



Meets at 9.30am for 10.00am on the second Thursday of each month at Mt Claremont Community Centre, 109 Montgomery Avenue, Mt Claremont

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2018/2019 Officers

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FROM THE EDITOR'S TURRET



Marsha of Shenton Park Dog Refuge

The March Branch meeting on March 14th saw 91 attendees presented with a double-barreled dog's show, except the Shenton Park Dog Refuge representative took fright at the outset and had to be taken home. Anyway, volunteer Marsha Sullivan gave us an entertaining and informative talk and powerpoint show on the work and activities at their site as well as a history of the predecessor organisations in Perth starting in the early 1900's. The outstanding voluntary contributions of herself and a core of others, mindful of the welfare of our canine friends, is to be much lauded. I was pleased to note that the Shenton Park refuge has received a grant from the Synergy Community Solar Fund for a 26.5kW rooftop system estimated to save \$8640 per annum for the complex, including heating and cooling of the kennels, and in turn offsetting 30.5t CO2 emissions.

Our second presenter, volunteer John Davies representing Guide Dogs WA, brought a very compliant, Ambassador black Labrador – Eva, to

LOOKING AHEAD

Thursday April 11th, 10am Monthly Branch Meeting with guest speaker David Cohen from "The Post" newspaper – be prepared to grill him!

Thursday May 9th, 10am Monthly Branch Meeting with guest speaker Dr Bruce Robinson, speaking on Fathering, in his inimitable style. TBA

Thursday May 16th Excursion from Mt Claremont to New Norcia, details TBA, but including morning tea stop at Bindoon and a tour of the Benedictine buildings with lunch at the New Norcia Hotel and return via Gingin.

Thursday May 23th, 6pm Dinner at University Club, UWA, Hackett Drive, as guest of Helena Coleman, main course + salad + tea/coffee, book by May Branchmeet, cost \$40 – cash only.

Thursday June 13th, 10am Monthly Branch Meeting, speaker TBA.

Wednesday June 26th, 9.30am Special Issue health meeting (all welcome), more detailed health checks and with stalls on specialist topics plus speakers including David Beard. An extravaganza being organized by John Dingle.

August 28th – Sept 1st Tentative 4 day trip to Geraldton is being mooted in connection with the NSA Zone 114 conference, plus a tour of the district including wildflower rich areas. Possible travel by State bus using senior concessions.

Roots of April fools day are not known to this day, one notable prank came from BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) who once tricked the whole nation into believing, that spaghetti grows on trees in Switzerland.

strut her stuff. John, in common with Guide Dog's practice, raised her from a young pup, through 2 years of dedicated effort then handed her over for intensive "schooling", but saw her fail to graduate through unforeseen medical issues, so he fosters her



Colette, John & Eva

and does the rounds of organisations such as ours. Once again a huge commitment. We managed to present them both with \$120 donations as a result of Sandra's raffle and Elsie's towels, plus the proceeds of Marion's compelling rattling of their respective tin/donation dog.

We hosted NSA GM Membership and Marketing – Sandra Philpott on March 15th, who presented on the new directions taken by our organization, to an audience of about 30. Sandra spoke about the increase in advocacy activities by NSA, especially in light of the looming Federal Election. She emphasized a push into increasing strategic partnerships with a view to gaining extra members. One example is the Australian Masters Games in Adelaide this year then Perth in 2020. Other partnerships include with organisations in aged care, real estate and finance.

A party of 19 of us braved the waters of Shoalwater Bay to visit beautiful Penguin Island on March 22nd on our first excursion of the year. See article by Angela Mercer below. There is also a travelogue on an Arctic Odyssey by John Yeatman in February, Part 1 – Norway.

A TRIP TO BEAUTIFUL PENGUIN ISLAND

A lovely day trip to the Shoalwater Marine Park was taken by 19 members on Friday 22nd March. After some quick refreshment at "Pongo's" cafe we boarded the small ferry to Penguin Island. Penguin Island has the largest colony of little penguins in WA. It is adjacent to sparkling water and sandy beaches and, on landing, many of us enjoyed a tasty picnic supplied by Nicole Walton. A short stroll brought us to the Department of Parks and Wildlife Discovery Centre that houses the little colony of penguins that have been rescued and are unable to be returned to the wild. We were able to see the current resident



Penguin Island – who are the spectators?

10 penguins swim and dive in their pool to receive a lunch of whitebait.

The afternoon saw us board a boat for a trip to Seal Island. We not only had dolphins swim alongside us, but we saw sea lions basking on a beach enjoying the sun. More than 30 species of birds have been observed in the area and we were fortunate to see many pelicans and pied cormorants flying above us.

Many of us enjoyed a walk along the boardwalks on Penguin Island before returning to the ferry and our coach for the trip home. It was wonderful to see so many sea birds up close on the island, with no feral cats or other vermin to threaten them it seems to be a nursery for many species including a large breeding rookery of pelicans. A perfect sunny day with a light breeze that will be a day to remember.

Angela Mercer



Sea Lions & Pelicans, Seal Island

Penguin Island was first used by Aboriginal people up to 12,000 years ago. Legend tells the tale of a local Aboriginal girl who ran off with her lover, against the tribal law. To the north of the island is Singing Rock, where her tribe caught them, speared the lover to death and imprisoned her within the rock. Legend has it that you can hear her singing to her lover today.



