

# Sixteen-day trip through the NSW Riverina and then north to Hillston, Mount Hope and Euabalong

23 April – 8 May 2021

We are travelling through the Riverina in April in the caravan. We plan to stay at the Ettamogah Pub at Table Top (Albury) on night one then travel on to Deniliquin for two nights, Jerilderie for two nights, Lake Wyangan for four nights (Griffith), Hillston for three nights, Euabalong for one night, West Wyalong for one night, Harden for one night then back to Canberra. The map below gives you the location of our locations. Daily travel information follows below the map.



### **Friday, 23 April 2021 – Ettamogah Pub, Table Top, NSW (Albury)**

Maree and I free camped at the Ettamogah Pub today and enjoyed an exceptionally good evening meal with wine and great music from a two-person guitarist band. The Pub provides free camping for travellers in caravans, motorhomes etc. So, to patronize the pub was a small token to pay for their hospitality. Campers: this place is recommended for a stay; be it overnight or for a few days. Great food and hospitality and on a Friday night (that we were here) – a great band.

The following information and images were taken during our visit to the Pub and the Ettamogah Pub Museum.

#### **INFORMATION FROM THE ORIGINAL ETTAMOGAH PUB MUSEUM, Table Top, NSW**

It was as a child in the Albury district that cartoonist Ken Maynard came to love the Ettamogah countryside, and later immortalized Ettamogah in his “Australasian Post” cartoons of the “Ettamogah Pub”.



Ettamogah Pub Table Top NSW

The original creator of the Ettamogah Pub was Ken Maynard, the cartoonist who drew the famous Ned and his Neddy. Ken was born in 1928 in Albury on the NSW and Victorian border. He was educated in schools in Albury and worked locally until he left at the age of 23 to join the Victorian Police Force. Ken later became a traffic police officer directing traffic on the corners of Flinders and Kings Street in Melbourne where he would encounter the

coming and goings of all the workers; where it was communally known that they would yell and wave to Ken, showing the true Australian larrikinism which, he loved. This is where he got the idea of the locals gathering around a pub. Ken's first work was published in the Victorian police journals where he remained as a contributor for ten years.



Ettamogah Pub Table Top NSW – 23 April 2021

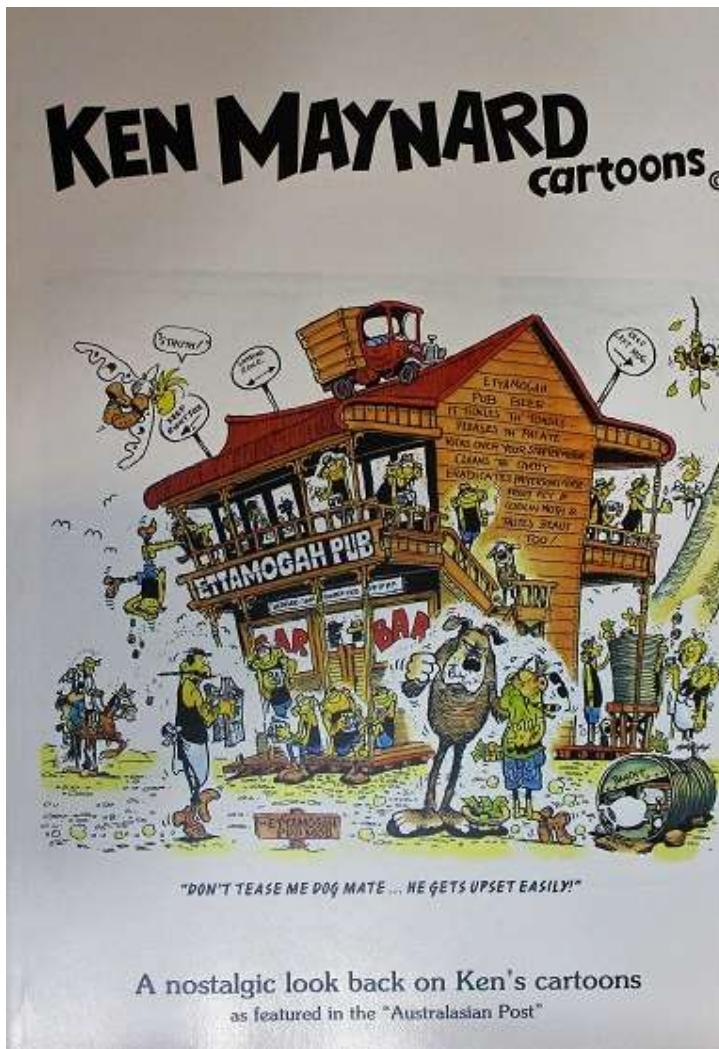
However, even though Ken was originally a police officer, Maynard got his break as a cartoonist in 1958 contributing his Ettamogah Pub cartoons to the Australasian Post, the longest running paper and one of Australia's leading weekly magazines, owned by Sir Keith Murdoch who also owned the Argus Press. Sir Keith Murdoch instigated "Ned and his Neddy" which was the start of Maynard's journey. A batch of rough drawings was submitted and published under the title "Ned and his Neddy". These early cartoons featured a stockman with an overloaded horse as the principal character. Over the years, however, the "Ettamogah Pub" began to appear increasingly and "Ned and his Neddy" gradually began slipping into the background. Maynard's cartoons became a main feature of the magazine and were included until its last edition. There was an enormous amount of material based in the cartoons of a few blokes getting together having a drink and a smoke. Ironically, Ken Maynard never drank or smoked,

