

SAMRA 207

Representing the Royal Australian Armoured Corps
Corporation Limited in South Australia



March 2023, Number 59

2023 COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS

PRESIDENT:
Malcolm Haynes RFD
Mobile: 0408 892 375

**IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT**
Reg Williams AM, RFD
Mobile: 0488 303 599

VICE PRESIDENT
Jim Kennelly RFD
Mobile: 0178 687 775

**SECRETARY,
NEWSLETTER, and
WEBSITE:**
David Mercer OAM
Mobile: 0439 843 897

TREASURER:
Peter Byass RFD
Mobile: 0418 841 680

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bill McKeough
Mobile: 0428 835 339

Steve Langdon
Mobile: 0452 507 986

Gerald Hopgood
Mobile: 0401 672 747

Warwick Edwards
Mobile: 0402 780 171

Thomas Begg
Mobile 0424 144 812

Bob Ireland
Mobile 0421 846 592

Presidents Page

It's been many years since I was last on a field exercise with 3rd / 9th Light Horse. These days, going into the field for me means being embedded in an Incident Management Team responding to a natural disaster, as I did with the SES in November and December 2022. An IMT is usually inside a building with access to regular meals and sleeping accommodation. It's a world away from working from an armoured vehicle while on exercise at Cultana, Woomera or Puckapunyal.

For all the hard work and punishing hours, I miss those days. One of the things I miss are the smells of armoured soldiering. I wonder how many others, who have shared the same experience, miss:

- The smell of diesel exhaust fumes when the vehicles starts-up first thing in the morning
- The smell of diesel fuel that has spilt over your tanksuit during a night-time replenishment and stays with you for the remainder of the exercise
- The smell of cordite from your .30 cal and .50 cal machine guns that fills the turret after a live-fire battle run which impregnates your tanksuit and stays with you for the remainder of the exercise
- The smell of OMD 110 oil and grease that sticks to your tanksuit during vehicle servicing and stays with you for the remainder of the exercise
- The earthy smell of dust or sand that sticks to the diesel, oil, and grease on your tanksuit and stays with you for the remainder of the exercise
- The unwashed smell of not being able to have a proper shower for days or weeks on end that stays with you for the remainder of the exercise
- The sickly, almost pungent-sweet smell of being packed in a vehicle with other soldiers who haven't been able to wash either
- The smell of beef with beans or chicken supreme meals cooked from a 10-man ration pack. Regardless of the meal, they all smell the same and for that matter, taste the same
- The smell of a freshly prepared jaffle cooked over a gas fire which reminds you that little luxuries are so important

Vehicles have changed over the years, however, the nature of soldiering and the conditions experienced by armoured crew have not. This is something that we can share across generations with those who are currently serving in 3rd / 9th Light Horse. One of the objectives of SAMRA is to provide an opportunity for those who have served over the years and are currently serving to get together to continue the comradeship formed during their service. I would love to see SAMRA members encouraging their mates-in-service to join SAMRA and share the comradeship we enjoy. If this means doing things differently to the way we are doing it now, I would love to hear from you.

An important way to maintain contact and connect with other service personnel is to attend an ANZAC Day ceremony. Wherever you are, I encourage you to attend a Dawn Service or other event. As usual, SAMRA will conduct a service at the Light Horse Memorial at 0800 h on Anzac Day followed by participation in the March at 0945 h. Details are in this newsletter.

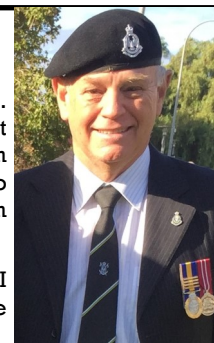
SAMRA activities

The only formal SAMRA function since the last newsletter has been the Old and Bold Lunch on Thursday 2 Feb 2023 at the Seaclyff Hotel. About 25 SAMRA members and partners attended. Thanks again, to Dave Mercer for coordinating these events.

While there haven't been formal SAMRA events, I am pleased to advise that in mid-January 2023, we sent care packages to deployed members serving on Operation Resolute in Darwin. Of these, five packages were sent to 3rd / 9th Light Horse members and three were sent to members of B Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment. This has been a good way to build our relationship with 1st Armoured Regiment who now command 3rd / 9th Light Horse. My thanks to Thom Begg, a member of the SAMRA Committee, for arranging these care packages.

