

Wright Bay Trip Report – 10th to 13th February 2016

By Syd Greig



Wright Bay Camping Area



Wright Bay

Wright Bay is a place I used to visit 40 years ago on a motor bike and it's still owned by the same family. So Jim Biggs and I thought it would be a good base camp for our Beachport/Robe trip. Jim kindly called in to my new Meningie house to help put a small boat on top of my 4WD. We travelled together and it was an easy 2 hour drive. When we arrived we found a spot to fit Frank and Pat Austin in when they arrived later on in the day. I took my caravan and Frank and Jim were bringing camper trailers.

Jim and I set up camp before Frank came at about 4pm. While Frank and Pat were setting up their camper trailer Jim and myself decided to go for a beach drive. We let our tyres down to 25 psi and I got Jim to pack his recovery strap just in case. I decided to leave my vehicle at base camp as it has a winch which might come handy later on. Jim and I headed down on to the beach to look for a sandbar or gutter for whiting. I found a really nice spot but Jim's car was slowing down as the sand had become very soft. We started to go sideways and sliding at 45 degrees. We dropped tyres to 15 psi but it was so soft we were hard on the bottom. So Max Trax were employed full time and if ever one method of retrieval of a bogged vehicle worked to save Jim's car this was it.

Slowly, 1 metre at a time, we started to make ground and got up above high tide marks. The sand was finally hard enough to drive out. The lessons we learnt were pack a shovel and a compressor even if you are just going for a look. We had my car as backup and it was not far away, so no real danger just a lesson for us all.



Syd's boat and caravan in a sheltered area



Jim and Frank roughing it in their tent trailers

The next day we decide to go exploring. Frank and I went with Jim as I was full of confidence by now (???) as we had Max Trax, compressor, and recovery strap. When we went to the Robe information centre we were warned about some very soft sand on the beaches. Well Jim said “Yes we already know that but thanks for telling us”. I knew of some tracks just out of town and sure enough we found some really good interesting tracks. There were some really good sand hills as part of the tracks we were on. We avoided the beach sections as we could see others had been bogged. So we spent all day following maps. I met some old friends from Meningie there and they were catching crays and snapper almost every day, so WE NEED A BIGGER BOAT.

On Sunday Frank, Jim and I decided to launch my tinnie into the sea. We went out about 800 metres to a sandy bottom looking for whiting but I will admit I was a bit nervous. We all put on borrowed life jackets (thank you Nick). We only had about 150mm of free board and a big swell. We tried a few spots but to no avail, just puffer fish and very small tommies. We also tried beach fishing but with no luck.

We did see some massive rigs come in to the camping area. One in particular was a 40ft motor home towing a 7 metre car trailer, with a 4WD on the bottom and a 16ft half cabin boat on top. It had hydraulic arms to raise the boat up. I guess it all cost close to 600K. I am sorry for those who missed the trip but we had an absolute blast from happy hours at night to a fully cooked breakfast with Pat and Frank. Thanks from Jim and myself for the breakfast.

Just a quick note about my place at Meningie. I have purchased 4 acres 1 mile out of town with lake views. Frank has named my place The Meningie Outstation and proposed a club trip in the June long weekend staying at my place. For those who intend to come tell me what you would like to do. We can go on the old Gold Escort Tracks, we can go to Salt Creek or drive onto the beach at Tea Tree Crossing. If you are bringing children then bring canoes for the lakes or Coorong, or we can go for a night drive to show them emus and kangaroos. If that's boring I will take you out spearing flounder at night. We can put out my 75 metre net for Coorong mullet but a few of us will have to camp by the Coorong as I must be within 100 metres of my net at all times.

I have just put power on to my bottom shed 70 metres from the house so power is available only for those needing it for medical reasons, and not for running air conditioners all night. A house toilet will be available but please bring your own portable toilet if you can. Dump point available at Meningie – please no burying waste in my paddock. I have a pile of wood 15 metres wide and 5 metres high. It is so big I am employing the local CFS truck to help get it going so that it will burn for the whole 3 days. The CFS will also keep an eye of the fire and all those camping should donate some money for this service (suggestion from Frank Austin). Children must be supervised at all times.

I am a tour guide for the local museum and I can offer a discount price for a group to go through the museum. We don't do freebies as we are all volunteers here. It is well worth seeing. We do have the cheese factory restaurant and the bowling club has meals on Friday night. The hotel has had a revamp so it's all here. If people want to go fishing I can show you where to go. If each couple camping here gives Jim 5 dollars then that can be our bait money. So talk to Jim and tell him what you want to do.

Cheers, Syd Greig, The Coorong Kid

Footnote from Jim and Syd

How Frank tried to board the boat. Sorry Frank but this was just so funny. Jim fell over laughing and I just sat there flabbergasted. We had unloaded my 12ft tinnie off my Patrol and pushed it out loaded up with our rods and life jackets. I put the outboard on, started it, and put it in neutral. Then Frank put one leg in the boat just as a wave hit which lifted the boat up and Frank's only leg on the bottom. I looked away and back and no sign of Frank. Just his hand holding on to the side of the boat. He was fully clothed and in a metre of water. Well sorry mate but Jim and myself were inconsolable and could only see the funny side of it. Jim made light of it and said "Hey Frank would you like a life jacket so we can find you next time?"