



JUMBUCK NEWS

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July 2020

The world has been dropped on its head during these last three months with the pandemic sweeping the globe. Australia not immune but fortunate not to have been as badly impacted as many other countries. Yet.

Of course, for many in the company working on stations, daily life has largely not been impacted, by their very nature being remote and isolated, but in some ways it has affected us all.

The lockdown had upsides with plenty of time at home, family time, attending to things which have been on the back burner for years and with very limited social interaction. More time with the kids doing things that are normally done in a rush now actually being enjoyed, conducted with more patience and consequently more pleasure. So, whilst you would not wish this pandemic had existed, there have been some positives.

Everyone has done their bit in terms of social distancing and increased hygiene to limit spread. It's called 'social obedience' and countries which have it have fared better than those that don't!

The pandemic is a reminder that our workplace health and safety is a journey, not a destination. As Directors, we meet monthly to discuss and review our WH&S processes but rely heavily on all staff on station to identify potential gaps in our safety systems, to be brought to the attention of managers.

Agriculture is too high on the list of industries where workplace injuries are concerned, and our intention is to do our bit within the industry to bring those numbers down. Above and beyond all else, we do not want our people hurt.

Renee Ween finished up at Jumbuck at the end of June after 18 months in the office, initially filling Meaghan Kennedy's shoes, who has now returned from maternity leave. Renee, we wish you well in your next chapter and thank you for all your endeavours.

Many stations are still firmly in the grip of a very

poor season; some now running into their third or fourth year without the country having had a proper, quenching drink. We all look forward to the day we can rejoice in seeing an end to this period of 'the long dry'.

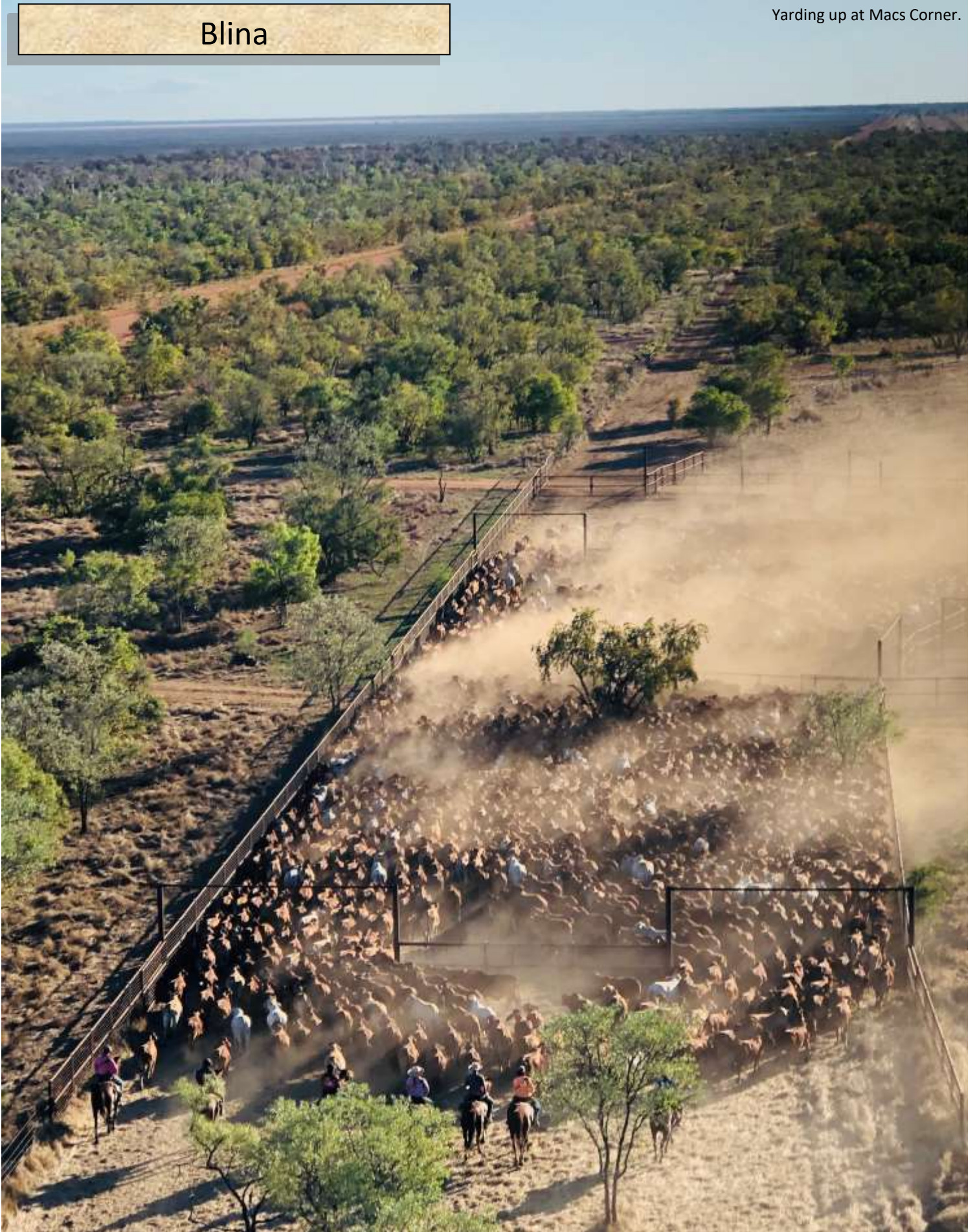
At least sheep prices have remained buoyant while wool prices have been adversely affected by the economic downturn associated with the pandemic.

Callum & Jock
Ω



Killarney's, Henvil Barroz, on the South Nelly Muster.

Photo: Amy Craig



The last few months at Blina have been very strange; as they have been across the world.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has touched every corner of the globe, and even

the isolation of a Kimberley cattle station has felt changes. Like most stations in the Kimberley, we were in lockdown for several months, with no visitors and no one able to

2,400 Mimosa Steers on their way to the yards.



leave the station unless in an emergency. This was very hard on staff with children and families not far away but with the vulnerability of the Kimberley community we needed to take it very seriously. All of our freight and stores were marshalled in Derby and delivered fortnightly. We had some real headaches getting staff into WA with three members making it all the way from NSW to Timber Creek Roadhouse in the NT before being halted, stopped for a few days and finally escorted back out of the state. Policy on the run was very difficult to navigate. We had new staff arriving and going into quarantine away from others, working separately. It took a bit of organising but in the end we got things sorted and things fell into line. We have had hold ups with freight, procurement of parts and stores, and general slow turnaround of almost everything; just like the rest of Australia. But we still have our health, a roof over our heads, and a job which is more fortunate than many. Of that we are grateful.

We finished with 550mm for the wet season, which is a little below our average of 700mm.

Steers on the move.



Isabelle and Amy at the end of another day.



But we were fortunate enough to pick up 3 inches across the run in late May in a very unusual weather system which followed the normal track of cyclones in reverse. With nice warmth and good sunshine following it up, we have had a great grass response to this rain, with all perennials kicking along nicely, and annuals reshooting. Naturally burnt country has responded incredibly well. So, what was a slightly below average season has become a pretty good one.