Nec Aspera Terrent

Malcolm Haynes



"I don't measure a man's success by how high he climbs but by how high he bounces when he hits bottom."

**General George
S. Patton**

G'day everyone. Some of you might remember me as a driver in 1 Troop, 3 Troop or SHQ Troop, others may remember me toward the end of my career as Admin Clerk to the Stars, the artist formerly known as Tpr. Westley. I spent almost 13 years at 3/9th in both a full time and part time career. Over that time I've made life long mates and have many wonderful memories.

Almost 8 years ago I moved to the US. For the first 2 years I lived in Las Vegas. I was able to find a small ANZAC Day service that was created by a Kiwi lady. She decided to make her own service as none seemed to be available at the time. It was great seeing a service from not only a New Zealand point of view, but also a Maori point of view. The service attracted about 30 people, a handful of ex Army and RAAF Aussies, a few ex US military personnel and a handful of Aussie tourists that wanted to pay their respects. I was also joined by former 3/9th and 2 Cav Black Hat, Russell Jones. I was also honoured to be asked to lay a wreath on behalf of the Aussies. It was a really special time.

Not too long after, I moved to Phoenix, Arizona. My first year here I was unable to find a service and was a little bit disappointed. I managed to find a local Aussie Rules Football team called the Arizona Hawks. I went out for a run with them a few times, but my knees and back aren't built like they used to be. Sometimes my brain forgets how old my body is. ANZAC Day was rolling around again and I was asked by members of the team if I had any plans for ANZAC Day. I told I hadn't found a service in the area. They let me know that there wasn't one. I was then asked by the coach, a bloke from WA, if I would say a few words at half time of the Arizona Hawks v San Diego Lions match on Anzac Weekend. I accepted with no clue as to what I would say. I knew that out of the about 60 players and supporters only 6 were Aussies. So I prepared a small speech about the origins of ANZAC Day and what it meant to Aussies and Kiwis. I finished it up with "the Ode" and got a small round of applause.



I was taken aback with how emotional a literally 2 minute speech could be. Turned out there were about 4 ex US military in the Lions team and they were quick to come up and shake my hand and thank me for those brief words. On a side note, a funny thing happened after the match (AZ Hawks went down that day unfortunately) when a couple of blokes from the Lions mentioned to me that before the game, they saw me in my suit, and with the tie I had chosen thought that I was a scout for the Port Adelaide Football Club!

After the positive reception to that small "service", I thought about Vegas and how one Kiwi had created an ANZAC Day service because no-one else would. It was a quiet, intimate affair and it was perfect. There was no reason I couldn't do the same thing myself. Over that next year an Aussie and Kiwi community had started to build in Phoenix, with meetings once a month a local watering hole. When I brought up the idea of an ANZAC Day service, it was met with a resounding YES! I was also told the old saying of, "If you build it, they will come". I had started to put all the pieces together when Covid hit. Our widely anticipated service was cancelled in 2019. 2020 rolled around and were once again put out of business.

Come 2021 and people were pretty sick of being housebound and the plan to do ANZAC Day went ahead. We hired a small park for the Saturday. We made it for a time that would hopefully allow the maximum amount of people to attend. Around 11am with a barbie and beers afterwards. We expected about 20 people. I was overwhelmed when we did a rough head count and came up with about 60 people give or take. We had a number of Aussie ex-service men, all were amazed at how big the turn out was. I'd managed to put together some makeshift flag poles out of PVC pipe that unfortunately didn't work as well as I'd hoped. I gave a small speech about Anzac Day, I mentioned how we might all be far from home, away from family and friends, and although today wasn't actually Anzac Day, at this very time, Aussies and Kiwi's were starting Dawn Services. The fact that we had all come together, proved that we had not forgotten. I also thanked our American brothers, who we have fought side by side with during too many conflicts. While I was annoyed that my flag poles hadn't worked, we also had some minor technical difficulties with National Anthems. The volume was really low and barely audible. I had chills when everyone suddenly started singing the Aussie National anthem in one voice. I hadn't expected that. I was told by most that those technical issues and flag poles didn't matter. The fact that I got everyone together for this day was pretty special. It was rather humbling.