The building of the pub commenced in November 1986 and completed in April 1987. From the moment the first few pieces of timber were placed in a horizontal position, thousands of visitors turned off the Hume Highway to have a look at this strange looking building that was taking shape. Thousands of photographs have said to have been taken of the building over the years. The entire project went through to completion without any serious delays. The "Aussie Spirit" in the workers is said to be the delivering force of the project.



The plane in the grounds of the pub was often depicted in Ken Maynard's Ettamogah Pub Cartoons; flying around the pub or crashing in the foreground and appeared often in the Australasian Post magazine.

The following image is the cover of the magazine that contains 54 copies of Ken's original images that appeared in the Australasian Post Magazine. I purchased a copy of the last few that are in circulation at the Pub as they will not be reproduced and are a collector's copy. I remember a lot of the images from the magazine during my younger years (yes I am that old). The Australasian Post, commonly called the Aussie Post, was Australia's longest-running weekly picture magazine. The magazine was founded in 1864 and the last edition ran in 2002.



Tomorrow we will head off to Deniliquin.

### **Saturday, 24 April 2021 – Travel to Deniliquin**

We slept in this morning as there was no urgency to get up and pack and leave. This is the beauty of free camping – no need to get out by 10:00am. We found the Pub's coffee shop was open so we decided we would have a cooked breakfast and give Maree a decent cup of coffee, a latte. Free camping without power means Maree cannot use her coffee machine, although I do have the 3KVA generator packed in the car. The generator is 3 KVA so it comfortably runs the aircon and of course Maree's coffee machine. Well, our breakfast was excellent as was the coffee and the prices even better. So, overall a great stay at the Pub and we will use this place again for our overnight stays when travelling down to Victoria or to the region generally.

After breakfast we packed the car, hitched the van, and headed off to Deniliquin where we are going to stay for two nights. We decided to use the back roads to get to Deniliquin so we could see what this part of the country in the Riverina was like. Things were pretty dry in the

fields that we passed on our way until we started to travel alongside the canals that feed the area with the much needed water for the region. The main canal we travelled alongside was the Mulwala Canal.

The Mulwala Canal is the largest irrigation canal in the Southern Hemisphere. The canal, starting at Lake Mulwala, diverts water from the Murray River across the southern Riverina plain to the Edward River at Deniliquin. The canal is 156 km long and the channel has an off-take capacity of 10,000 megalitres (ML) per day and annually supplies over 1,000,000 ML to 700,000 hectares in the Murray Irrigation Area. As well as water for agriculture, the canal also provides water for the southern Riverina towns of Berrigan, Finley, Bunnaloo and Wakool.