We have just finished our first round of mustering, with all breeders now having had weaners removed, calves branded back on. We weaned around 55% in the first round, which is pretty standard with some 15% branded back onto mum and small out of season drop of calves happening behind us. So, all in all we should be on track for around our average 75% weaning in 2020 at the conclusion of the second round. This will be a good result given that 2019 was the driest year on record in the

last 25 at Blina and if we have been able to use our big supplement program last year to ride out the dry year, and not take too much of a hit on the production front, then we will have done well.

We have also delivered about half of our sale turnoff already, delivering on forward contracts. The pricing into Indonesia has had some of the gloss come off from the pandemic but does remain solid enough for good operators to enjoy some margins. The out of season rain made the mustering and trucking of sale cattle a little touch and go, but good to have it behind us now.

I am glad to say that Connie and I have a great team around us at Blina, which has made things very enjoyable. Head Stockman, Bud Long, has enjoyed being back in the fold, with new country and a capable crew to support him. He has led from the front and put plenty of effort into training and fine tuning people and has kept everyone positive and keen along the way. Well supported

by his right hand man Razi Bin Rasheed , now in his third year at Blina, and passing on his skills with horses and cattle to the rest of the crew. I am very much enjoying having some returned staff really starting to hit their pins. Ben Carrick, Cody Kitchen and Alan Bin Rasheed have all developed into reliable, skilful and capable hands and their knowledge of the place, and how it operates are invaluable. Ben has been doing the bulk of the motorbike work though is now a competent horseman as well. Cody Kitchen has got his young string of horses coming along well and shoes like a farrier. Alan has improved out of sight on his horsemanship and always keeps us laughing no matter what's happening. New stockcamp members Tye Stewart, Amy Johnston and Isabelle Hare (all from NSW) have all slotted in well bringing skills, great attitude and good humour to the table. All the way from Argentina Charly Sere has been getting used to how things are done

in Australia and learning some new ideas to take back to his farms in South America, he is now quite fond of the calf and weaner cradle, but not so fond of shoeing horses! At the start of the season it was looking as though the NSW contingent would not be able to make it to WA at all, so we grabbed two short term backpackers from Broome to get us started. Julia Nehme and Maria Suarez were working at the Cable Beach Club in Broome before the pandemic cost them their jobs. They have been great value, learning to fill a gap in the yards, vaccinate cattle and help out wherever required. Julia returned to Broome about a month ago, and Maria finished up at the end of this month. We wish you both the best!

Mark Blount has returned to the grader drivers' position at Blina and continues to make an impact. It is great to see the gradual improvement in the roads at Blina. This can be largely attributed to two men, one currently at Killarney, Stu Jones, who spent five years here, and in recent times Mark Blount. Plenty of whoa boys put in with the 938G under many operators are also starting to stack up and make an impact around the run. Good grading practices with erosion mitigation a priority is starting to make a difference. Keep up the good work.

Mick Green has slotted in well to the Overseer's position with waters running along like clockwork at the moment. Aply supported by All Rounder Shay Thackra (ex-Rawlinna) things around the run look tidy, and keeping vehicles serviced and in a good state of repair. Barnetts Bore is now on a solar system; another pumpjack retired. Plans are in progress to convert Number 7, Calwanyardah and Billys across to solar in the coming months. Various other minor maintenance projects have been attended to.

Trish Kenmare has enjoyed her second season at Blina, with a great crew of people around it has been enjoyable for her. She keeps everyone in line, keeps us laughing and keeps our body condition score up! Trish and Connie have a veggie

garden happening with some great homegrown veggies now on the table.

And last but not least, Connie and the kids Harri and Imogen keeping things around the homestead running, ordering stores, doctoring horses, on the weaner cradle and getting out on horseback when required. We would like to thank all staff for a great start to 2020 and look forward to the next few months.

With cattle work looking like it will be wrapped up mid to late July for a while, we will turn our attention to maintenance projects, with new tanks and troughs for Mt North and Tunnel Creek Dams, troughs to be replaced and windmills decommissioned and converted to solar.

Till next time.

Matt Wood
Ω



Amy with Allan and Razi bin Rashid and Ben Carrick.

Bulgunnia

Swamp in Lena following some good rains.



The rain back in February really was a game changer as noted in the March issue of the Jumbuck Newsletter. We went from doom and gloom to total joy. Proof that it can rain and results were great to see. Feed has pretty much gone to seed and hayed off now. One swamp in Lena still had water in it up until recently.

Following this fall it has only been 1 to 5mm events, not quite enough to keep things bouncing as hoped. Last few rain bearing fronts only delivering .5 to 1.00mm. However don't for one minute think I am complaining, far from it. It has meant that our plans to bring most of our sheep back from the feedlot went out the window. In its place 1,200 odd ewes scanned and in lamb have returned. Results are looking good. Plenty of healthy lambs have now been seen on the ground. Those sheep that have not returned have mostly been sold and results on Auction Plus have been incredible. This is a big help with the wool job wallowing.

With shearing over and stock placed the team had some of the expected changes with Ruby-Rae Rogawski venturing on to a job in the North somewhere as expected, Marcus Gibson departed as we expected but not sure how his Cathay Pacific job ended up due to the coronavirus pandemic. Hamish and Chantal Hull decided to go back home and enjoy the

significantly cooler and (usually wetter) scenery around Cooma. Think being closer to family and potentially starting their own would have been a significant attraction. We all hope they are enjoying the change. During the cattle off-season in the north, Kate Hagley came down to cook and then managed to get a short holiday before able to beat border closures and return to Meda. Not so easy for Sandra returning from Queensland. Crossing state borders followed by two weeks of isolation then back into cooking



Section of the graded Woolshed road with no corrugations!

again. Having a vacancy for an Overseer with Hamish departing, we now welcome Nathan and Sophie Wakefield along with their 3 children to Bulgunnia. Their eldest at boarding school and the two younger being of school age meant that a governess would be a good idea. Teaching your own children schoolwork is generally stressful as I am sure a number of people will agree. We welcome Lucy Spurling to the team as a governess. Josh Tabone and Isabel King are still among the familiar faces here and going well.

Low sheep numbers do have advantages. The pressure off waters means that along with a much smaller team we are not getting stressed or pressured when problems arise, and we are able to steam ahead with general maintenance. Salt damaged trough pedestals being replaced with new. We are trying out a protective coating called "Protectasilane" a paintable coating that gives a water repellent seal in the hope that the life is extended beyond the current 35-40 year mark. Time will tell. Mill servicing has also been underway and we have also had the chance to give the tracks a touch

up with the grader. Additionally, a few fences have also been stood back up following kangaroo damages along with the replacement of some short sections.

Lamb marking and crutching are our next major events on the calendar. As always, we are hopeful for more rain!

Greg Morris
Ω

Previously barren, some dry feed near Vokes has popped up following recent rains.



A few recent upgrades; trough with new pedestals.





It doesn't seem like all that long ago we were reading the March Jumbuck Newsletter, but the world has certainly changed a whole lot! For most of the last three or four months those of us here at Commonwealth Hill, like the rest of you and the world, have had to get used to a different way of thinking and doing things.

