



THE

# BUSH TELEGRAPH

## From the H&C Manager

### A Big Thank You!

With the end of 2008 fast approaching, I'd like to thank all of the volunteers who have helped to make this year's scheduled H&C activities a success.

These people have helped out by managing Tilterweira when George wanted a break, organised and conducted workshops at Tilterweira for visitors, assisted with 2008 Youth Camp and helped setup and assisted with the management of Hunters Days at St Marys.

While the help of these guys and girls is greatly appreciated, there is always room for more volunteers, so if you want to put your hand up and get involved, don't hesitate to get in contact.

The 2009 calendar has been released and includes numerous Tilterweira activities, three St Marys Hunters Days and provides four new ones.

The R licence Forest Hunts and Deer Farm visits are activities that have been requested by participants at our workshops and chosen by the H&C Management committee to trial for the year.

Due to the way these workshops are structured they can only cater for a limited number of applicants, so these camps will only be offered to registered H&C participants.

To ensure your applications is considered please return it early so that there is plenty of time for notification.

### Details of the weekend State Forest Hunts:

Negotiations have taken place with Game Council NSW and Forests NSW to obtain access to various areas.

The selected forests are being reviewed so that participants will have a good opportunity to take game, with the forest to be booked for a period of three days.

The base camp will be set up on Friday morning. Participants are to be self sufficient ( accommodation, tucker and showering).

Information on the dates of these proposed visits can be found in the 2009 H&C Calendar (page 4) and application forms are included in your H&C mail-out.

### Details of the weekend Deer Farm Visits:

This is possibly the most exciting workshop SSAA NSW H&C has been able to offer registered participants.

The Camp will open for invited participants on Friday evening. It has workshops on deer species, management and hunting techniques and allows time to sit and watch deer as they do their thing in the large farm enclosures.

The farmer is very particular about his operation and has strict management and quarantine procedures. The Game Council NSW version of this workshop has proven very popular in the past so it will be important to apply early so that you can obtain one of the limited places. I recently had an opportunity to inspect the farm and it will provide an excellent location for this workshop.

For security reasons, the location of the deer farm, along with weekend state forest hunt, will not be divulged until participants have confirmed their attendance.

Information on the dates of these proposed visits can be found in the 2009 H&C Calendar (page 4) and application forms are included in your H&C mail-out.

### GPS

GPS use and accurate navigation has been the largest single request from participants at H&C workshops.

SSAA St Marys Retail Manager Anthony Papalia has investigated offering GPS products as part of the St Marys product range. Electronic mapping technology has changed considerably over the last few years making it difficult to provide adequate staff training to advise clients.

Recent additions to the Australian market have been several advanced GPS units with high quality moving map technology. NSW State Forests has also been working on a making available a forest package that provides boundary information for all R licence forests.

To ensure accurate and current information is provided to workshop participants GPS OZ representatives have been invited to participate in the SSAA H&C workshops.

They will be in attendance at the Hunters day in December and February with a display of current GPS Technology.

SSAA St Marys have added to the shelves a supply of very basic GPS Units the Bushnell Backtrack (product product review page 4).

SSAA has appointed Mat Godson as the Australian SSAA Hunting Coordinator. He is based in Adelaide and is working towards developing SSAA hunting. Matthew was invited to visit SSAA NSW and review the way the H&C program works with Hunter Workshops, Tilterweira and Game Council NSW. During his visit he met Game Council NSW staff and participated in several NSW State forest visits.

This visit is important as it will allow Matthew the opportunity to gain an understanding of SSAA NSW H&C program and the type of hunting opportunities available in NSW.

### Membership Matters

Your continued SSAA NSW H&C membership is important to us, as it allows the H&C Program managers to continue to develop workshop activities and provide programs at Tilterweira.

A decision to value add your SSAA NSW H&C membership has been made by the H&C management committee. There are now merchandise based incentives for you to consider when you rejoin SSAA NSW H&C.

Anthony Papalia has been busy ensuring the products that are offered are excellent value and will provide long service. During the year other H&C participant specials will continue to be offered. The two products offered in 2008 ( Binoculars and the Ridgeline winter pack ) were good value and all the recipients have indicated they were very pleased with the purchase.

If you have any product suggestions for 2009 please let SSAA NSW H&C know so the request can be passed on to Anthony for consideration.

