

# Soundings

EDEN KILLER WHALE MUSEUM

Established 1931

Newsletter, December, 2023

## A VISIT TO PLEASANTLY CAP THE YEAR

Just as is the case all over the world, AD 2023 is coming to a close. As the big excitement builds for the kids has past and no more counting sleeps till birthday time we all we have much to be thankful for. A little time for individual reflection on our place in the world, is very much in order. The unspeakable acts of human against human, the overwhelming of whom would just like to be left alone get on with their.

A great cap for our happening year at EKWM with progress on many fronts is our little bit to tack on to our personal thoughts notwithstanding the disruption that staff changes tend to cause. We look forward to some stability in that area as we look forward to 2024.

Visitor numbers continue to grow., not solely by the increase in cruise ship numbers, but also “off the road”. Each satisfied visitor carries with them the potential to influence their circle that they don’t miss the Museum at Eden. Satisfaction of the visit is arguably the best promo.

As the year was drawing to a close we had quite a wonderful visit by a young adult group from Milingimbi, East Arnhem Land, Bilingual School, as part of well planned, packed, 5 day tour of the south east coast of the continent.

It was the school’s first interstate visit in over a dec-

ade and teacher Mara Mars gave some insights into the way of life of this community. Their language is Yolgnu matha and songlines. They practice kinship, and hunting. It is far from being a wealthy community.

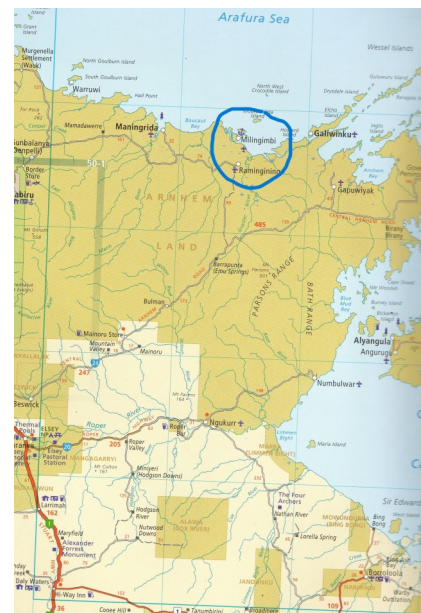
I’m sure this eager young group would have taught as well as learned, as they covered our area.

We congratulate Teacher Mara on organising this journey for these young people and wish them well in their

future endeavours.



They were a long way from Home!



## Soundings December 2023

### Passing of Dr Alex Ritchie

Foremost palaeontologist, D. Alexander Ritchie, passed away in Sydney, recently.

Scottish born, near Edinburgh, Dr Ritchie was the first member of his family to seek tertiary studies. He graduated from Edinburgh University with honours in geology and zoology in 1959.

His vehement opposition to apartheid caused him to not be able apply for a position in South Africa. Subsequently, he applied for and won the position of Curator of Fossils at the Australian Museum in Sydney. In 1968 he, his wife and two children set sail for Australia.

Dr Ritchie's predecessor Dr Harold Fletcher had travelled to Canowindra NSW to view some fossil slabs from the Devonian Period uncovered during road works. Several examples were taken to Sydney for study.

The specimens would lure Dr Ritchie back to Canowindra in 1993, to uncover one of the world's greatest fish fossil finds in what would be the pinnacle of his career.

Our paths crossed with Dr Ritchie when fish fossils were discovered in our own area. Excitement was abound when some removal was planned and executed.

Dr Keith Crook, with partner, Anne, were EKWM volunteers. They had accommodation in Eden for many years. They ultimately retired here and restoring the stone house, just down from the Museum. The regularly brought student groups to Eden to study local formations

Keith was liaising with Alex during the uncovering and removing some specimen rock for examination in Sydney. I well remember the excitement on that Saturday night when we were invited to have a look at something that was aged even further back than the Canowindra collection.

We were told that the specimen would be returned to EKWM. That did not happen but we were pleased to settle with a moulded copy.

### Maintaining the Home Base

Hats off to the crew who have doubled down on the maintenance "to do" list. There are jobs now finalised that have been begging for attention but had to simmer on the back burner for a timely opportunity to present itself. The building programme, covid and staff matters all contributed in no small manner to this delay.

One big job completed was the concreting around the outside of the building.

The white stones are gone. Hooray!. Having cheered their demise I was also cheered at their placement, thirty years ago in an effort to reduce the concreted-in look. They were always a bit of a nuisance but the building of the entrance air lock exacerbated their unfriendliness. Earlier on, it was mainly the kids who kicked and belted them about during a "boring" time waiting for Mum or Dad or Schoolteacher, or the like. After the advent of the air lock then the closure of access through the hinged door, matters became worse.