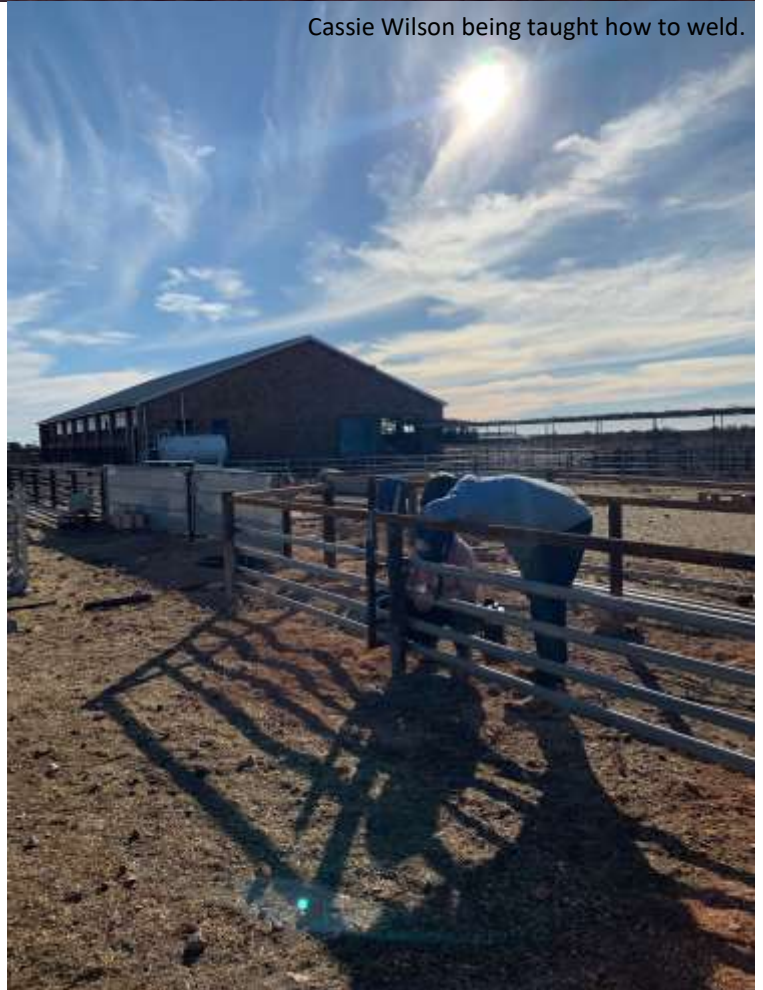
Generally station people exist in their own little bubbles, which we have here to an extent. HGM threw a spanner in the works when he arrived a couple of weeks after the end of shearing, and the onset of the coronavirus, bursting our bubble! Every precaution was taken given the Barossa Valley was one of the hotspots in South Australia at the time.

While unnecessary travel was reduced, we have found ways to occupy our time on the station. A Friday movie night has been introduced over dinner to break the monotony and has been well received by the staff. We have even upgraded from a bed sheet strung badly on the back of the shed wall, to a 150" projector screen adding to the viewer quality along with improved stereo sound. We will start selling tickets to the surrounding stations soon!

After coming to terms with the idea that many of us have missed out on annual leave for the first half of the year due to the practicality of self-isolation interstate and then again on return, it has been business as usual.

Shearing was completed without an issue with 14,457 sheep shorn. We were even happy enough to lose a day or two due to wet conditions! As we

Cassie Wilson being taught how to weld.





Charlie Casanova & Flora MacKenzie being precise.



Repairing grids at JK Junction.



had lifted all the lambs in the Spring, this would have to be one of the lowest shearing numbers Commonwealth Hill has ever seen. Despite this, the ewes cut well given the terribly dry conditions.

A special thanks goes to Elise Hore, a friend of Jess's from the Upper Murray who came over to help us during Shearing. Her help in the yards took a lot of pressure off me, having to spend a lot more time in VH-RXY mustering.

It was the first shearing for all my staff here now, with Tom Wheelhouse and Jamilah Parker departing at the end of shearing for greener pastures in the western districts of Victoria. They did very well during their time at Commonwealth Hill with just between four and four and half years' service each. We wish them luck in their new positions at Dunkeld.

A big thankyou goes to all those staff who just completed their first shearing with the enthusiasm and dedication I have come to expect from each and every one of them. Brittany Jacobs, Cassie Wilson and Charlie Casanova are all picking up the job well. Flora Mackenzie joined us at the end of shearing and will now be learning the tricks of the family trade. William Bond who was with us for shearing is from the UK and now over at Mobella and is enjoying his time in the Northwest.

All sheep were back in their paddocks the week after shearing and we've been ticking off a lot of improvement jobs since. We have tidied up what was an ordinary grid arrangement at the JK Junction and replaced a terrible trough at Meteor Tank with a homemade poly trough, which we hope can just slip into existing trough arrangements when the fibrous cement troughing succumbs to saline conditions.

Most recently our time has been going into yard rebuilding at the woolshed. We are redesigning the backlining setup to improve handling time along with incorporating an easier to use trucking yard setup. While still undergoing final touches, we can't wait to use it next shearing.

Richard Armour is also here in a home renovation capacity and has nearly completed a renovation of the Overseer's house before moving on to the Staff quarters and Cookhouse. This has been badly needed and will greatly improve living arrangements in these buildings.

James Barry
Ω



Last load of wool from shearing being trucked.



Newly built poly-trough at Meteor tank.



Practising social distancing with HGM on his recent inspection.



A hopeful sky...

Glen Devon



Meg, Oaks and Autumn colours.

Crutching went very smoothly in the yards, with Travis Le Ray and one of his sons who came to learn the ropes. HG was helping in the paddock with his very capable and trusty dogs. And the job in the shed was looked after by the team supplied through Millhouse which turned out a clean sheep at a steady pace. The only disappointing aspect was the amount of clean wool to stain baled as the sheep were not overly dirty due to the dry conditions.

The rainfall for March was 10 with 90 in April and 56 in May bringing us up to 236mm so far. The Dams had lifted a little but will need a lot more to carry through this summer.

Glen Devon is slowly starting to green up and the feed now starting to lift up off the deck. A local fertilizer and seeding business has spread some Super, mixed with clover, out just before our winter break. This has been done after the first couple of wet days so the Super granules would soften and break down. The size of the granules was large this year with the average size close to a dry pea. This was placed out



Lambmarking underway, led by Michael Cochrane.

In the yards and ready for processing.



BELOW: The lush pastures at Glen Devon with the typical rolling hills ever present.



over four paddocks including the main hay production paddock, Springs, and three other paddocks. The aim being to improve the ground with clover and add to their carrying capacity.

The seasonal weed spraying has now been done. Our main areas of concern are the thistles and the gorse and of course to keep the weeds under control and keep their seed banks low. The slender thistles are at the top of the list.

The ewes are lambing well with a large number of twins and scattered amount of triplets about. The grain feeding program has now ceased as the first lambs hit the ground. This is to limit the amount of disturbance and Libby Langley on the quad bike has been a huge help.

Ken Prokopec has also been busy around the homestead with the gardens and all of the new plantings that have been made.

Graham Andrewartha in the Olive Grove is still in low tempo with just maintenance watering due to the season, however the Grove will be pruned next month to keep it in trim.

Michael Cochrane
Ω



Road in Horse Paddock.



Since the March issue of the Jumbuck Newsletter, we have received some good rains at Gunbar. 168mm fell in April alone and gave us so far 257mm for 2020 which is 25mm more than we had for the whole of 2019. Tiarra has not fared so well, receiving 92mm for April and 150mm for the year so far. The feed response at Gunbar has been very good especially on the Homestead end. The response at Tiarra has been very short and green which is now starting to turn. We have still been feeding four paddocks at Tiarra despite the rain.

