

Farina outback South Australia, 2024. HF radio portable. VK3CAM

(written by Farina Volunteer Glen Alford)

For a third year, the opportunity to do some voluntary historic building restoration, in outback Farina. I opted for weeks 3&4 in the



program, 8th June to 22nd June. Farina is located on the Outback Highway, between Leigh Creek and Maree. SA

I selected like previous years to do stone pointing. This involves removing the old sand lime mortar mixture, and replacing with sand lime, cement mortar mix. The original stone buildings some built around 1880, have decayed since being abandoned. Farina was an important rail head with goods moving north from Adelaide, and cattle moving south. In around 1980 the line was moved to the west of Farina, about 200 miles. This was to avoid flooding to the line.

Once this occurred the metal roofs were removed from the stone structures, and rapid decay of the old mortar began. Farina was a sizeable town in its peak, about 1891 had a population of 300. All the government buildings, post offices, railway, police stations and the 2 pubs were built from stone. The stone was actually shipped from

Adelaide and Port Augusta. Residential buildings constructed from timber posts, timber and corrugated iron, same with the churches. So, these structures were removed completely or did not survive.

During my time off and the weekends, I engaged in other activities. Naturally ham radio was one, working some DX around the world. The equipment I used was Icom 7200 small HF portable radio, 100W. Tuner LDG IT-100, centre fed wire dipole 6m-20m band. This was simply strung between the gum trees. To power the station off grid, VoltX LiFePO4 lithium battery 100ah. Farina camp ground relies on generator for power with limited hours of operation and solar.

What is really great about working DX from remote locations like Farina, was no RF noise or interference. Except to say the generator when operating did cause quite a bit. The antenna due to tree location was directly parallel to the generator. Last year also operated from the historic stone Post Office, another great location, no noise, but also no trees.

So, what countries did I work this year on 20m or 14mhz. Australia certainly, Canada, Thailand, Norway, United Kingdom, France, Holland, Italy, and quite a number of contacts in the USA. Its incredible to think very little mobile phone coverage. But a wire in the tree, and low power I can reach the other side of the world.

Next year will look at a longer wire that will provide 80m-40m, which give coverage after dark around Australia and some parts of the world. Accommodation this year was able to get access to the on-site van for 2 weeks, rather than the tent. So, it was very comfortable, and the equipment could be left set up.

Information on Farina and the restoration program, which only runs for an 8 week period can be found at www.farina restoration.com

There are some great historic images and history provided on the web site plus current news, and what is happening.



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