After a short stop in the small town of Berrigan for lunch, we continued arriving in Deniliquin around 14:00 this afternoon. We checked into the Riverside Caravan Park, unhitched and setup the van for our two-night stay, and then went for a quick drive around town. We found most shops closed as it is Saturday afternoon. Tomorrow is ANZAC day so we will go to the main street to view the local march and then do a couple of the designated town walks along the Edward River.

This evening we decided we would cook dinner at the van. We settled for some nice, stir-fried vegetables with salmon steaks. Very tasty.

Until tomorrow have a good evening, everyone.

#### **Sunday, 25 April 2021 – Deniliquin**

We had another sleep in this morning and did not start our travels until around 11:00. We decided we would take the Sanctuary walk alongside the Edward River. The walk takes you through bushland that is home to a large variety of birdlife and the usual kangaroos that you find everywhere.



The Edward River flowing through Sanctuary Park



The Edward River flowing through Sanctuary Park

As we were walking through the park, we can across a memorial to a Deniliquin High School Student who also became a teacher at the school, Sean Francis Walker. The memorial and the Island Outdoor Education Sanctuary commemorate Sean Walker tragically killed in 2008.

Sean Walker had a dream to build an outdoor learning space for local students in the Island Sanctuary. His dream became a reality after his death with the Sanctuary officially opened in November 2010. The Deniliquin High School teacher was working on the project when he was killed in a car crash in September 2008. Teachers, students, and community members continued working on his vision, and the learning centre.



Memorial to Sean Francis Walker

The covered outdoor learning area is used by Deniliquin High School students and the public. Students regularly visit the Island Sanctuary for geography, history, and science lessons.

After our walk we decided to get a bite to eat and then visit the "The Depot." The Depot is a Vehicle and Memorabilia Collection and tells the stories of life at home and on the road. There are touches of Hollywood, trucking and transport, Australian motoring, rescue vehicles and cars from around the world. The Depot is full of nostalgia and discovery. Images from the collection appear below.



Maree in front of an early style Australian caravan. She did not want to swap ours for this one though.



Model T Ford



Ford Lincoln



Early Model Fords

The Depot is worth a visit if you are in Deniliquin, especially for any car enthusiast or vehicle history buff.

After visiting The Depot, we headed to the artwork that has been completed on the town's water tower. Images follow.



Water Tower Art Deniliquin



Water Tower Art Deniliquin



Water Tower Art Deniliquin

### **Monday, 26 April 2021 – Deniliquin – Jerilderie**

This morning we packed up, had breakfast at the local bakery and then drove the 87 kms to Jerilderie. We decided to take the Conargo Road to Jerilderie rather than retrace our steps through Finley and Berrigan. The trip to Jerilderie was uneventful and there were very few vehicles on the road to Conargo. From the small town of Conargo, we turned right and headed the 55 kms to Jerilderie. There were even less vehicles on this part of Conargo Road. Of the six vehicles that passed us, two of them were police patrol cars. Considering there is no traffic I was surprised to see the two patrols. Perhaps because there is minimal traffic drivers speed and therefore the patrols are there to ensure drivers keep to the limit, who knows. As the road was incredibly quiet and most stretches of the road are straight for several kms, and no vehicles behind to hold up, I reduced our speed to 80kph. I usually only do 90 – 95 kph with the van anyway as this is Ford's recommended towing speed for our van weight. This made for a very pleasant drive.

We have checked in to the local motel/caravan park in the centre of Jerilderie for two nights. An excellent park. Very spacious, exceptionally clean, and very welcoming. The Billabong Creek runs at the rear of the park so I thought I might try a dry fly (frog) in the creek at dusk to see if there is anything jumping.

### **Tuesday 27, April 2021 – Jerilderie**

Today was a relaxing day as it should be when you travel around this great country. We started by taking a walk around the lake at Jerilderie. There is a walk called the "Hogan's Walk." The walk covers the local history of the town and takes you around the historic parts of the town. Maree started to feel ill after the walk so we headed back to the caravan park so she could rest and relax. She is well and is happily sitting in the van doing nothing but watching TV, something she usually does on our travels. TV is important for Maree. I prefer to sit outside the caravan and watch the sun set and the stars appear, which I do on all our trips. That is why I enjoy cooking outside under the stars. Tonight, I sat outside under the stars, on my own, preparing eye fillet in the baby Q with roast potatoes and steamed vegetables. A most enjoyable meal if I do say so.