Crutching was completed in March using a crew from Doug Millhouse. All sheep went through the trailer well and were drenched as they went onto the trailer.

Even though the season started very dry we have had a fantastic joining and lambing. With lamb marking completed at Tiarra with 5,948 ewes going through the yards and producing 5826 lambs at an average of 98 percent. All lambs are in very good order and growing well despite the season starting to go backwards once again. We have marked 1,500 White Suffolk cross lambs in this Tiarra marking which should sell very well around shearing time. Gunbar's lamb marking is going well with 9,211 ewes through the yards producing 9,648 lambs at an average of 105 percent! This is quite amazing considering we have nearly 4,000

maiden ewes in the 9,000 marked. Some paddocks have been quite remarkable with the 789 Cabbage Garden ewes producing 1,035 lambs at 131%. We had a few other paddocks that went over 125% as well along with a few paddocks of maiden ewes that have lambed between 100-105%. All lambs now getting a really good size on them and we will be glad to complete the last paddock shortly. This good lambing will give us a lot of sale sheep this year. After shearing all we need is a little more rain to keep things going and sheep prices to stay where they are.

The cattle that were on agistment at Cavandish have been returned to Gunbar with the exception of some that were sold. They made very good money with the price of cattle at current levels.

Col Andrews is currently at Gunbar renovating the cook's cottage.

We have had a few staff changes since March with Overseer Lance Anstice leaving us and station hands Sean Lawrence and Steven Trotter starting at Gunbar in May. Steven has transferred over from Rawlinna. Jack Jennings has taken up the Overseers position.

Let's hope we all get some good rain before long.

Dominic Jennings
Ω

Ewes in Moolah chasing the vehicle looking for some grain.



Cows & calves back from agistment and now in Dry Lake.



Sorting up rams in McGregors Yard.





Henvil Barroz and Ben Evans pulling Number 4 Bore.



half of February produced some very isolated thunderstorms but no general rainfall and by late February things were starting to look very concerning. We were staring down the barrel of another bad season and the prospect of having to seriously lighten numbers but thankfully, ex-tropical cyclone Esther made her way across the Top End and delivered 142 mm in the gauge at Killarney putting us in a much stronger position and allowing us to maintain numbers and continue with a normal programme. A further 50 mm across the run in mid April kept feed green well into May and was a big help.

Six hundred tonnes of dry season breeder and weaner lick, and an early weaning programme, got cattle through to mid January in reasonable condition; strong enough to steam ahead once green feed was available. All class of stock by late March recovered and in good order. Despite a tough season in 2019, production numbers for 2020 are looking good as are sale weights to date.

With a lot of Australia reeling from first, prolonged drought, then devastating bush fires, and just when things were starting to look up with some decent rainfall, COVID-19 rears its ugly head, and for most brought about unparalleled stress and concern, especially for the older more vulnerable members of families. For us at Killarney already isolated from the threat of COVID-19 things just carried on, apart from no nonessential visitors and isolating essential visitors when on station.

The 2019/2020 wet season started late with no significant falls until mid-January. 222.1 mm in the second half of the month got the ball rolling, taking stock of manmade waters and generating some decent green feed. The first

Fortunate enough to again have a good crew of people at Killarney for the 2020 mustering season lead by Michael Stanley, Rhys Angland (head stockman weaner camp) and Tammy Bowman (leading hand weaner camp), Cain Burns (head stockman bush camp) and Trent Preece (leading hand bush camp), Jeremiah Lander and Isla Smith, both in their second season at Killarney, have stepped up and are very handy and valued. Will Crosby, Tejay

Will Crosby wheeling a bullock and, below; at smoko in Marcos.

Photo: Amy Craig



Craig, who is in her fourth year as station cook, continues to provide meal after meal for weeks on end and also manages (with good organisation) to find the time to help in the yard, drive the stock camp truck, run the social club, and also make shirts on her trusty sewing machine. A group who have worked their way through first round mustering program, with thanks to COVID-19, no off station social events or breaks away. Thanks to all for remaining positive and getting on with the job during this unsettling and uncertain time.

Henvil Barroz continues in his role as boreman. In between times he and Ronnie are very handy with stock work. Ronnie being Henvil's work horse who has been a challenge for Henvil at times and prefers to play his own game. However, Henvil has persisted and he and Ronnie are now on the same page and a very handy combination. Chrissy Barroz continues to work hard keeping the gardens and homestead surrounds looking immaculate, not to mention many other unnoticed, thankless tasks.

Gemma Laurisson who keeps the office and manager in order, deals with any ailments staff may have and cooks for the homestead crew when stock camp out. And selflessly does a lot to ensure the smooth running of Killarney.

Stuart Jones, our now long serving machine operator, spends plenty of time camped out by himself as he makes his way around the run grading and repairing eroded roads on 12G grader and 950H loader. Stuart had quite a traumatic experience recently when he awoke in the middle of the night to relieve himself. Stuie, not renowned for over dressing, made his way out of his caravan stark naked, made his way an appropriate distance from his van and stood their relieving himself. He suddenly caught something in the corner of his eye, and

Angland, Tiana Kelly, Ben Evans and Emma Kuerschner all started in mid March and are all competent and pulling their weight. Also Rachelle Stanley who has filled in, in a part time role, proving to be able to turn her hand to all tasks with no fuss. Her most challenging task keeping tabs on little Charlie, who at two, is a live wire who keeps us all entertained. Amy



been cleared and fencing material on hand ready for Kurt Heath to erect. This will allow us to stock unused country from August and, in turn, lift production.

Congratulations to Michael Stanley and Alex Laurisson, who are now the proud parents of Cooper Stanley born 23rd March 2020.

had the eerie feeling that he was being watched. He slowly turned to find a fully grown bull Buffalo staring at him, needless to say Stuiie's return trip to the caravan was considerably faster than his departure. Stuiie very happy to tell me this story, with a how dare a Buffalo disturb my nightly ablutions! I wonder what that Bull tells his mates after encountering Stuiie stark naked in the middle of the night.

Our endeavours to develop the eastern side of Birrimba continue. With drilling rig on site and to date, four bores drilled with three producing no water and one good bore. It has highlighted that the further east you go, the harder it is finding underground water. Fence lines have



Jamie and Cooper Stanley taking care of the office work.

McCoys Well



Green feed coming up after flood water has receded.

As a finishing note in the March issue of the newsletter we were hoping for a wetter 2020. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to be happening for a lot of areas so far this year. We have been fortunate here at McCoys to receive reasonable rain on the southern half of the property, but the northern half is in desperate need of a drink.

Crutching was a very short affair this year, being completed in 5 days. Everyone was kept busy with smaller mobs that meant a lot more shifting of the crutching trailer than normal. Very thankful for Cameron Kakoschke and Brett Goldsworthy for getting sheep in and out with no fuss. And a big shout out to Sean Lawrence who did a great job helping me in the yards and mustering when time permitted. He has now moved onto Gunbar and we wish him well there.

With the rain we have received so far, we were in a position to lift our stocking rate a little and was thankful Mt Victor and Mobella had sheep we could purchase. It also enabled us to take delivery of the next generation of rams from Glen Devon and get them adjusted to north



Still a bit of surface water, but now receding.

A few cold mornings have meant ice on the troughs until late morning!



at the house dam so when it decides to rain again, we can keep the house dam full and keep water in the lagoon for a bit longer. Whilst Mark was here, he cleared a couple kilometres of fence at Whyngoon which was damaged during the recent flood. Now to get the new fence up so we get the paddocks back to the normal size.