**John Pond**  
H&C Manager

# Overseas visitors enjoy the Tilterweira experience

*Earlier this year Austrians, Gerald, and son, Sebastian Shoeblinger, took part in the SSAA Hunting and Conservation, Father and Son Camp, held at Tilterweira Station.*

*This is an edited account of Gerald's stay in Australia. A full feature on his visit will be published in the Hunter magazine in 2009.*

As I've always had a fondness for Australia and its beautiful nature and wide empty spaces, it seemed like a great place to go hunting.

The Aussie outback is a dangerous place for the careless or un-prepared visitor, so I needed to gain knowledge as well as ensure any legal requirements were met, before I ventured out.

Information from the Police in NSW or QLD was sparse and hard to get, and it wasn't until I stumbled upon the SSAA website that I finally found the support and information I required.

I was very impressed with the professionalism and help they were able to provide and once I found out about the H&C program and the activities it provides, I realised this was the way to go.

After getting in contact with John Pond, I was permitted to participate in the Father and Son Camp with my oldest son Sebastian, whose interest in hunting and nature is as big as mine.

With the help of John, Richard Gawned and SSAA NSW staff we were able to organise all the necessary paper-work and permits to take the trip and it wasn't long before we had our bags packed and were ready to go.

After spending one week in Sydney we took off for Tilterweira from the Sydney domestic airport first to Dubbo and later via Cobar to Bourke with a small 2 engine airplane. This was quite exciting as we had never travelled that way before.

We were greeted at Bourke by H&C volunteer John Creamer, who picked us up and took us the rest of the way to Tilterweira.

Arriving at our destination, we were introduced to the other H&C Volunteers and



**New Experience:** Gerald was captivated by some of the Australian fauna and flora he came across for the first time

the Station manager George Hackney. Their friendly and helpful attitude towards two European greenhorns who have got no clue about the environment, the possible dangers and necessities of the outback, was exceptional.

After a small conversation about our background and hunting experience we got down to business quite soon. After choosing a suitable rifle from George's stock, we proceeded to meet the other participants of the Camp before settling into our room at the shearer's quarter.

Not long after we were shown how to sight in our rifles and learnt about safety regulations at the shooting range.

I realised that the Aussies give more regard, in general, to shooting proficiency and -conditions compared to Europe, as sighting in is usually only done once a year only.

All of the camp participants used the opportunity to visit the Shooting range several times during our stay in order to improve our shooting proficiency and correct the rifle scope if needed.

After lunch we have got a heap of theoretical knowledge concerning orientation, tour preparation, GPS-handling, game tracking and animal wildlife.

I have to mention that Aussies approaching these topics in a more direct, uncomplicated and practical way compared to Europe.

I also have to stress that the camaraderie between the hunters and the H&C volunteers was unbelievable and it seemed that they had known each other for years.

In Europe it takes more time to reach that point, as people are more reserved and the social gap between them is sometimes considerable.

Common duty activities like cleaning the dishes and chopping the firewood started immediately with no discussion or prior schedule or discussion. The communication with our Aussie mates was sometimes a bit difficult as their accent and my German-Accent was hard to understand at the beginning. Later we could adapt our pronunciation to be more understandable.

The next day we left early at dawn together with John Creamer as our guide to our designated hunting block taking our lunch and water.

Pretty soon we spotted a single pig, but it darted away into the underbrush lignum before I was ready to shoot. So we left the 4WD back and proceeded further on foot. I was impressed by the nature around us and the different animals I species I had never seen or heard before.

Every plant looked exotic to us. Wow, we were really in the Outback!

As it was Winter, the temperature in the early morning was cold, but improved soon up to approximately 20 degrees, very comfortable for the long walking during the hunt.



**Big Hit:** Sebastian, with John Creamer and his first Billy

After patrolling around some waterholes and billabongs we spotted some track marks from pigs and emus, but encountered only a wild cow, which we spared.

It escaped in a slow pace after sensing our presence. After checking our direction and distance constantly with the GPS and the map we toured through the wilderness in search of game, but met only a fox who escaped immediately.

John explained to us the different species of birds and plants and gave notice of any remarkable detail like fruit, by standing roos or birds of prey.

