AUSTRALIAN
AGE OF DINOSAURS
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER ISSUE 6 MARCH 2013

INTRODUCING THE MYSTERIOUS "OLIVER" FROM DIG-A-DINO 2012

Every now and then a Dig-A-Dino team finds something totally different to anything else that has found before. This is exactly what happened at the August 2012 dinosaur dig.

In virtually all cases the first dinosaur bone discovered at a dig site is the one on top of the ground and in most cases this is a pile of broken up fragments that have been breaking down in the weather for many years. This year we worked on a site that was totally different and we would like to formally introduce you all to "Oliver".

Oliver was discovered by the owners of Elderslie Station near Winton. Our first job at the dig was to collect a small pile of bone pieces on top of the ground. Unlike most of our finds which consist of big broken and weathered chunks of fossil bone, this site had only a few pieces and they were beautifully preserved. The bone had a smooth outer veneer and the breaks were all sharp and clean. It took no time to fit it together, but what did it belong to?

The bone was obviously a femur (thigh bone) and quite small – certainly smaller than the sauropods we have been digging up. Could it be an ornithopod dinosaur such as *Muttaburrasaurus*? Or even a huge theropod like a tyrannosaur? The bone was hollow – nothing like our sauropods and yet its shape just didn't fit that of an ornithopod. Our excitement mounted as we considered the possibility of a huge carnivorous dinosaur. *(cont. pg 2)*

2012 "Oliver" Dig-A-Dino site

"OLIVER" CONTINUED

It wasn't long before more clues began to emerge. No sooner had we removed the black-soil overburden from the site when one of our volunteer diggers Elizabeth Vanderwerff uncovered a small bone fossil. It was a claw – but it was nothing like the claws we had found before. Before long we were digging up rib bones – too small for a sauropod but yet quite large. What was this dinosaur?

A couple of days later Peter Vanderwerff (husband of Elizabeth – both pictured at left) found a bone that just might answer all of our questions. It was a small (by sauropod standards) flat bone but still it seemed to be too big for an ornithopod or theropod dinosaur. It looked like the miniature scapular (shoulder bone) of a sauropod!

One thing we have certainly learnt over the years is not to be too hasty when identifying dinosaurs but at least now we can speculate. And we reckon it just might be a baby sauropod! Just like every other animal on the planet the sauropod dinosaurs produced offspring and this exciting new discovery looks very much like that is what it is. But can we be sure? Of course not! It could be a new species of small sauropod! Or even a weird new form of meat eating dinosaur. And when our staff and volunteers have finished preparing it in the laboratory we will know for sure! Any takers?

AAOD staff members Trish Sloan (Laboratory & Tour Manager) and Carl Webster (Tour Guide / Preparator) piece together the small femur found on the surface of the Oliver site

AAOD Staff – Here's Kat Thompson

Tour Guide / Retail Co-ordinator Kat Thompson points out the crushing in the scapula of Diamantinasaurus matildae*, aka "Matilda"*

Sometimes the world seems to conspire to make something happen that you never imagined. If Kathrine's parents hadn't taken the scenic route from Sydney to Innisfail, happened to change the planned route to include Winton, or seen the Museum's highway sign and popped in for a tour, her life wouldn't have changed so dramatically. The Thompson's loved the Museum and enquired about a possible job for their son who is keen on dinosaurs. Once home again, it was his older sister – known to us at Kat – whose ears pricked up and who expressed interest in being a Tour Guide, prepping dinosaur fossils and living in the Outback. The rest, as they say, is history – perfect for someone with a BA double major in Medieval Studies and History.

Kat was also attracted by the idea of doing something different from the usual office and shop work, although ironically she has recently taken on the new responsibilities of Retail Co-ordinator for the Museum Shop. Working at the Museum has given Kat lots of scope to keep learning and changing her understanding of dinosaurs and natural history. Also, she enjoys seeing how our visitors react to what they learn and see here.

While Winton can't provide a big shopping centre, new movies on big screens, dozens of TV channels and family and old friends around the corner, for Kat there are other drawcards. She says, "People tend to know each other so much more, they're friendly and stop to chat or at least acknowledge one another in passing. And I've only seen the DVD of the Outback Festival so I'm really looking forward to the actual event." According to Kat, all this and Winton's great pubs make it a nice place to live in its own unique way. Add in dinosaurs and fantastic scenery and what more could you want? Well, like Steve Rumbold in our December issue, Kat would prefer not to have to iron the Museum work shirt and really wants to get rid of all the pesky flies.