ARCTIC WINTER JOURNEY

In February 2019 I left for a very different holiday - a trip to Norway and Iceland in the middle of winter. Having previously visited both countries in the summer of 2017, I expected it to be cold and the scenery somewhat starkly black and white. How wrong that assumption was. It was absolutely beautiful, beyond my descriptive ability. It was as though we were leisurely travelling through never ending Christmas Card scenery. With suitable clothing, it was quite comfortable and warm although I did find the constant need for addition and removal of clothing layers, to adjust to varying temperatures, rather tedious.

Our first destination was Oslo. Having left Perth after a very hot and humid period, arrival to below zero temperatures and snowing conditions gave the climatic changes reality. For me, the usual visitor attractions were still appealing but this time it was the unbelievable natural beauty, the snow clad buildings and roads, the frequently slippery icy surfaces and the penetrating cold winds. Each continued to reinforce the never to be forgotten memories and the huge differences to Australian conditions of only hours before, but I say that as someone who has never had to live that way or shovel snow from driveways each day.

After our stay in Oslo, and a short walk from hotel to the railway station, we travelled on the well known Flam Railway to Voss. Travelling in Komfort Class is very comfortable, with free unlimited WiFi, tea, coffee and hot chocolate and a small bar and cafe at the rear of the train. The trip was spectacular, with never ending Christmas card like scenes all the way. Powdery snow was blown by air from the train movement, even dislodged from the trees causing a beautiful falling curtain of snow. When the sun was shining, the snow glistened in a way not dissimilar to the white beach sand at home. Temperature outside varied during the trip from -3

to -7 deg. but on arrival in Voss it did not feel so cold. An enjoyable two hour fjord cruise to Myrdal allowed appreciation of the mountain scenery, admiration of the snow covered settlements and the resilience of those living here. Following a museum visit that explained the history and lifestyle during development, we returned to Voss by train.

Another train journey took us to Bergen, where our hotel was wonderfully located in the historical wharf area. Apart from the unique restored buildings and history here in old Bergen, there are many other attractions conveniently nearby. One, the popular funicular car to top of mountain with beautiful city and port views.

Next morning we were taken to board the Hurtigruten ship Polarlys. It was adequate, but important to remember that it really is a goods and ferry service to remote ports rather than a cruise ship. Sailing very close to mountains, the visibility was superb, ensuring picture card beautiful scenery as we sailed North, passing many small towns and snow covered mountains as background. There were only a few longer port stays, with limited time only allowing visits to nearby areas. One was at Alesund, a lovely, quite large, interesting town, with many Art Nouveau styled buildings, along canals in the rebuilt town centre. Next was Trondheim which was very cold (-12deg) with the wharf area and roads, including a most interesting walk from wharf to the Cathedral, snow covered. There is a mixture of old and new architecture to buildings.



North Cape, Norway

Always sailing close by snow covered land and isolated settlements, I pondered about what different lives we lead - we passed a small remote lighthouse which apparently had had the same occupants for 26 years.

We headed North to Tromsø where it was snowing heavily when we left the ship and moderately cold but a lovely experience walking in the soft powdery snow. We spent a couple of hours walking around the town where there were many beautiful old

wooden houses and shops, well stocked, with nicely displayed goods. There were also a number of large, impressive snow sculptures in a city square down toward the harbour.

Proceeding on to the high Arctic, we disembarked at the port of Honningsvåg (71deg north latitude) for a bus trip to North Cape (northern-most point of Norway). Led by a snow plough, the group of three coaches, including ours, travelled along the mountain crests. There were absolutely beautiful scenes, as though viewed from a plane, with no trees anywhere as it is well beyond the timberline. I can't describe the incredible beauty of the winter snow, this drive is memorable, a life highlight - snow covered plains either side with mountain peaks in the distance. The world globe, Exhibition Centre and Museum at North Cape were well presented and interesting.

From North Cape the ship sailed east in the Barents Sea to the final destination of Kirkenes thence driving around the area, including to the well controlled Russian border, then heading for the Snow Hotel. What a delightful establishment, and for me, most comfortable, as I had chosen to stay in a cabin rather than the ice beds housed in a large igloo structure. The outside temperature was -14deg, quite cold!

Here we also enjoyed another most wonderful experience, a sled ride (pulled by a team of ten huskies) in light and clear conditions. Surprisingly, we were allowed to drive the team for about 2kms. The scenery was amazing, with heavy deposits of light powdery snow and about 15 kms travelling



Dog sledding at Kirkenes, Norway

through groves of snow covered trees, up and down hills and across a frozen river. For me, it was beyond description to convey the beauty. A big disadvantage was that despite heavy

cold weather gear including mittens and boots over our jackets, it was impossible to find the camera beneath all the layers, and even more difficult to press the button due to the freezing conditions. My toes felt as though they had frozen solid and twice I lost my heavy gloves which had slipped off my lighter gloves worn under the mittens. It didn't really matter though, as travelling along in the silence, slipping sometimes on the slopes, it was truly beautiful, magical and repeating myself, Christmas card like. Our sled driver (musher) took some photos and on her instruction, the rear dogs turned to face us when the photo was taken. The dogs obviously love the work and seem happy together when out working.

After returning from the sled ride it began snowing quite heavily. What an absolutely magical and beautiful sight at the hotel with softly lit pathways, the igloos and the wonderfully comfortable cabins. It was a lovely feeling exploring while lightly snowing, without the wetness of rain.

John Yeatman

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