Later we moved back to the 4WD and proceeded further till we spotted a flock of goats near a swamp. After a short stalk, I was close enough to take aim at a mid-sized white Billy, who presented his broadside inattentively.

The 308/ 150 gr bullet hit him well and he went down immediately. Afterwards John gave us a detailed training in gutting and skinning the carcass of the goat. Unfortunately I have damaged the goat's belly with the bullet as he was turning away in the very moment of the shot. So we took along the meat for the farm dogs Nell and Floss.

Back at the home stead we admired the trophies of the other hunters and exchanged the details of the hunt. Several trophy goats have been taken and each of them gave room for a nice story to tell accompanied by a cold beer.

We will never forget the time spent at Tilterweira, nor the many friendships we forged during our trip and we are already looking forward to our next visit to Australia.

**Gerald Shoeblinger**

## St Marys Hunter Open Day

The upcoming Hunter Open Day, held at the St Marys Indoor Shooting Centre on February 22, is shaping up as one of the big highlights on the 2009 calendar.

The day-long event, will host about a dozen stalls boasting the latest in accessories, clothing and knives. African and Australian safari outfitters will also be on display, along with information on getting a Restricted (R) Licence and the SSAA's Hunting and Conservation program.

The day is open to the public. Entry cost is a gold coin, with all proceeds donated to the McGrath Foundation, it promises to be a great day!

A full list of exhibitors, displays and presentations will be available, closer to the event, from the SSAA NSW website, [www.ssaansw.org.au](http://www.ssaansw.org.au). For further information contact the State Office on (02) 8889 0400.

## Blackfoot Design Writing Competition Winner

The winner of this year's Blackfoot Design Writing competition, is Neale Hughes, for his article "Armchair Bunnies" which appeared in Issue 2, of the Bush Telegraph.

Judged by Adam Leto SSAA NSW Communications Officer, John Dunn SSAA NSW H&C Education Officer and Dave Greig from Blackfoot designs, Neale will receive a Blackfoot Design Blaze hunting jacket, valued at \$100.

Neale will be presented with the jacket at the Hunters Day, at the St Marys Indoor Shooting Centre, in February.

The H&C would like to thank all of this year's participants for their outstanding contributions and look forward to hearing more hunting yarns in 2009.



## Tilterweira Report

There has been plenty of activity out here the past few months, with the various camps and workshops, but things are expected to quieten down over Christmas.

Tilterweira has recently received about an inch and a half of rain and things are pretty green, with good sightings of goats and pigs.

Actually, one of the biggest pigs I've seen on the property was spotted just a few weeks back, along with about eight pretty good-sized young ones by the river.

Myself and a few volunteers have just finished pulling apart the big green water tank and brought it back to the property, which took quite a bit of effort and manpower.

Now that we've got it back here, it will be a matter of piecing it back together and stationing it adjacent to the shearers' quarters.

It is one of the few projects we will be working on next year and it is sure to be a valuable asset, once it is up and running.

Many members and volunteers were fortunate to take advantage of the great conditions and activities at Tilterweira this year and with another extensive program planned, 2009 should offer plenty of good hunting.

George Hackney

## Tilterweira Youth Camp

The annual SSAA Tilterweira Youth Camp, a week-long adventure involving 14 teenagers from across the state providing young hunters with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the field, was another big success.

Camp supervisor Jacob Whybrow-Lane captured some of the many special moments with his digital camera.



**Demonstration:** Camp supervisors show the correct way to cape a billy. This was followed by a workshop on butchering.



**Keeping Busy:** Participants complete their R-Licence testing while other practice their craft skills



**Taking Aim:** Property manager George Hackney prepares a miniature cannon for fire.



**At the range:** Participants practised their accuracy, under supervision, at Tilterweira's approved shooting range.



**On Target:** A young camp participant with his first billy.

## Bushnell Backtrack Review

The Bushnell Backtrack is a lightweight, shower proof, entry level GPS which is easy to operate.

In America, Bushnell has a range of innovative GPS units that have gained a portion of the market. The Backtrack is a base unit which has been developed to be easy to read and provide essential information.

The unit's shape resembles a compass with a large round display screen, side mounted switches and the ability to store three waypoints which are represented by symbols on the screen.

I tested the backtrack on a hunting trip. When I arrived at my location the unit was switched on and soon locked on to the nearest satellites.