This year, I invested in a small speaker and couple of cordless mics. We had a few technical difficulties again with the speaker set up, but it we'll have that ironed out for next year. I also invested in a couple of "swooper" flag poles and they worked a



little better than the previous year. The thing that surprised me and humbled me even more than the previous year was our attendance. This year we had approximately 150 people join us. It was incredible! We had a service, we had national anthems, we had the Last Post and Reveille all playing over a sound system. We had beers, pies, a barbie and made lots of new friends. It left a tear in this bloke's eye that's for sure.

Anzac Spirit is alive and well in Phoenix.

Regards...Daryl Westley

The planning has begun for 2023. I have a couple of lads that are helping out now. We are trying to organize a trumpet player to belt out the Last Post. There is even talk that we might be able to have the local US Marine base supply a catafalque party. But these are all "ifs and maybes" right now. For now, I'm just happy that the



The Sam Browne belt is named after Sir Samuel James Browne, VC. Browne began his service in India in April 1849 as Second in Command of the 2nd Regiment of Punjab Cavalry, the unit which also later took his name (22nd Sam Browne's Cavalry).

On 31 August 1858, at Seerporah, Browne silenced a field gun, single handed, which blocked the advance but during the fighting he received two sword cuts, one on the knee, and the other on the left shoulder which cut off his arm. The dress regulations for British Officers of the 2nd Punjabis required members to wear their waist belts under their tunics. Browne found this ungainly with his left arm missing, and devised an external belt, supported on the left-hand (sword) side by a shoulder strap. The belt had two shoulder pieces when a pistol was added.

In the Australian Army a brown leather Sam Browne is worn on ceremonial occasions by officers and Warrant Officers Class One of all corps, except those who wear silver dress embellishments (Armoured, Aviation and Nursing Corps); these members wear a black Sam Browne.



A great day was had at our 2022 SAMRA EOY function at Glenelg North in December 2022

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Warwick is a former RAAC member who served with 1st / 15th Royal New South Wales Lancers and is a SAMRA Committee Member.

106 mm RECOILESS RIFLE M40-A1

(Reference Australian Army Journal 162. Lt. Col. A.E. Strong RAAC)

At the time of its introduction in the early 1960s the 106mm Recoilless Rifle was the most potent anti-tank weapon fielded by the Australian Army

With a range of 750 metres against moving targets or 1700 metres against stationary target, its HEAT round could defeat any armour of the day and its HESH round was an effective anti-armour and potent "bunker buster".

It was a light weight weapon, (220kg), which meant that it could be transported mounted on a light vehicle, and could be separated into mount and barrel for man packing, albeit over short distances.

Its main draw backs were the lack of protection for the weapon and crew and pronounced flash and dust blast on firing.

The back blast from the weapon precluded siting in a normal artillery field emplacement, and although designs for weapon pits suitable for emplacing the weapon were included in the article, Col. Stong emphasises "that the basic concept behind employment of the 106mm rifle on the battlefield should be mobility."

This was very much a "shoot and scoot" weapon.

Col. Stong also recommends that the weapon should be "fired from the vehicle on which it is mounted whenever possible."

Hence the development of the Land Rover "Gun Buggy".

69 Land Rover series 2 and series 2a ¼ ton GS Landrovers were converted by 3 Baseworkshops at Broadmeadows Victoria.

These modifications included, amongst others, of removal of the roof, doors and tailgate, fitting of seatbelts, beefed up rear suspension, fittings for the mounting of the gun for travelling, clamps for the crew's personal weapons and an ANPRC 10 radio set, and stowage for 6 rounds of 106mm ammunition.

(The SAMRA collection has a complete set of 6x10 photos showing the above in detail as well as mounting and dismounting the gun).

Unit Squash Team

The crew consisted of 4 soldiers under the command of a corporal.

Although the weapon was deployed to Vietnam, I have been unable to find evidence of it having been used in action. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some gunbuggies were fitted with M60s and used as road convoy escorts.



Crew showing personal weapons.