Tomorrow, we leave Jerilderie and head off towards Griffith.

### **Wednesday 28, April 2021 Jerilderie – Lake Wyangan**

We had a lazy start this morning as we only have a 135 km drive up to Griffith. We are actually going to free camp at Lake Wyangan which is about 7 kms northwest of the town of Griffith. Even with the lazy start and with time to check everything before departing the van park, I noted on arrival at Lake Wyangan that I had not removed my Hoselink tap connector from the tap. Oh no. Oh well I have the standard Pope tap connector and a length of drinking hose with the Hoselink connector that connects to their tap connector. Lot of connecting words in that paragraph, sorry.

As we were driving along the Kidman Way, we could see what looked like a large grass fire in the distance. As we approached, we noted some workmen on the side of the road and they weren't worried about the smoke so we assumed it was just farmers burning off. What we found out later is that this time of year is rice crop planting season. The farmers burn all the grass and debris from the fields and plant the rice crop and then flood the enter crop, as they do in Japan. Interesting. The water comes from the canals created as part of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area.

We travelled further north and crossed the Sturt highway at a little town called Waddi. The only thing there is a BP service station and a little further down the road, the Altina Safari Park. We drive through this place every time we use the Sturt Highway to get to Adelaide and we always wondered

where the road south and north went. Now we know. Deniliquin and Jerilderie to the south and Darlington Point and Griffith to the north. Both served by the Kidman Way.

After crossing the Sturt Highway, it was a short drive to Darlington Point, about three kms, and we decided to stop for lunch. There is a bowling club here in the small town. We opted for a hot lunch, and we met some interesting local characters. All women who had just finished playing Wednesday bingo and were sitting down to lunch. "Strangers in town" was the first comment to us. "Yep" I said as I munched away at my lunch. Very friendly townsfolk and after a bit of a yarn, a few laughs, Maree and I headed off to Lake Wyangan.

The journey from Darlington Point was only 35 kms so we were at the lake around 45 minutes after leaving the bowling club. We setup up camp and then headed back into the town of Griffith for a look around.

Following are images of our free camp location. Included in the images is me cooking duck breast with a plum sauce reducing in the pan alongside. Who says you have to rough it when camping; we don't.



Our camp site – Lake Wyangan



View of the magnificent gum trees from our van – Lake Wyangan



Wide angle view of the lake from our van – Lake Wyangan



Duck breast and plum sauce cooking on the camp stove – Lake Wyangan

**Thursday and Friday 29 – 30 April 2021 Lake Wyangan**

Over these two days we have just concentrated on having a leisurely time. We head off to town for a nice breakfast and coffee at the 2sixty2 Cafe. Then it is a walk through the park, a visit to Willow Park to fill my collapsible 20 litre plastic containers I use for potable water (so I can replenish the van water tanks), then off to see a few wineries. After all that we head back to the van and relax taking in the views and Maree settles down to read her next book and I think about what I will cook for dinner. As I said, a very relaxing time. We plan to do the same tomorrow as well.

Hmm, now what to do for dinner.....



A novel approach to decorating the ceiling of the 2sixty2 coffee shop. Suspending coffee cups and saucers upside down.



A novel approach to decorating the ceiling of the 2sixty2 coffee shop. Suspending coffee cups and saucers upside down.

### **Saturday 1 May 2021 Lake Wyangan**

Today we just lazed around the lake relaxing. A very enjoyable day listening to the wildlife around the area. A few vans in this afternoon but still noticeably quiet. We have decided to amend our travelling route and head northwest to Hillston for a few days and then head northeast to Mount Hope and across to Euabalong. Interesting and remote locations to have a look at before we then head towards home.

We leave Lake Wyangan tomorrow morning for the short 111 km drive to Hillston.