Lamb marking is nearly on us again, and weather has been reflecting that with a week of temps below zero in the mornings and troughs not defrosting until 10:30am most days. Temporary station hand, Kate Smith, has found this makes cleaning on water runs a little more interesting!

Mick Goldsworthy
Ω

Future station hand in the making.



ABOVE: Wrong tool for the job.

ABOVE: Ally keeping the young rams up.

east pastoral conditions.

We managed to once again, secure services of Mark Taylor with his loader to fix the wing bank



The wet season ended up being pretty good for Meda. Getting close to our average of 650ml, after a 192ml over the first few days of March. The feed and cattle condition were looking the best we have been for a few years leading into the dry season. We were also very fortunate enough to receive 70ml late May which has really sparked up the feed and will keep breeders going for a lot further into the dry.

The first round of breeders is all but over with only a couple more musters to finish off. Weaning numbers are looking like they will be above average by the end of the year and with cows being in the condition they are currently in and having had weaners pulled off, would expect next year to have high weaning numbers. Weaners pulled off over first round would be up there with the heaviest line of weaners we have weaned in my time at Meda.

We have also been able to sell a big percentage of our sale cattle during the first round of mustering. In contrast to the breeders, the sale cattle have been a bit lighter than we would have hoped for. Although we were able to get a good price per kilo and have had a pretty respectful result here.

The stock camp has been doing a good job getting breeders and sale cattle processed, in the time they have had. Aaron Nielsen has been going well in his second year as head stockman helped by returning crew from last year Declan Childs, Kelsey McDonald and Callum Hampton-Brook. Brumby Forrester, Eddie Toranto, Emily McKay, Sean Edwards and Louise Poultney have started off the year well; all keen to get in,

2020 Weaners presenting well.



learn and have a go. We have also been lucky enough to have Kate Hagley back for her third year as the cook. The cook is probably the most underappreciated person in the crew, and I would like to let Kate know that her efforts don't go unnoticed and she makes my life a lot easier when it comes to keeping the crew happy on the food front.

Jason Deacon and Andy Hallen have had a quieter year so far on the bore run with ground water keeping a lot of pressure off bores. They have been kept busy this year on improvements around the bores with new solar systems being installed on new bores drilled last year and also replacing windmills where wind just isn't quite keeping up. They have also made a start on erecting new water tanks to add watering

New solar bore being installed.



Walking the breeders.

points in some paddocks and to replace dams that have been trouble for bogging cattle late in the year.

Stu Knickle has returned for his third year and as always has been doing a great job operating the grader. Stu is very conscious about minimising erosion the best we can and working to help prevent it. We also have the CAT 938 loader here this year with Arron Blount working on clearing fence lines, whoa boys where erosion is becoming a problem and opening up river and creek crossings again. It has been great having these two work together and get some great work done around the place.

Bernie Jack who was with us in 2016 and 2017 as our truck driver when we used to cart our own weaners has returned to be our lick man. With more and more lick being put out it has been good to have Bernie look after this for us as well as being a pretty handy all-rounder to help out where needed.

Troy Haslet
Ω



Mobella



Mobella is still quite dry with only 19 mm falling since March causing some of our ewes to find the going tough with a lamb at foot. Winter has been a cool, little to no wind affair, thus far and less rain than we had hoped.

On the staff front, Eric Akbar is keeping busy overseeing, we have been getting on to jobs that have been just out of reach for a few years. It certainly makes a difference having Eric out tackling these jobs with a couple offsidars while I am free to work on solar bores and fixing tanks. Rhonda is the hardworking better half of the duo and is keeping us well fed and looked after. Rhonda keeps a tight ship in the kitchen, and it's a pleasure to arrive to a spotless dining room full of fantastic aromas of meals carefully prepared. The chickens are going great guns with a bit of TLC, though for a while Rhonda was at war with a couple of local goannas. They were stealing eggs, being young enough to fit through the netting however they seem to have taken the hint and buggered off at last.

We have some new faces, Lachie Ryan is our new jackaroo from Drysdale in the land of peace and prosperity (Victoria). Lachie has been here for a few months now and is going from strength to strength, he is taking on any challenges thrown at him with vigour. William Bond has come from England to see how the other half live. After doing a bit of time at Comm Hill, Will was sent to Mobella and has been a fantastic help. During our quieter times he has experienced other station work besides moving and handling stock. Although not his original plan, he has spent more time in Australia and experienced station life out on the edge of the earth. I hope when he leaves to go home to university, he has plenty of stories to share with his fellow Englishmen of the trials and tribulations of outback Australia. Last but not least we have Lucas Fielding, being a fellow South aussie from Quorn, he was always going to be good value. Lucas has come to Mobella to get a taste of sheep station life, after seeing a bit of the cattle side when visiting family north of Coober Pedy. While Lucas is young, he is

switched on and keen to learn, always ready to lend a hand.

Mobella is now the proud owner of 2 new solar systems, one at Pibroch (Pibroch auxiliary) and Geisha (Geisha auxiliary). Both are up and running and will make life a bit easier come summertime. The new 2 Stone bore has also been tested and will proudly carry a new solar system shortly. This will open up some country that, without dam water, is unusable. It will give us a bit more usable feed during this dry time and ultimately give us more usable country. We have also been flat out replacing pedestals on troughs. After doing over 40 odd we have pulled up on that job for a bit until we can stock up on pedestals before the whole run is completed. Watering stock is going to be much easier now, with less water wasted as well. While our numbers are down, we are trying to get on top of jobs so when we do get a break in the season, we can restock country as soon as the feed grows. Some of these jobs have been in the pipeline for a while and it's fantastic to get them finished. A few tidy up jobs done along the way and Mobella will feel like a new station.

With lamb marking commencing at the end of the month, we will be back in the field with stock movements and marking. We are patiently waiting for a decent rain, as they say a rain always ruins a good drought! Sadly, the outlook for winter and autumn is slowly going backwards, it did look promising a month ago. Every dry day is one closer to a season changing rain, so they say. Although we are running at half with stock numbers currently a good couple rains will turn the country around in weeks. As sad as it is to see older mulga (and some of the younger ones as well) die it is part of this country and the cycles that the land goes through, we must have the dry to appreciate the wetter years. As dry as Mobella is, it could be worse. We at least still have a bit of leaf on our bush. On the upside, the kangaroo numbers are down now to what they were.

Testing at 2 Stone Bore—fingers crossed!



We had a visit from the RFDS during the height of the COVID-19 problems in SA, in which we all had flu injections. With two planes visiting at once we nearly had a traffic jam at the airstrip. Luckily our own KZS was all tucked up in her hanger while they were here. We are all safe from the flu now and good to have a visit from our local nurses, our first clinic for at least 8 years I believe.

Tasha Masters
Ω

Dust storm on the way home.



Two RFDS planes on site for flu injections—almost a traffic jam!



Mount Victor & Plumbago

Before I started to write I re-read the Mt Victor's piece in the March issue. At that time I sounded truly optimistic, but alas, not much came of that short change in our fortune. Mt Victor observed very little response and has only received 33 mm so far this year. Plumbago is better and has seen some feed, but that is starting to fade having had only 59mm. The stock are in surprisingly strong condition and look to be carrying quite a bit of wool. Lambing seems to be a very hit and miss affair, probably a bit more miss than hit. We are looking to start marking this coming week so will see what we have got then. What lambs we have seen are looking good.