**Weapon dismounted.
Seated soldier is using the .50 calibre spotting rifle.**

Despite the limitations of the weapon and the gun buggy, (one soldier describing it as "a real pig to drive") it soldiered on in the anti-tank platoons of infantry battalions until well into the 1990s

Informal outdoor portrait of 722 Trooper Ernest Charles Matheson and an unidentified VAD at St Dunstan's Hospital. Born in Cairns, Queensland, Ernest Charles Matheson was working in South Australia as a labourer when he enlisted in the AIF on 25 November 1914, at the age of 22. He was assigned to the 1st Reinforcements, 9th Light Horse Regiment, and after initial training, embarked for overseas service from Melbourne, aboard the troopship HMAS Surada (A52), on 6 February 1915. Trooper Matheson joined his regiment in Egypt on 8 April and was posted to A Squadron. The regiment arrived on Gallipoli in May. Matheson was wounded in the face at Lone Pine on 7 August 1915 and was immediately evacuated to Egypt and then on to England to the 3rd London General Hospital. He lost his left eye and also the sight in his right eye. Once his wounds had healed he was admitted to St Dunstan's Hospital for the blind in November 1915 where he underwent rehabilitation and training for work in civilian life for the next two years. He was discharged from St Dunstan's on 25 November 1917, described as being 'fully trained in mat making', and returned to Australia two days later. He was discharged from the army at the end of January 1918. Although blind, Matheson was able to find his way around parts of London with little assistance. In 1917 he was noticed by a British artist, Claire Sheridan, in Regent's Park, dressed in his uniform. She later recalled that Matheson had attracted her attention 'by the way he walked alone, with his head held high and an inspired expression on his face. He was beautiful and resigned and patient'. His appearance inspired her to create a small painted plaster statue of Matheson, now in the War Memorial collection as ART19568. She replaced the cane he normally carried with the figure of a woman to guide him. Ernest Matheson died in Adelaide in December 1965. St Dunstan's continues to support blind and visually impaired ex-Service men and women today. *Submitted by Keven Draper*



ANZAC Day – Tuesday, 25 April 2023

SAMRA members, their families and members of the general public, are invited to attend the Light Horse Memorial Service at 0800 h on ANZAC Day at the LH Memorial at the cnr of North and East terraces. 3rd/9th LH (SAMR) will be mounting the Catafalque Party.

ANZAC Day March—Meet at the FUP 0945h, Group 12, Western side of Pultney street. Look out for our banner. **DRESS: Beret, medals, jacket, dress trousers and tie.**

This information has been provided by "Hungu" Huang, Aaron Johnson and other recollections. Hungu and Aaron are both current serving members of 3rd / 9th Light Horse. Hungu is the ARA Training WO and Aaron is a Troop Sergeant.

1. Date of activity: October 2003.
2. Name and location of activity: Exercise Central Rhino 2003 at Cultana.
3. Names of people: (Left to right) TPR "Hungu" Huang, TPR Rory Hughes, TPR Matt Alcock, TPR Matthew Playford.
4. Recollections of activity: This was a Squadron field exercise at Cultana involving static .30 cal and .50 cal shooting, battle runs, individual vehicle and troop drills and swimming the vehicles at Port Augusta. The OC was Malcolm Haynes, 2IC was Hamish McKendrick, ARA Training Officer was Adam McIntosh, SSM was Grant O'Dea and Troop Leaders were Andy Kemp, Chris Manning and John Watts.

A notable incident was the TST vehicle recovery training. The ARVL and a Mog were bogged in the salt pans on the south end of Cultana Range. The vehicles got bogged more than expected and took well into the night to recover them. This photo was taken in the El Alamein Range Control area at the conclusion of the exercise. The ARA cadre staff, Dicky Dannatt and Glen McKean, had pushed the troops hard and at the end of the exercise everyone was dirty, dusty and exhausted.



We are co-ordinating a project to add details to photos of unit activities and exercises that have been held since 1948. Your support is requested. Each edition of SAMRAG will have a photo of a unit activity, unit members and / or unit vehicles. If you recognise the photo we would appreciate contacting Malcolm Haynes on haynesfam8@gmail.com or Dave Mercer on david Mercer@adam.com.au with any information on:

1. Date of activity (month and year if possible)
2. Name and location of activity or exercise
3. Names of any people you recognise (please be specific e.g. TPR Bloggs - second from left)
4. Vehicle ARN (if known)

If you have any anecdotes of the photo or the relevant activity, please let us know so they can be published in the next edition of SAMRAG.