### **Sunday 2 May 2021 Lake Wyangan to Hillston**

We had a leisurely start this morning as we only have 111 kms to travel to get to our next destination, Hillston. We will spend three nights in Hillston as we progress into the outback region of the state of NSW.

After breakfast we left and headed northwest. Being Sunday there is not much open in the small towns we pass through. The first town of Goolgowi has a population of around four hundred and we thought we would stop for a coffee. We passed a guy walking his dog and he had a takeaway coffee in his hand, so I stopped and asked him where he got the coffee. "A short way into the town on your left" was his reply. I asked, "is the coffee good". He shook his head and screwed up his face and replied, "not really". We all laughed, and Maree and I decided we would push onto the next town, Merriwagga.

Another 20 kms up the road and we arrived at Merriwagga. Unfortunately, this small town was also closed. The town is interesting though. Merriwagga is the very heart of Black Stump Country. The name Merriwagga is believed to have come from it being an outstation of Meri Merrigal Station, situated on the Lachlan River 100 kms further north.

A visit to the Black Stump Memorial tells of the gruesome tale that gave Black Stump Country its name. A bullock team was passing through in 1886 and the chap left his wife to make camp for the night while he tended his cattle. The day was hot, windy, and dusty, and while his wife prepared the evening meal, the campfire flared, burnt her clothing, and she sadly burnt to death. When people expressed sympathy on his loss, the chap simply said "When I returned, my wife was dead, and she looked just like a black stump. And so, the Black Stump legend was born.

The Black Stump Hotel is a character filled pub that boasts the tallest bar in Australia. Legend has it that the bar was built at that height so local stockmen could ride their horses right up to the bar and order a drink without having to dismount. Who knows if it is true or not, but the bar is certainly high enough to accommodate a person on horseback.

With still no coffee in sight we pushed on to Hillston, arriving around midday. We headed for the caravan park and booked in for three nights. An excellent rate of \$27 per night with senior's discount. So, we setup the van and then headed into town to the local bakery for lunch. After a relaxing afternoon I decided on cooking pork loin roast with roast potatoes and steamed veg for dinner. After a relaxing evening we called it a night.

### **Monday 3 May 2021, Hillston**

This morning we took a leisurely drive around the small town and then went for a walk along the Lachlan River. Following are images that we took of the town's lake and the Emu Antics Public Art Project. Also, a pic of Maree crossing the swing bridge that crosses the Lachlan River.



Lake Woorabinda Hillston NSW



Emu display in the park which is a part of the Hillston Emu Antics Public Art Project