That's the good news but as the job got underway it was realised that the levels to achieve the critical watershed was not at all friendly. This of course was overcome but not before costing the volunteers more of their valuable time.

A constant worry was removed when the pot hole in the bitumen adjacent to the light house, was removed. Hole in one!



This trip hazard refused to be put down, despite our best efforts to repair it over

the years, with cold mix. A big portion of today's pedestrians are watching their phones, with scant heed to the pavement ahead. We were lucky to not have somebody go heels over phone with and someone instantly available to blame.. It is actually Council land, but make no error, an accident could have cost more than the general makeover of the area.



## Soundings December. 2023

### Snakes Alive!

An uninvited visitor (didn't pay) arrived at EKWM earlier in the month in the form of a red-bellie black snake. And a fine looking specimen at that. He was not given the usual in house greetings for which we are known but amid the sheiks and the looking for higher safety zones he/she was made feel quite the contrary.

It was of no use calling Ghost Busters the only valient course was to call Philip Sproates, a snake handler of forty years' standing. Philip soon had the situation under control, but not before friend snake felt it needed to inspect the Bert Egan light house.



Phil Sproates...Job done!

It would appear that a snake convention was happening, as I was told by an employee, that a similar visit was paid to Ron Doyle Motors' show room, no doubt looking for a ride to the meeting. Another near the CBD.

Now snakes don't worry me as long as I know where they are. They still give me a bit of a start when we might suddenly come cross . I get occasional visits from the species.

Like all, I hope, I have had family home for Christmas including two great grandsons of the age where exploration of new surroundings is compulsory. Though they are bush boys, our range of small lizard are very much different from theirs. While on that adventure they found our own 1.5 red-bellied, sadly dead.

I had a roll of bird netting sitting on top of a retaining wall. The snake had apparently entered it stated to entangle and the net fell of the wall and became hopelessly entangled where it was to sadly, perish

***Cheers to all for the new year.***

***A Special cheer for the volunteer***



CalendarNew Staff Member

A hearty welcome is extended to Linda Donaldson, who has come on board to head up the Administration department.

Linda has had extensive experience in the accounting and taxation profession and will bring that background to the position.

We wish her well during this settling in period, into what we trust, will be a long association with EKWM.

News has been received of the death of the son of the late, respected volunteers, John and Aileen Bowles, Dale, in his home town of Moama. He lost his life at the age of sixty. Dale was volunteering in the role of fireman, trying to extinguish a vehicle fire at the time of his passing. A fitting tribute was given by an officer. on National Breakfast Television

It was to Dale's that John moved when he left Eden as his health began to fail.

Full Marks to the Board

KWM has a history dating back some decades to encourage children to visit and learn while they do so. We have had a policy to admit for no charge any children's group from within the Shire for no charge. We have given favourable consideration on request from groups from outside our area. We have made annual end of year donations to the two town schools, Towamba and St Joey's, until it demise.

We endeavour to keep the children's (particularly) admission fees low to encourage family parties.

The Board has decided to make available an annual Scholarship for our year 12 students who are looking to move on to tertiary learning. It is of a not inconsiderable value.

Now more than ever it is tough for kids of lower income families, particularly when living away from home, is a necessity, then considering their H

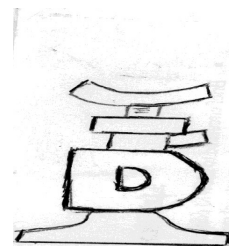
The first awardee has been chosen. Congratulations to the winner and the Board and EKWM.

January

1st New Year's Day  
 3rd Crystal Symphony 10AM  
 6th Seabourn Odyssey Arr. 7AM  
 7th Disney Wonder Arr 09 AM  
 9th Europa Arr 8AM  
 12th Silver Whisper 08 AM  
 14th Queen Elizabeth Arr 08AM  
 15th Norwegian Spirit Arr 11AM  
 17th Norwegian Spirit AM 2M  
 22nd Disney Wonder Arr 09 AM  
 26th Australia Day  
 28th Coral Princess Arr 9AM  
 29th Vasco Da Gama Arr 15.30  
 30th School returns

February

3rd Disney Wonder Arr 10 AM  
 5th Azmara Journey Arr 7.30  
 8th Norwegian Spirit Arr 11AM  
 10th Norwegian Spirit Arr 11AM  
 13th Silver Whisper 07 AM  
 14th Viking Sky Arr 8AM  
 16th Viking Neptune 8AM



We should all rise on New Year's morning and kiss the ground we walk on. We are indeed the words of Donald Horne "the lucky country".....

In my wild erratic fancy visions come to me of Clancy.....  
*And the bush hath friends to meet him, and their kindly voices  
 greet him*

*In the murmur of the breezes and the river on its bars,  
 And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended,  
 And at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars.*

I wish you all, health and happiness *Jack*