Here at Mt Victor and across the outback we watched as COVID-19 put great a kink in a great many people's lives, but for us very little changed. The day to day rhythm of our lives remained the same. We watched as the rest of the world went a bit crazy. Watched from the security of our well-stocked station stores as the greater population's daily focus became toilet paper.

A recent survey has shown that the Yellow-footed Rock-Wallabies on Plumbago are surviving the drought well with very little drop in overall numbers. The success of the *Bounce*



TOP TO BOTTOM: Little Arkaroola Mill before and after upgrade.

Back program (in partnership with Jumbuck) in returning these iconic natives from near extinction to truly sustainable numbers is something to be proud off. It proves a strong conservation ethic is a viable part of managing these large pastoral properties.



LEFT: Courtney with the first lamb for lamb-marking.



Eliza Duroux and Felix Williams put in a new trough at Black Hill Yards.

Felix setting up to pull Arkaroola pumpjack.



Lucy Read repairing the sacrificial bank at Koolka.



With such a small team it has been difficult to get large projects accomplished, but we have managed to get the pipeline laid from Little Arkaroola to feed Reedys tank through to Gums Well. This provides the Gums sheep a much improved water quality, going from 11,500ppm at Gums Well to 7,000ppm from Little Arkaroola.

Mary Blackmore, our Cook, has clocked over 2 years as has Courtney O'Dea - congratulations! Both are valued members of the Mt Victor team. Courtney also had the milestone recently of her 21st. There was quite a celebration at Mt Victor with some sorry people the next day. Eliza Duroux continues to do good work at Mt Victor as does Lucy Reed at Plumbago. Jayden Brogden, Lucy's partner, has secured a position at the Goldfields on the bottom of Mt Victor. I wish to thank my team for their stalwart support in these trying times we are experiencing at Mt Victor / Plumbago.

To the future. Without rain in the next few months some heavy decisions well have to be made for the sake of the condition of the country here at Mt Victor. Here is hoping that those decisions don't have to be made.

Richard Williams
Ω

HAPPY 21ST BIRTHDAY COURTNEY!!



Celebrating Mere's second year with us at Mt Victor.



Mulgathing

2020 shearing was all wrapped up by the 26th of February after having shorn 24,500 sheep. Just over 11,000 sheep were trucked off shears, with the majority going to the Kulpara feedlot.

After a promising start to the season, rain has since alluded us having only recorded 60mm at the homestead up until the end of May. This has resulted in the decision being made to sell some of the sheep that we had sent down to the feedlot instead of bringing them back to Mulgathing. The rest was sent to agistment in NSW and some of these have since been sold. Recent sales of rising 6yr old blue tag ewes scanned in lamb resulted in a record price for Jumbuck of \$301/ head. Cull orange tag ewes rising 2yr old scanned in lamb made \$266/ head. These prices are fantastic for this year's bottom line. Unfortunately, with the continuing dry spell, 2020/21 is not looking quite so bright.

We have started replacing 50km of internal fencing. Sampson's from Streaky Bay have been putting up around 1.5 km/day. We have been busy pulling down the old fences and clearing the fence line. All the posts have been carted back to the saw bench and all the old wire to the dump. A big thank you to the crew

Looking down the new Ealbara fence.



Mulgathing 2020 Shearing crew, Left to Right:
Brett, Rosie, Yasmin, Saige, Dan, Darren, Logan, Trish & Zara.



Load of old fence post out of the Ealbara fence.



New gate on the Ealbara fence.



as rolling wire up by hand is not the most inspiring job but a much better result than leaving it in piles to later get tangled around the front wheel of a motorbike. A new holding paddock has been put in at Malbooma which will be a great help when we put sheep together prior to droving them up at shearing time.

We continue to upgrade our troughs with new pedestals and aprons where needed. Charcotts has been one site that has seen all troughs receive new aprons and pedestals with One Mile getting all the pedestals replaced.

Lamb marking is the next job on the agenda. We should have been well into it by now but unfortunately the ewes are a month late in starting to drop. With the season the way it is the lambs are not overly big so we have decided to delay marking until the beginning of July. We have just over 11,000 ewes mated. It is extremely hard to predict what sort of percentage we will get.

Most would agree 2020 so far has been a vastly different year than one was hoping for. Let's hope the next six months is a much brighter and prosperous year for all.

Darren Wilson
Ω

An old trough at Charcotts.



Sheep checking out a new trough at Charcotts.



One of the locals keeping an eye on things!



Rawlinna

Penning_Up – a mad rush to put the last of the wethers in the shed as a pretty decent storm rolled in right at the end of shearing.



Shearing at Rawlinna was completed on the 29th March with a total of 26,125 being shorn for a mere 517 bales. This represents approximately 25% of our top historic wool growing capacity and probably the lowest shearing tally since Rawlinna was founded in the 1960s. The low numbers are due to a non-existent lambing in 2019 and catastrophic losses of adult sheep in the last few years. We were hit with a perfect storm of a dry winter in 2018, a very dry season in 2019 and the direct predation of wild dogs on our flock. With this abysmal shearing behind me, I know that my capability as a manager can only get better with each passing season and I look towards 2020 with the knowledge that we are better positioned to rebuild our flock and return to full production.

The season so far has been kinder than this time last year with some 70mm of rain falling at the homestead this year to date. The northern half of Rawlinna was looking quite green in

Ben Kuhrt, Tom de La Salle and Corey Short cleaning the tank at Speculation with the trash pump. Note the plastered cracks on the walls and flow into the tank from the newly drilled bore.



Jimmy Wood with success having struck water drilling at Speculation Bore.



Final product: Speculation tank full and overflowing for the first time in many years now that it has been plastered.



McTaggarts bore after a good drenching during shearing. The flooded yards made moving sheep through pretty challenging.



Finally seeing some green feed on Rawlinna again.



Apocalyptic scenes at Oban bore one night after JRW discovered the joys of lighting up nitre bush!

March with the sheep heading back to green paddocks after shearing. This was a marked improvement from 2019 where only 43mm was recorded all year. The southern end of Rawlinna has received approximately 100mm to date, but as this is heavier myall and saltbush country it takes a lot more rain to respond and as such is still looking very dry, although the bush is refreshed and not as chewed out as last year. The summer grass in the north has hayed off and is still offering good dry feed for the stock, however, some green grass would be pretty handy coming into lambing in June and July.

To date, only a handful of lambs are at foot, with a late joining in January leaving the drop behind schedule. The late joining allowed me to delay shearing, as until the drought broke in

mid-January, we were looking down the barrel of a gun in terms of getting sheep in for shearing. Some of the mobs have to walk 85km to the shed, and I doubt that they would have made it there and back had the rain in January not arrived. Thankfully the rains did come, and we reverted to a reasonably wet shearing, with about a week lost to wet weather in total. This is a good problem to have on the rangelands.

The rebuilding work was ongoing over the past few months with Doug Brown of Highly Strung Fencing completing the northern netting upgrade by the first week of April. Our northern netting is no doubt the most impressive fence on the Nullarbor at the moment and is without a doubt a great step in the right direction for Rawlinna. After a few weeks back home, Doug and his men have since been working on the southern netting.