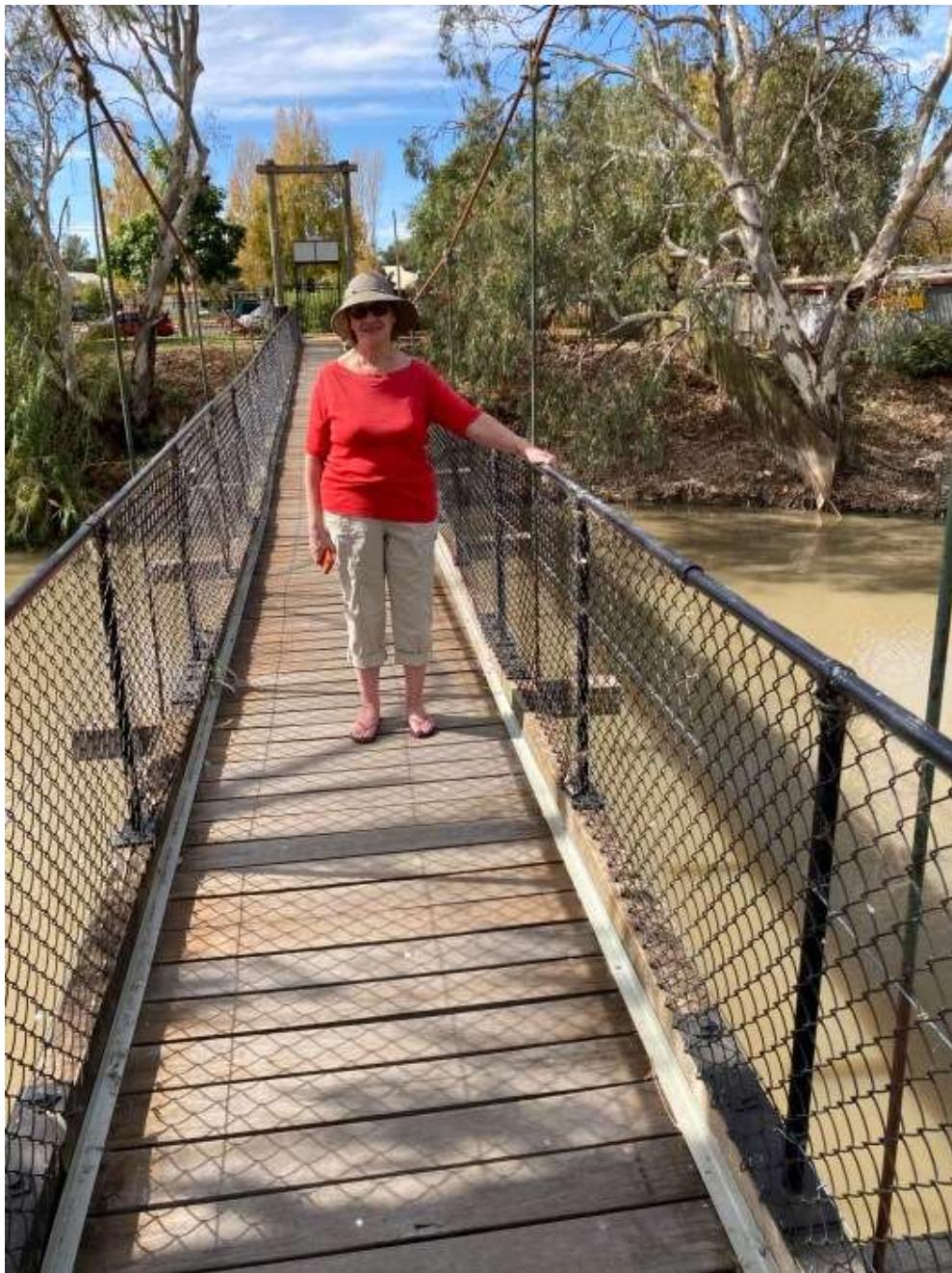
Emu display in the park which is a part of the Hillston Emu Antics Public Art Project



Emu display in the park which is a part of the Hillston Emu Antics Public Art Project



Emu display in the park which is a part of the Hillston Emu Antics Public Art Project



Maree crossing the Lachlan River using the swing bridge.

**Tuesday 4 May 2021, Hillston**

Last night we had about 5mm of rain in the area so not really walking weather. So, we decided to go back to Merriwagga to see if the Black Stump Pub was open for lunch. It is a short drive from Hillston to Merriwagga and we arrived around 11:30. We found the pub open and a sign outside advertising coffee and pies. So, in we went. The first thing that struck us was the remarkably high bar. The lady behind the bar could only just see over the top. So, we ordered coffee and asked about food. Well, the response was that they do not serve lunch during the week as there isn't the demand. Fair enough. So, we settled for a coffee.

The lady behind the bar said she hated the coffee machine but would do her best. Well, we all laughed together as she battled with the obstinate machine trying to get it to make coffee. After 15 minutes she put two cups in front of us. Laughing she said, "I don't think it will be very nice". Maree and I laughed and said, "we don't think so either". It turned to be the worst coffee ever. So, we chatted with the lady for a time about the area and the history of the stockmen riding up to the bar on horseback. She said that the TV show 'Back Roads' did a story on the pub and its history, and she showed us a newspaper cutting that had a rider on horseback at the bar.

We got up to leave and we asked how much we owed for the coffees. She laughed again and said "You have got to be joking. I cannot charge you for that rubbish". We all laughed, and we left, took more photographs and headed back to Hillston.

Tonight, we are going to the Hillston Pub for dinner. Tomorrow, we head of north to our next destination, Euabalong, which is 164 kms from Hillston.