We also appreciate contributions of any photos you have with as much detail on the photos as you can provide. Here is the next photo. Thank you for your assistance.



THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

I saw the going down of the sun on that ANZAC Day – the chaotic maelstrom of Australia's bleeding!

I fought in the frozen mud of the Somme and in the blazing destroyer exploding in the North Sea.

I fought on the perimeter at Tobruk. I crashed in the flaming wreckage of a fighter in New Guinea and lived with the damned in a place called Changi.

I fought in the snow in Korea and again in the jungles of Malaya, Borneo, South Vietnam and Timor.

In the deserts of Somalia, Afghanistan and now Iraq.

I was your mate, the kid across the street, the medical student graduate, the mechanic at the corner garage, the baker who brought you your bread.

I was the gardener who cut your lawns and the clerk who sent your bills.

I was a Private in the Army, a Naval Commander, and an Air Force Bombardier.

No man knows me! No name marks my tomb! For I am every Australian Serviceman; I am the Unknown Soldier!

I died for a cause I held just, in the service of my land, so that you and yours may stay in freedom and I am proud to be an Australian.



Unit Squash Team

BROWNING .50 CALIBRE MACHINE GUN

The Browning .50 MG was first introduced in 1921, making it an incredible 102 years old this year. This heavy MG came in different forms depending on its intended use. There were three different barrels the heavily perforated air-cooled model for use in aircraft, while a water-cooled type was used in the anti-aircraft role. The third type the M2HB model had a heavy barrel for prolonged firing and was ideal for armoured vehicles and static infantry defence. Despite the different barrels the rest of the working parts are interchangeable, its reliability and heavy bullet makes it a formidable weapon.

History of the Waler

In 1788, the first fleet of eleven ships to Australia brought with it one stallion, two colts and four mares from the Cape of Good Hope. They were generally thought to be Barb horses. Later ships, such as the *Britannia*, which landed in 1795, brought a further thirty-three Cape horses. The increasing demand in the fledgling colony for saddle and work horses led to migration of notable breeds such as the Thoroughbred, Clydesdale, Suffolk Punch, Cleveland Bay, Lincolnshire trotter, Norfolk Roadster, Yorkshire Coacher, Hackney, Timor pony, Arabian, Percheron and native British ponies.

From the outset of European settlement it was realised horses were needed that could meet the demands of this tough country. All horses that reached Australian shores had already undergone a tough sea voyage and many horses died along the way.

From those survivors, the foundation of a uniquely Australian Colonial horse was established.

The practice of cross-breeding the small number of breeds available in Australia at the time resulted in a versatile work horse with good weight carrying capabilities, speed, endurance and the ability to thrive on the native pastures.

Successive Governors encouraged the breeding of horses to meet the needs of transport and communications in the developing colony. Soon, owners of large properties were to breed these colonial horses by the thousands not only for the domestic needs but for what became a lucrative export trade in remounts, initially to the British Army in India. Strict standards of conformation and temperament were monitored by breeders for the fastidious remount horse agents.

These colonial bred horses became known as the “Waler”, a term coined by the British in India given to those horses that were bred in the colony of New South Wales.

TA Coghlan, who became the government statistician in 1886, wrote:-
“The colony is specially adapted for the breeding of saddle and light harness horses and it is doubtful where these particular breeds of Australian horses are anywhere surpassed. The bush horse is hardy and swift and capable of making very long and rapid journeys when fed only on the ordinary herbage of the country: and in times of drought, when grass and water have become scanty, these animals often perform astonishing feats of endurance” (Wealth and Progress of NSW 1884, p348).

Walers were used overseas as remounts for the cavalry, as artillery horses, and as carriage and sport horses for both the British Army and the Raj in India. By 1867, the Waler was regarded by the British as amongst the finest cavalry horse in the world. Horses were exported from the colony as early as 1816 through private sales and the flourishing remount trade which ran from the 1830s till the 1960s.



Walers were supplied to the Australian army for the Boer War, where mounted on their strong robust Walers, the Australians established an enviable reputation for their horses and their horsemanship. Later in WWI, the Waler became legendary with the Australian Light Horse for their feats of endurance and courage in the desert campaigns and later in France.