Draconex hogwartsia tops the lists of Kat's favourite dinosaurs, purely based on the crazy name. Anything called Dragon King of the Hogwarts is a winner with her.

Dinosaurs to Dunnarts

Since the disappearance of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago, the Australian continent has moved northwards. Even over the past 20,000, the area around The Jump-Up has changed significantly. The plants and animals left behind following the last Ice Age have adapted to new climates and environments. Today, marsupial mammals and small reptiles rule the plains of inland Australia. The marsupials, including kangaroos, possums and dunnarts, have a unique reproductive system that has adapted to enable them to survive through the droughts, floods, dry winters and vast temperatures ranges of the central west.

Many plants on The Jump-up are stunted from growing on the hard cap rock surface but those growing around the edges of the rocky cliffs are in many cases unique. These include three species of fig trees – rare survivors of a time when Western Queensland was a much cooler and wetter place.

The Museum's "Dinosaurs to Dunnarts" program looks at the plants and animals found in the 4,500 acres on and around The Jump-Up. Museum visitors are invited to take photographs of the flora and fauna, which are uploaded to the Australian Age of Dinosaurs website and then identified by scientists specialising in Australian natural history. The photographs submitted by visitors and staff feature on a DVD playing on the television in the Laboratory waiting room.

On your next visit to The Jump-Up, see if you can identify these animals and plants:
☐ Wallaroo ☐ Peregrine falcon ☐ Scorpion ☐ Ghost gum ☐ Lancewood
Grab a "Dinosaurs to Dunnarts" brochure from the Laboratory waiting room to learn about taking great natural history shots, explore this biodiversity of the fascinating Jump-Up environment, compose your landscape, flora and fauna photographs and then send them in for identification and display. We'd love to share them with all our visitors.

The "Dinosaurs to Dunnarts" program is supported by the CAMD Council of Australian Museum Directors and 2010 International Year of Biodiversity.

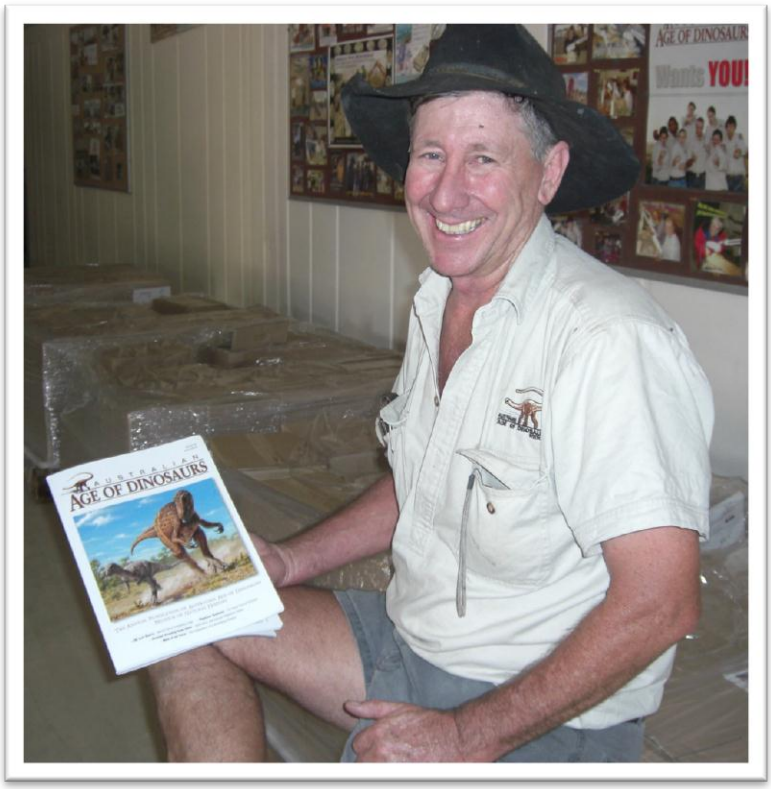
*Left: Holly Grevillea (*Grevillea wickhamii*)*

Right: Centralian Knob Tailed Gecko - Nephrurus amyae

Contact Australian Age of Dinosaurs

Telephone	07 4657-0712	Web	www.australianageofdinosaurs.com.au
Email	info@aaod.com.au		(Shop and info on Dig-A-Dino, Prep-A-Dino)
Fax	07 4657-0716	Post	PO Box 408, Winton 4735, Queensland
Bookings	07 4657-0079	Visit	Dinosaur Drive (off Landsborough Hwy), Winton

AAOD Journal Issue 10 is a TEN!



