toilets available here. The Department of Environment and natural Resources has an excellent pamphlet available which shows all the tracks in the park.

RFDS

The Royal Flying Doctor flies to Mount Ive twice a month to provide a medical clinic for the residents. During our stay the RFDS was scheduled to arrive and anyone who wanted to see a doctor could put their name down on the list. The camper trailer group decided to take a collection for the RFDS and a large amount of money was passed onto them.

Conclusion

Mt Ive Station is a destination with lots of things to do and see. There are plenty of challenging 4WD tracks. The club should put on a trip next year in the April school holidays to allow young families to come. For the workers take a week off work and come with a trailer, caravan or tent. Normally 4WD clubs come here at Easter but that only gives you a couple of days to explore the place. You can get more information from Mike Fretwell's report at http://www.campertrailers.org/gawler_ranges_meet.htm Also you can see more photos on the SE4WD Club's web site.