

Wind north, weather excellent. Continued to Campbell Hill where we met an RAAF Sergeant from the observation post there. [It was in the closing stages of World War II.] The ridges have characteristic ironstone capping. Steep descent to Blowhole Creek which flows between steeply dipping banded shale and grit. The valley is U-shaped which may account for the strong wind blowing down it and possibly the name of the creek itself. Creek flowing strongly but slightly brackish. Hut on the beach. Freshwater soak on the hill."

Monday May 28 Sun rose 7:15 "--fished before breakfast but the tide was too strong". Easy walk to Aaron's Hole Creek with grassy undulating gullies. "Aaron's Hole Creek is very precipitous--just a gash in the rocks about 300 ft deep--and was dry."

"From here the going became very difficult chiefly because of the ubiquitous gorse and cassia scrub. [That's what I wrote at the time, not knowing any better. Kangaroo thorn, acacia paradoxa, would be better]. Soon became badly scratched. Forced to change into long trousers and long sleeves." [We were still pulling out prickles two weeks later]. "The terrain became very precipitous and we found that the easy way into Tent Rock Creek was to jump down the cliff, relying on the bushes to stop us. Good water and lunch here."

"To this point the 'gorse' had been mostly on the western side of the valleys but from here it covered the whole of the hills and we made only a mile or so in four hours to darkness. With difficulty found a spot flat enough to sleep on and had to dig for water in an un-named gully. Plenty of driftwood on the beach for a fire but a very cold night--found a beer bottle! Rocks mainly sandstone, steeply dipping SE."

Tuesday May 29 "Weather fine, wind north. Left this unsavory spot as rapidly as possible." By now we had evolved a technique for negotiating this type of country.

- * Stay near the sea on the cliff top
- * Follow the outcrops
- * Look for kangaroo pads
- * Choose your way out of the valley before going into it and pick your way in to match.

[The Heysen Trail avoids this problem by going inland after Blowhole Creek and not returning to the coast until Tapanappa Creek]



Heysen Trail from Tapanappa Ridge [file photo]

We were now making good progress.

"In the second gully after Porpoise Head John K fell heavily, gashed his hand badly, severing a small artery. Doug dressed it effectively, and with the aid of a thumb stick John made it to Deep Creek for lunch.

Good, very cold, water but little wood. An attractive little harbour. This creek has a very steep eastern face and needs almost climbing skills to get out. We followed a kangaroo out of a later gully".

"Most of the valleys to the east had running water; eucalypts and ti-tree began to appear: progress was easier. Layered rocks, hornstone with softer layers between were very characteristic of this area. In

mid-afternoon Doug lost his sheath knife and John K. fell I on his hand again, necessitating redressing.

Gullies still very steep but easier to negotiate. Yacca now plentiful. We were struck with the large numbers of small rosettes 1/2 inches across with sticky hairy leaves, a form of Sundew. Rocks now have smaller dip and show some signs of folding."

[This is where the present Heysen Trail returns to the coast]

"Made Boat Harbour Creek comfortably and had a good wash. This was a good camp spot with plenty of wood and water and fairly sheltered. Found a small, apparently seaworthy, dinghy among the driftwood piled on the beach."

Wednesday May 30

"Weather fine, wind north. From here the country has been largely cleared and sheep tracks were seen occasionally. On the summits of ridges busbfires have left skeletons of scrub covered in charcoal--rather dirty going. As Tunkalilla Beach is approached the well defined sheep tracks provided an easy

way round the ridges. An hour's tramp brought us to Tunkalilla a Beach, a wide shelf of alluvium some 10 feet above the sea and perhaps half a mile wide, running back to the steep scarp behind. The old James farmstead is here and seemed to be still in use. We took a boiling of silver beet from the garden. There was no evidence of the fleas about which Madigan had warned us. There were two semi-wild horses here and a number of cows that acted more wild than semi as we eyed them and the nearest fence."

"Near the end of the beach is the wreck of the Victoria, a Danish ship which ran aground during a fog on her maiden voyage. They could not get her off and she was claimed by the underwriters who removed most of her fittings but not before she had been a valuable asset to the local fishermen. A few steam valves and the stern post are all that the sea have left of her now."

"Tunkalilla Creek was reached by 11 am. It proved difficult to get out of and our practice of following sheep tracks led us to believe that this lot was made by mountain goats or ghosts because they abruptly vanished at a sheer rock wall."

[The Heysen Trail goes inland again at Tunkalilla Creek]

"Once on the top, however, the going was very easy since it was all cleared land and the gullies were all well sheep-trodden."

"Lunch at Callawonga Creek and, being ahead of schedule for the day, we cast about in search of an aboriginal camp seen by Madigan. Behind the sand hit is there was much evidence of occupation, evidently fairly recent, with several middens. Also found an old hut and a flagged pathway, Upstream the creek runs through a steep gorge and there was only one place where it was easy to get out, indicated to us by a group of timid cows who ran before us until they/we reached the top.

[The Heysen Trail is back at the coast again here].

"Overlooking Bollaraparudda Creek we found a solidly built fireplace, apparently made not from country rock but from rock carried in. Bollaraparudda Creek was running; it has cut itself a very tortuous course around bands of hard rock. Went inland to cut off a large flat headland marked by rocky outcrops running in arcs, roughly east west and sparsely timbered inland. From here it was about two miles to camp at Coolawang Creek with, as we went, excellent views along the coast as far as Newland Head. Descended a sort of rocky outcrop staircase to the creek and followed sheep tracks to camp.

"This was rather a disappointment; the creek was not flowing and a dead sheep lay in the pool behind the beach. The ground and the firewood (such as it was) were wet. Still it was soft and the wall of an abandoned house offered shelter from the wind. There were fish in the river but we were unable to persuade them to leave. Dislocated my thumb and pushed it back into place. Saw the first evidences of people; recent footprints of man, woman, child and dog; and felt like Robinson Crusoe.

Thursday 31 May

"My 21st birthday. Slept in. Ate all our surplus food for breakfast. Had a shave and felt much cleaner. From here we left the coast and struck inland, finding an excellent bridge about half a mile upstream, leading to a track and eventually a road. It should be possible to get a car down to the beach here.

[1945, remember?] We followed the road and others from it to Victor Harbour. About this time nails worked their way through my boots and I arrived at Victor with four enormous blisters. Camped by the local Scout Hall and had a fish supper.

[We had originally intended to walk all the way to Victor Harbour along the coast but the slow progress of the first two days set back our schedule]

"Home next day by train."

John Prescott