After labouring over Issue 10 for nearly a year, AAOD Executive Chairman David Elliott is happy – the proud "father" of yet another healthy publication!

Six pallets of the Australian Age of Dinosaurs' annual Journal, Issue 10, finally arrived in early February and the envelope stuffing and posting process is moving at a furious rate on The Jump-Up.

The four feature stories are:

- **CSI Lark Quarry**, search for a cretaceous killer by Dr Scott Hocknull
- **Claystone Textbooks**, the fossil flora of Dinmore by Dr Stephen McLoughlin
- **Devonian Dreaming Down Under**, Australia's spectacular Palaeozic fishes by Professor John A. Long, and
- **West of the Fence**, the rediscovery of a disobliging dinosaur by David Elliott *(this is a great read, Ed.)*

The Journal's intriguing "Blacksoil" offerings are Australia's Ancient Swordfish, A Snail Tale, Bloat and Float (hint: think sauropods in marine deposits), Lungfish Living, Lungfish Lost and The Ridge Ripper.

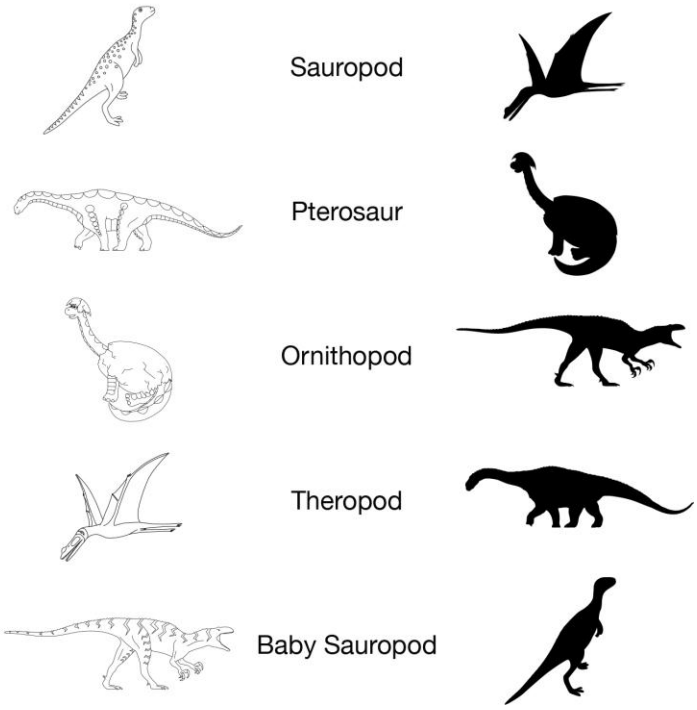
Liberally adorned with gorgeous photographs and entrancing tales, Issue 10 scores a definite10. Society members are reminded to send in their renewal payments so that they don't miss out.

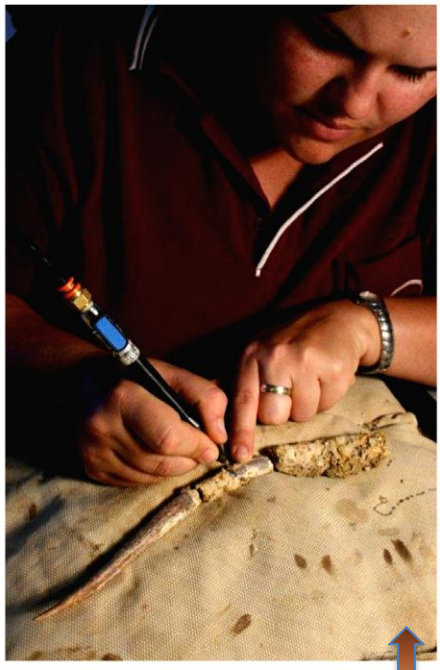
Hats off to Narelle & Ron

It's easy to love some of our Honorary Technicians, like Narelle and Ron Leven. Narelle (inset photo) and Ron buy caps, they buy AAOD patches, they stitch and stitch and then donate the end results to the AAOD Shop for sale. Administration Manager Linda Young displays the latest offerings and we all say "Thank you!"

