

Goulburn River – Shepparton to Moama, 19-24th November 2017



This was the third leg of the journey down the Goulburn River.

In 2015 we paddled from Blue Gums Caravan Park (near Eildon) to Seymour. In 2016 we paddled from Seymour to Shepparton.

For this trip the paddlers were Wayne Hooper and Libby Robertson, Simon and Anne Langsford, Don McDonald and Peter McLeod. Wayne and Libby hired touring kayaks, Don had his Sea Lion, Simon and Anne paddled their Rogues and Peter had a Dagger Coorong. The longer kayaks made for easy paddling in the river and managed the small gravel race rapids that crossed the river occasionally. However, everyone enjoyed the extra push we got from the environmental flow release of water from the up-stream dams.



Simon and Anne met up with Wayne and Libby in Moama on Friday 17th. The pull out point was checked and the local pub assessed for dinner (it was recommended). On Saturday, 18th, we loaded Simon and Anne's kayaks and gear into Wayne and Libby's car, then leaving the Langsford car in Moama we all set off for Shepparton. The best kayak straps we had were the locking straps, so it would have saved time if we had remembered that Anne's keys were on her main key ring locked in the car and Simon's were safely in the glovebox where they usually live.

Eventually we were set up in Shepparton, had done the fresh food shopping and then had a quiet afternoon looking for a good put in spot and waiting for Don and Peter to arrive, before going to the pub for dinner.

Day 1 paddling, Sunday 19th, about 36km

We set off at about 8:30am having used the kayak trollies to move the loaded kayaks from the camp ground down the fairly steep bank to the water's edge.



Not long after paddling under the road bridge, where we finished last year's trip, we came to some small rapids. Thinking they were the rapids marked on the map we were glad when everyone got through them easily, however a much larger rock wall was further downstream and these rapids did slow us up as Peter and Libby opted to portage while Simon, Anne, Wayne and Don paddled through, only touching a couple of hidden rocks.

The gentle paddling, warm weather and beautiful calm scenery had a soporific effect on Peter who must have dozed off and snagged himself on a dead tree. After lunch he woke up and concentrated more on enjoying himself.

We found a campsite about 36km along the river. The bank was fairly steep which gave us all a good walk up and down as we set up camp. Everyone did tie up their kayak, well out of the water but in the morning we found them afloat as the river level had risen over 40cm.

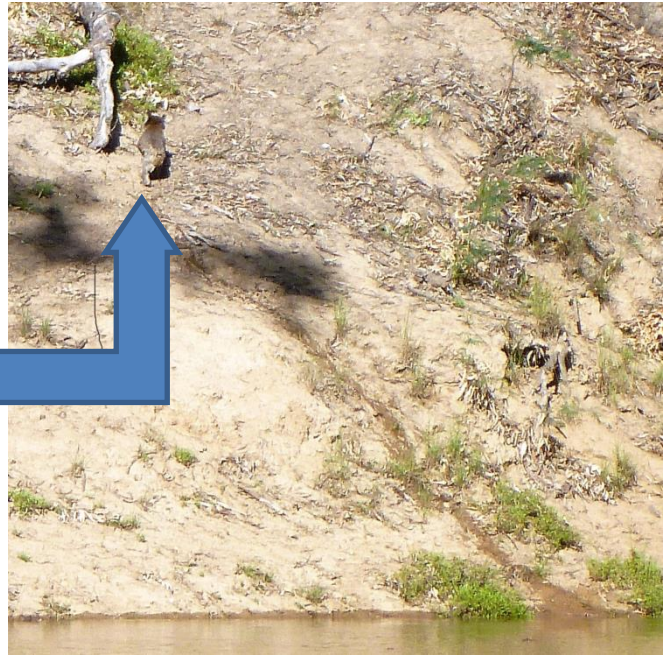


Day 2 paddling, Monday 20th, about 30km

We took a couple of short cuts today avoiding Hurricane Bend and later Breen's loop. The small rapids down these routes were easily negotiated.

Peter spotted a koala in a tree where we stopped to have some morning tea and then to our surprise a large branch fell from a gum tree on the opposite bank. As we all turned to see where it landed we noticed something swimming. A very wet koala pulled itself up on the bank and then climbed a different tree leaving a wet trail behind it.

A real Drop Bear!



Jack Pell Sandbar made an excellent campsite. There was easy access, a nice flat area not too far from the water and a rapid just upstream which provided a bit of fun and practice in the white-water hybrid Rogue kayaks.

The water level rose again overnight but we were well prepared.



Day 3 paddling, Tuesday 21st, about 34km

We had a very early start today, on the water just before 8am. The group divided at Hanlons Bend, with Simon, Anne, Don and Peter taking the long scenic route leaving Wayne and Libby to discover and then negotiate the rapids through the shorter cutting. We had lunch just after McCoys Bridge so easily passed our planned campsite at Clarks Bend. There were numerous sandbars on the river until we started looking for a camp site, then we found steep banks everywhere. Eventually we found a suitable pull out point and made our camp on a shady flat area above the steep bank.



Peter was a bit distressed at cooking on the road but it was in the shade and away from the long dry grass.

No-one used the road while we were cooking but later in the evening at about 11:45pm some cars drove around our camp then left.

Day 4 paddling, Wednesday 22nd, about 29km

This was another lovely day's paddle, ending just short of Waites Bend. We had the river entirely to ourselves not seeing anyone else all day – just perfect.

We had time to admire a huge Sea Eagle flying down the river in front of us and then spotted its nest high up in a tree by the river.

We also had a dead Corella chick drop into the water as we paddled near a dead tree. Apparently it was pushed out of the nest.



Although there was a great camp site just after our 2pm stop we paddled on, as most of us had a very restful break.

Our camp site had a beautiful view of the river where we cooked dinner.

A Rainbow Bee-eater joined us here.



Day 5 paddling, Thursday 23rd, about 21km

Because much of the river is bordered by National Park the wildlife abounds. We have seen several wallabies and today Libby let the river flow carry her silently downstream and was rewarded by drifting past lots of Superb Blue Wrens. While Anne had a close encounter with a large snake swimming next to her kayak, probably a Red bellied Black.

Peter found a single kayak only landing spot which had a hand crafted seat which he enjoyed while the rest of us opted for the opposite easier bank for our morning tea stop.

The weather forecast, (Thanks Peter for looking this up) predicted a thunderstorm in the afternoon so we made sure we were off the water early, with camp pitched and the emergency hutchie rigged up. We had to make minor modifications, using a split paddle to raise the centre when the heavy rain hit.

The afternoon was spent relaxing, enjoying a cuppa, reading and swimming when the sun came out after the rain. Peter went for a walk and discovered that we were not far from a road, but we were not disturbed by any cars near the camp.



Day 6, Friday 24th, about 15km

We finished the Goulburn River and joined the River Murray for the last stretch down to Moama.



We arrived in Moama for an early lunch then while Anne, Libby and Don drove back to Shepparton Simon, Wayne and Peter moved the kayaks up to our camping spot.

Libby unfortunately had car trouble – her car wouldn't start. Thanks to the RACV she managed to get back to Moama where we discovered the problem was not the car battery, the alternator or the camper trailer but the battery in her electronic key was flat – everything else worked just fine.

We enjoyed a great dinner at the pub in Moama to celebrate our 3 year plan to paddle the Goulburn from Eildon to Moama.

This final section of the Goulburn River was the most picturesque having almost exclusively National Park along each bank.