The southern netting upgrade includes fortification of the SE and SW corners of the netting with fabricated netting laid over the existing fence, new box assemblies and maxi pickets carrying high tensile carrier wires. This fortification was also completed on a small 750m section where the Nightshade Electrics meet the netting and is directed at minimising the roo pressure on these areas where the original fence has been punished by the roos over the years. 25km of new foot lapping was laid on rusted sections of the southern netting and included laying new carrier and lapping wires for these sections. A new carrier wire was also installed to properly complete approximately 35km of lapping originally laid in 2016. With this work now complete we can focus on the western and eastern sides of the netting which are also in desperate need of a refurbishment.

Sam White has now completed approximately 40km of new internal fencing including a 23km section east of Cabernet bore right out to the eastern netting. This is a strategic fence, designed to contain slippery wether weaners on the south in Sauvignon (being a 6 wire fence) and to keep the ewes to the north from migrating into the SE of Rawlinna where they will not meet a ram and only have salty water to drink. Prior to this fence being completed in



ABOVE: The entire 110km length of the Rawlinna western netting has now been graded with a double cut. This will allow better visibility for patrolling as well as reduce roo and large animal pressure.

CENTRE: Close up of the upgraded northern netting. The fabricated stockgrip mesh withstands the roo pressure far better than the original marsupial netting laid in the 1960's.

ABOVE RIGHT: Close up of the new lapping wire being laid on the southern netting. Note the new carrier wires and lapping wire. We have laid 25km like this now.

March only one, and in some places none, wires stopped the sheep moving south on the wind. Improvements like this will make Rawlinna far more manageable again, and will certainly improve our flock control.

Sam has also built a new yard at Miocene bore, as well as completed short sections of new fencing including yard sections at Little Tin and Berthas bores to replace the dilapidated yards which were there before. The 12km long eastern fence of Alpha paddock (a strategic holding paddock) has been renewed as well.

Due to an influx of dogs during shearing, and a significant shift in the focus of the rebuild, Sam White and his men began a refurbishment of the 110km long western netting. This work includes laying 10km of barb wire to reduce camel and cattle pressure on the fence, restraining loose carrier wires and replacing rusted and rotted posts and suring up internal fences where they meet the netting. A lot of the internal fencing junctions with the netting have been damaged or destroyed by roo pressure over the years. Sam has completed approximately 30% of the planned work to date before taking off earlier this month to welcome his and Lee-anne's latest addition of a little girl (Grace) to their family.

In the last few weeks we have been running a hard labour camp taking turns loading the truck with rocks, carting them to the south and using them to fill in and sure up a significant number of holes under the netting where wombats have been digging under the fence. With this work,

Jillaroo Taylor (New Taylor) Mondy using the air leg to drill holes on the northern netting so we could pin the lapping down, assisted by Eggy The Bullcamel. A day of air legging on the Nullarbor is no mean feat!



the laying of the lapping, the completion of the northern netting and directing the contractors to the other weak spots in our netting, Rawlinna is again approaching a dog proof status. Combined with ongoing internal dogging work including the laying of some 50,000 baits in the last 23 months, I feel we are almost reaching a dog free environment for the first time in quite a few years which will have a hugely positive effect on our lambing.

Two new bores have been drilled and equipped since February. A new axillary bore at Wyuna was drilled in March to augment the diminished

Laying rocks to pin down the lapping on the southern netting. Corey Short doing the hard work under the direction of netting rider Mick (Slick) Reed and fellow jackeroo Troy Campbell (ex Kybo).



supply from the old windmill bore and a new bore at Speculation being necessitated after jamming a submersible pump and hose in the existing hole. Both these bores have been equipped and are operational with an entirely new solar setup and short pipeline installed at Wyuna. These bores and the new one at Nevertire in December have shown fantastic flows, suggesting that our struggling bores are failing more due to failures of the holes themselves rather than the aquifers they tap. This is a comforting thing in a place where we rely so heavily on ground water for our business.

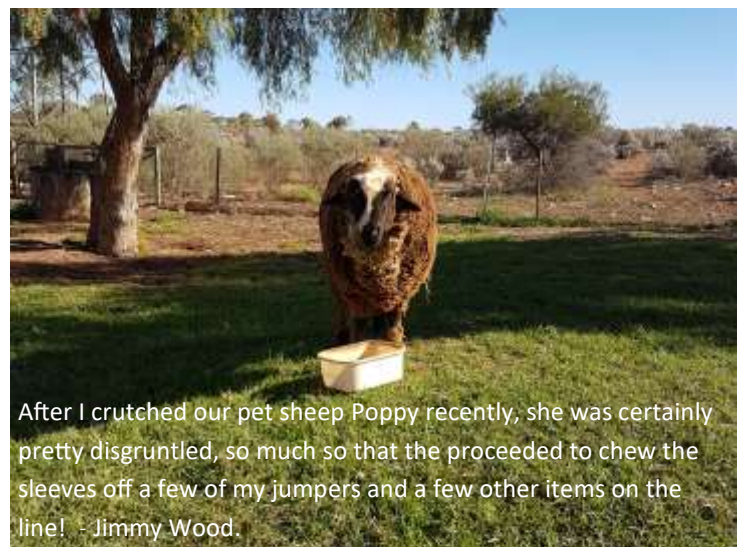
With the sheep placed by mid-April, a round of mill servicing completed and general maintenance in hand, we have been able to get on with some of the rebuilding work around the run with our own staff. We have been able to roll up a few old fences where Sam has done the business, plaster the tanks at Speculation and Distaff to make them again watertight and carry out a bit of internal fencing and yard rebuilding at Wyuna and around the Distaff and Cabernet pipelines. We have also spent a bit of time equipping the bores at Wyuna and Speculation as well as rebuilding and re netting a significant number of gates which have been hit by both roos and cars over the years.

The grader has been on the go since January, covering over 120km of clearing of most of the internal fencing in the NE part of Rawlinna completed, clearing the line for the new fence east of Cabernet and of course the clearing of a double cut for the entire 110km length of the western netting for the first time in many years. The clearing of this netting offers a massive improvement in visibility to both our netting rider and to animals who now run along the

fence rather than into it.

I would have to say that my second shearing was much easier and less stressful than the first, partly due to a significantly wetter season taking much of the water pressure off, but largely due to my committed and determined staff. Some of my staff have returned for a second shearing and my overseers and senior staff have been a great help being both committed to doing the job properly and interested and passionate about the wool industry. By building and holding onto a core of loyal, enthusiastic and intelligent people who don't complain about early starts and late nights, impossible goals and even my unrealistic expectations of what we can achieve, we have made Rawlinna an enjoyable and cutting edge place to be.

Jimmy Wood
Ω



After I crutched our pet sheep Poppy recently, she was certainly pretty disgruntled, so much so that she proceeded to chew the sleeves off a few of my jumpers and a few other items on the line! - Jimmy Wood.

Springfield

Frost in Glen Head.



This year has certainly been a year of many challenges. Fortunately, with all the chaos going on around us, I have been lucky enough to continue everyday life with not too many changes.

After receiving good rains in February, we were able to postpone supplement feeding silage until the beginning of March. With previous conditions being so dry, feeding has commenced at least a month earlier the past 2 seasons. All mobs started calving mid to late March with an expected 250 calves over the following 12 weeks. Through the calving period, cows were fed 3 times a week and daily inspections to record all calves born. There have been minimal calving issues this year, apart from a few rejected calves. I ended up feeding 4 poddy calves for approximately 10 weeks before weaning on to Johnsons weaner pellets.