AAOD Shadow Match

Irene Elliott has drawn five different dinosaurs on the left-hand side but the dinosaurs have become separated from their shadows, which are on the right-hand side. Please help the dinosaurs find their lost shadows.





This Mystery Bone is being prepared in the Laboratory by Trish Sloan. Do you know what it is? The answer is on page 7.

A 2012 Dig-A-Dino Team – this could be YOU!

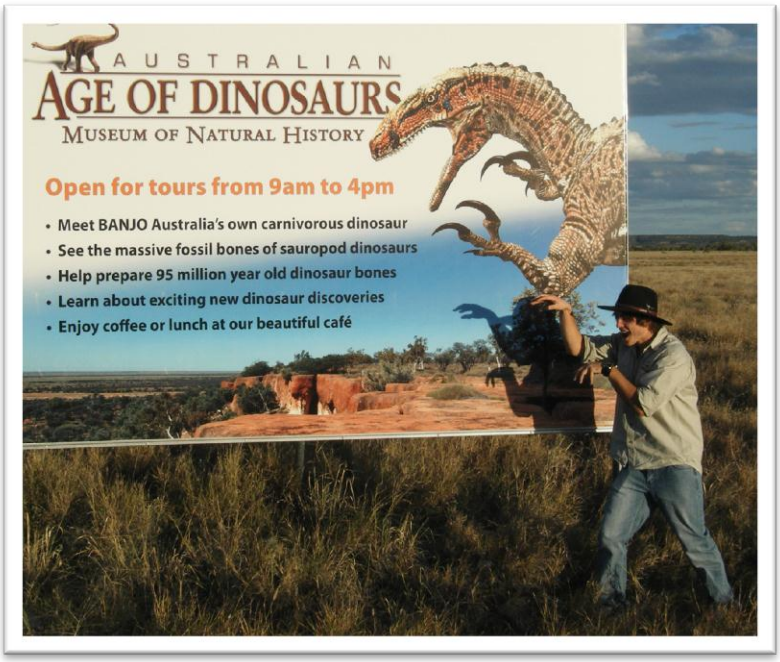
Join the AAOD team at DIG-A-DINO 2013

Here are this year's dig dates for which bookings are being taken now.

Week 1 – 19 May to 25 May 2013 (2 places available due to cancellation)
Week 2 – 26 May to 1 June 2013 (3 places available)

To find out more, contact Dig Co-ordinator Judy Elliott on tel 07 4657-0414 or email judy.elliott@aaod.com.au Judy can send you a brochure or view the slide show and information on http://australianageofdinosaurs.com/aa-dig-a-dino.php

Ciao Carl



A strange metamorphosis overtook Carlin Webster during his year as an AAOD Tour Guide. Werewolf? Dracula? Neither. He's captured here taking on Banjo-like mannerisms. Carl had a different effect on some visitors who confessed they struggled to stay focussed on dinosaurs while he was delivering his tour! Carl is heading home to Albury for a break before maybe going back to university to finish an education degree. Go well Carl, thanks for all your work and the memories.

Diplodocus Welcomed by Staff

Things are never perfect in a workplace but the lack of *Diplodocus* dinosaurs must be a particularly rare staff complaint! It seems that a small order of Diplodocus was received early last 2010 but sold out in two weeks, much to the dismay of staff members and program participants who'd missed out. And then, nothing … no more Diplodocus were available for ssssoooo long! Finally, another supply of the much sought after Diplodocus has arrived. They were accompanied by *Miragaia*, the first European Stegosaur and a new model for Safari in 2012, *Brachiosaurus*, *Dracorex*, *Apatsaurus* and *Giganoto-saurus.* Members are asked to contact Linda (telephone 07 4657-0712 or email linda.young@aaod.com.au) to request their 10% discount from the on-line Shop.

Mystery bone: This is one of Banjo's gastralium. The gastralia are dermal bones similar to ribs situated between the sternum and pelvis and can be found in some modern animals including crocodiles. In theropods they articulated along the midline of the animals stomach