I saved a way point by pressing the mark button. I set it to the car symbol. The GPS was turned off and placed in my pack. I noticed if a way point is not selected the compass is displayed and references to the north.

When it was time to return to the vehicle, the Backtrack was taken out of my pack and turned on. After locking on to the satellites it displayed the distance and direction of the return route to the car (selected waypoint symbol).

During field testing the unit displayed an accuracy of approximately +/- ten meters and continued to give readings under a moderate tree canopy.

The battery life from the two AAA batteries varies with battery quality. The advantage of the two AAA batteries is that spares can be easily purchased and backups carried.

This means the user is not relying on battery charging equipment to ensure the unit remains functional. It is also important to remember that GPS units do not replace basic navigation items,

the map and compass.

The Backtrack is a compact, shower resistant, basic and functional GPS unit which provides sufficient information to guide the user back to the selected waypoint.

This unsophisticated unit should prove easy to master by hunters with only elementary electronic understanding. The Bushnell Backtrack as a navigational aid worth considering when looking for a basic GPS unit

Features:

- Stores and locates up to three locations
- Utilises the latest digital technology
- High sensitivity SiRF Star III GPS receiver
- Self calibrating digital compass
- Weather resistant
- Operates on 2 AAA Batteries
- Compact size stores easily in your pocket or purse
- Lanyard included for easy attachment

John Pond



**Easy to Use:** The Bushnell Backtrack is a simple, yet effective GPS unit which has proven to be a popular choice amongst hunters

## H&C Calendar 2009

**February 22:** SSAA NSW Hunter Open Day, St Marys Indoor Shooting Centre, 10am-4pm.

**March 1-7:** Tilterweira Week for H&C members, at Tilterweira Station. Only available to H&C members.

**April 12-18:** Family Holiday Special, at Tilterweira Station.

**April 26 - May 2:** Tilterweira Station Maintenance Week.

**\*April-May:** Deer Farm Visit and Workshop.

**May 3-9:** Tilterweira Week for H&C Members, at Tilterweira Station. Only available to H&C members.

**May 31-June 6:** Hunters Camp, at Tilterweira Station, includes guided hunts, workshops, R-Licence testing.

**June 14-20:** Tilterweira Week for H&C Members. At Tilterweira station. Only available to H&C members.

**June 20:** Hunters Day, at St Marys Indoor Shooting Centre

**July 12-18:** Parent and Child Camp, at Tilterweira Station.

**August 2-8:** Tilterweira Week for H&C Members, at Tilterweira station. Only available to H&C members.

**September 13-19:** Tilterweira Station Maintenance Week.

**\*September:** Deer farm visit and workshop.

**October 3-10:** Tilterweira Youth Camp

**\*October:** Weekend Forest Camp Hunt

**November 22-28:** Tilterweira Week for H&C Members, at Tilterweira station. Only available to H&C members.

**December 5:** Hunters Day, at St Marys Indoor Shooting Centre.

\*Dates and venue to be confirmed.

\*\* For a more detailed list of the H&C calendar of events contact the SSAA NSW State Office on (02) 8889 0400

## Game Managers at St Marys

Two Game Managers have taken up residence at the Game Council NSW office at the indoor shooting complex of Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (SSAA) at St Marys.

Game Managers David Smith and Troy Hogarth are readily available to meet inquiries from SSAA members about becoming Voluntary Conservation Hunters and enjoying the benefits of hunting access to more than two million hectares of public land.

Their office is upstairs at the St Marys complex. Please note that, due to various duties, the Game Managers are not always present, but they can be contacted on mobile.

David Smith, 24, is a former fishing and outdoor guide from the Mudgee region, where he also co-ordinated a

conservation hunting group for the Game Council. David is enthusiastic about all forms of hunting, including bow hunting and pig dogging. David's mobile contact is 0417 300 034.

Troy Hogarth, 38, is a former firearms retailer and compliance expert, and a current qualified firearms safety training instructor. Troy is keen to encourage people to get a good grounding when they take up conservation hunting as a new interest. Troy's mobile contact is 0417 300 076.

Both these Game Managers are R-licence assessors, so if you are a member of a club or Approved Hunting Organisation, talk to David and Troy about doing a presentation.