During WWI, about 160,000 horses were sent overseas. The Light Horse proved themselves with feats of endurance and bravery in the sands of the Middle East. One of the most courageous and internationally recognised charges was that of the 4th and 12th Regiments at Beersheba on 31 October 1917, where after a full night's march and a day's fighting with no water, they galloped across a burning plain at the entrenched and heavily armed Turks, winning the day and the water wells of Beersheba. A monument was erected in Sydney by returned soldiers who due to quarantine and army economies had to leave their mounts behind. It has the inscription *“by members of the Desert Mounted Corps and friends, to the gallant horses who carried them over the Sinai Desert into Palestine, 1915-19. They suffered wounds, thirst, hunger and weariness almost beyond endurance, but they never failed. They did not come home.”*

Again Walers were supplied to the Army during WWII for use by the secret North Australia Observer Unit who carried out surveillance of the remote northern coastline. A small number also went with the army to Papua New Guinea and to Burma. However, during this time mechanisation had begun to supersede horses both in the army and in general usage throughout the country.

At home Walers proved the ideal utility and stockhorse also being used by the mounted police. However, with phasing out of the remount trade in the 1940's and the onset of mechanization, commercial breeding of Walers rapidly declined. Some breeders destroyed their stock but others simply abandoned them to run free on their station properties. By the 1960's, the Waler had virtually disappeared from the domestic scene, with recreational and competition riders favouring more refined imported purebred horse such as Thoroughbred, Arab, European Warmbloods and Quarter horses rather than the old fashioned heavier boned colonial breed with no studbook. The Waler, once lauded to be one of the greatest cavalry horses in history, became an anachronism and almost became extinct. **Source [Waler Horse Society of Australia Inc](http://www.walerhorse.org.au)**

The following items are available for purchase. All profits support the Association:

- ASSOCIATION PLAQUES - \$40.00
- BLACK BASEBALL CAP EMBROIDERED WITH THE 3rd/9th LH (SAMR) BADGE ON THE FRONT AND THE WORDS 'SAMRA' ON THE BACK — \$20.00
- NAME BADGES—\$25.00
- BLACK POLO SHIRT, BADGE ON THE FRONT, WITH SAMRA UNDERNEATH— \$45.00 WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING SIZES IN STOCK 2XL = 3, L = 1 AND M = 1
- 3rd/9th LH (SAMR) BLAZER POCKET BADGE - \$25.00
- RAAC LAPEL BADGE—\$6.00
- SAMRA MEMBERSHIP LAPEL BADGE—\$5.00
- ASSOCIATION TIE—\$33.00
- UNIT TIE—\$33.00
- 100th Anniversary of Beersheba Medallion were struck specifically to commemorate this important date in our ALH history.

We only have one left priced at \$30.00, plus \$10 for postage.



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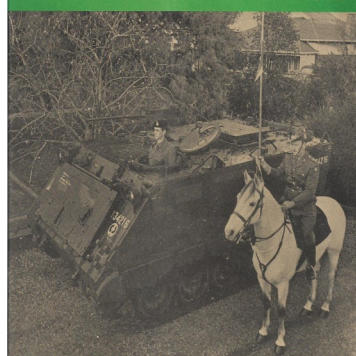
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THE REGIMENTAL JOURNAL

of the
3rd/9th SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MOUNTED RIFLES

Volume 1, No. 1, June, 1966



1966 SAMRAG

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2023 SOCIAL CALENDAR

- **Tuesday, 25 Apr—ANZAC Day, 0800 at LH Memorial, then the RSL SA march through the city.**
- **Thursday, 8 Jun—Old & Bold lunch at the Lockleys Hotel, 1200 for 1230.**
- **Wednesday, 16 Aug—35th Annual General Meeting.**
- **Thursday, 20 Sep—Old & Bold lunch at the Maid of Auckland Hotel, 1200 for 1230.**
- **Wednesday, 11 Oct—Black Hat Night.**
- **1st Week in November—SAMRA AFX at the Stansbury caravan park.**
- **Saturday, 2 Dec—SAMRA EOY family function venue to be confirmed.**