At the end of February, I headed down the South East to the Hazeldean on farm bull sale. After an extremely successful sale with 100% clearance, unfortunately I didn't get the right bid. A couple of days later headed back to the Basin Sale Complex for the Bull Oak Well annual bull sale. Another great sale with a double top price of \$14,000 and 100% clearance. Extremely happy to get a successful bid on Lot 10 Bull Oak Well Complete P8. This bull will be running with our replacement heifers and our first calvers and a great addition to our breeding program.

Craig Hage from Regari Contractors spread 20 tonnes of single super on all silage and hay paddocks at the beginning of March. Also, we

Moving a new born twin from Hamiltons.



The Springfield yards at sunset.





Cows calving in Pine.



ABOVE: The 4 poddies having a drink.

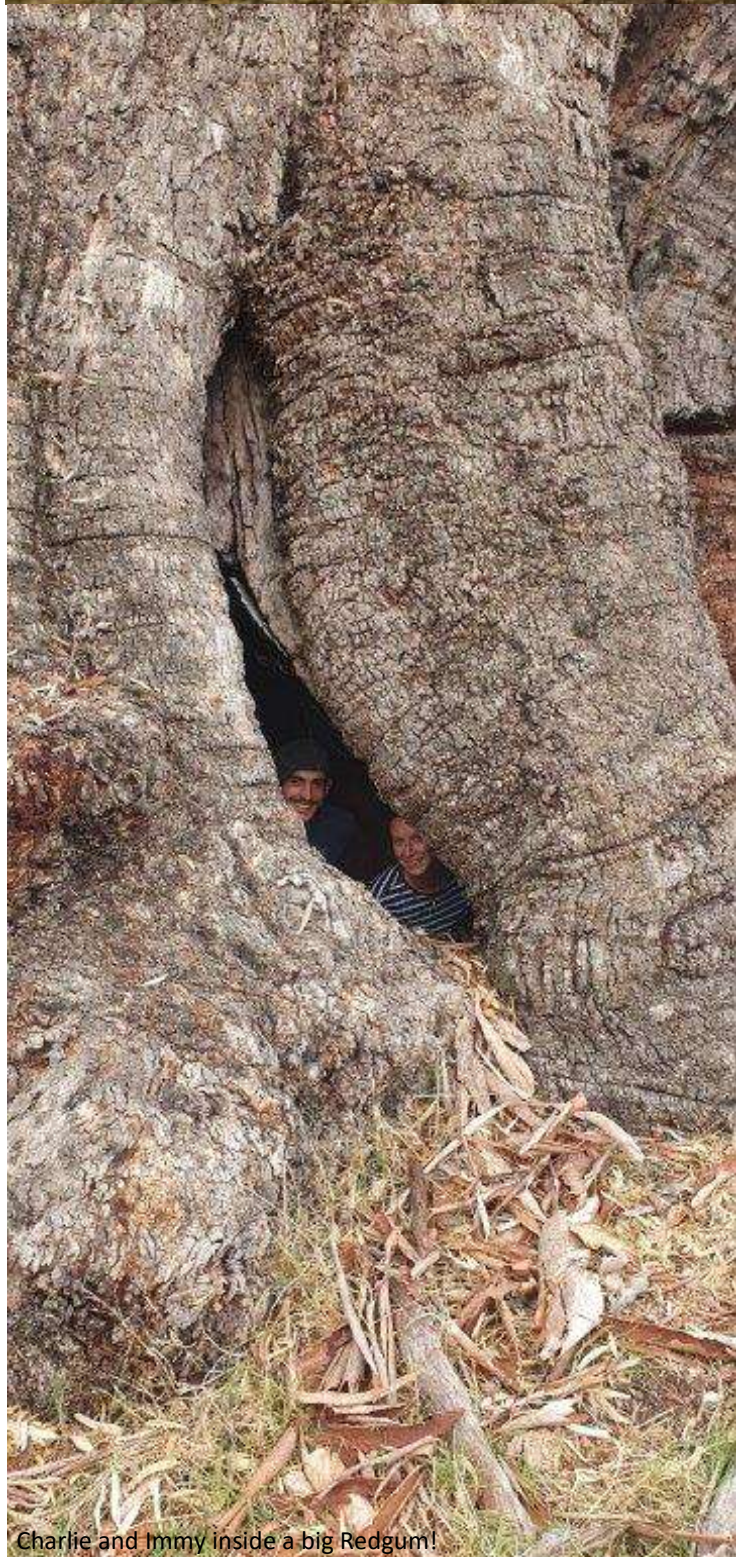
welcomed Charlie from Argentina, who was working the horses as well as helping me with some urgent fencing and a bit of spot spraying. Charlie ended up leaving a few weeks early at the end of March to head up to Blina before the borders closed.

Not a drop of rain was recorded in April last year, this year we recorded just over 100mm which has kicked off the season perfectly. We continued to have some beautiful warm sunny days which boosted germination to start our spray program for broadleaf weeds a month early. Another 60mm in May prompted a pasture renovation program in Paspallum and Big paddock to eradicate barley grass and hopefully increase our silage production by up to 5 tonnes of dry matter per hectare. Both paddocks were sprayed out with a brew of round up and combination of knock down herbicides and insecticides. Craig Hage returned to direct drill a clover and annual ryegrass blend and spread pasture boosta fertilizer to add nitrogen.

This year the annual bull examinations were performed by Mike Boerema from Willunga.



Last of the steers being loaded.



Charlie and Immy inside a big Redgum!

Mike tested for motility and morphology in the semen and does a full health assessment. All bulls passed with great results.

The seasons are changing and with winter arriving in the past few weeks the temperature has dropped to as low as -4 degrees. With that came some very heavy frosts. The conditions have slowed the spraying down a bit but I'm still making good progress when weather permits. Another good rainfall for June so far with just under 100mm recorded in the gauge. Calf marking is scheduled for next week so I'm looking forward to getting back in the yards. Hopefully we have a few extra helping hands with school holidays starting. Looking forward to seeing a lot more rain in the next 2 months. It would be nice to think that we will fill some dams this year.

Shannon Kunst
Ω



Callum staging a photo on a stationary motorbike with Zali and Willa

Jumbuck House

Monica Walker

Many of you will know or at least have talked to Monica, who has now been employed at Jumbuck House as successive PA to BH, HG, & JH MacLachlan for thirty four years, with only some brief absences for maternity reasons, otherwise continuous service.

Monica is a diligent all rounder with an excellent memory and very real skills in dealing with suppliers when ordering. Her sunny disposition makes her a very popular member of the Jumbuck team, as well as the longest serving.

H.G. MacLachlan

Ω



Staff Referral System!

Nobody knows better than you what's involved in your job, right? So do you know anyone who would love to do your job?

Refer and be rewarded!

To reward you and say thanks, Jumbuck will pay a 'finder's fee' if your referral is employed. Half of the payment is made upon the referral's start and the remainder paid once they pass probation.

The fee varies from job to job; ranging from \$200 for a station hand to \$2000 for a manager.

Some easy money!

So get thinking.... who do you know that would be an excellent new employee for Jumbuck Pastoral?!

To 'refer a friend', ask them to contact Shane Badman on 08 8100 1609 or email recruitment@jumbuckpastoral.com.au making sure they mention your name!