Following are the pics we took at the Black Stump Hotel and the very tall bar inside.



Steve leaning on the bar in a standing position and Maree standing next to the Black Stump Pub bar. You can see how high the bar is and the stools.



View of the bar and the high heavy stools. Getting onto the high seat of the stool was a feat in itself



Front of the Black Stump Pub at Merriwagga NSW.

**Wednesday 5 May 2021, Hillston to Euabalong**

We headed off to Mount Hope this morning intending to stop at this pub in the middle of nowhere for lunch. After a short 94 km drive through open flat red dirt country, we arrived at the pub 30 minutes before they opened. We decided that we would not wait until they opened as we had had a substantial breakfast before we left this morning. We did take a picture of the pub and the surrounding bush land.



Mount Hope Royal Hotel in the outback in the middle of nowhere. Panoramic view



Mount Hope Royal Hotel in the outback in the middle of nowhere.

From here we headed off to Euabalong. On the way Maree yells out "kangaroo." I immediately looked forward as I was looking at the caravan camera to see if anyone was behind. I couldn't see anything, and Maree said it bounded across the road a few yards in front of us and then disappeared into the bush. Another lucky escape. I am now trawling through the dash cam images of the route from the Mount Hope pub to Euabalong to try and find this kangaroo. No luck so far so I keep asking Maree "are you sure you saw a kangaroo?"

We eventually reached the small town of Euabalong and decided to free camp at the local pub, the Royal Hotel. Every small town seems to have a pub called the Royal. Not very imaginative.

We setup and found we had parked in the middle of the field where all the 'cat's heads, bindis or three-cornered jacks' were growing. They are known by various names, but all share the same problem. They bloody well hurt a lot when you stand on them.

After setting up we walked to the Lachlan River, and I did a little fly fishing. Nothing around so packed up and we took a walk around the town. Dinner was at the pub to say thanks for the free camping, and we had a good night with the locals.

Tomorrow, we head off to West Wyalong via Lake Cargelligo.



Lachlan River in the outback town Euabalong



Lachlan River in the outback town Euabalong

**Thursday 6 May 2021, Euabalong to West Wyalong**

Early this morning I decided to move the van out of our prickly patch and onto decent grass. I left the van hitched last night as we were only staying the night. Then I spent about twenty minutes cleaning

the ground mat getting all the spiky little bindis (as Maree calls them) out of the mat. Then it was time to get them off all our shoes and to really make sure there were none on the carpet inside the van. We found a couple we did not find earlier and that was by walking on them, the painful way.

Once Maree was out of bed and dressed, we headed to Lake Cargelligo which is only 27 kms from Euabalong. We stopped for breakfast and then drove to check out the caravan park here as well as the free camping area at Frogs Hollow. Despite complaints about this van park, it looked quite clean and well looked after. So, a definite consideration for a future stay.

Then we checked out Frogs Hollow. This is a genuinely nice camping area right on the Lake front. It was quite busy with vans parked on top of each other, but a nice option when not so busy.



Lake Cargelligo foreshore



Lake Cargelligo foreshore

From here we took the back roads down to West Wyalong. Noticeably quiet sealed highway through Ungarie down to West Wyalong. The countryside was quite wooded with flat plains along the way. On arrival at West Wyalong, we set up camp at the caravan park for the night. Then we headed out to a cafe we used on our last visit for lunch. We decided on a quiet afternoon as we were in West Wyalong last October and did sightseeing then. If interested, you can read about that travel in the Lightning Ridge travel blog on this site.

Tonight, we had dinner at the pub, and we are now relaxing back in the van watching the rugby league. Tomorrow, we head off to Harden and then Saturday we arrive back in Canberra.

#### **Friday 7 May 2021, West Wyalong to Harden – Murrumburrah**

After breakfast we packed up and headed to Harden via the town of Young. We deliberately took the back roads so that we could see more of the farming country. The area is quite flat with occasional hilly and wooded areas. After arriving in Young we parked at the railway station which has provision for caravan parking. Then it was off into town for lunch. We both enjoyed a gourmet smoked salmon and lettuce roll with a latte. I have to say that the smoked salmon roll was one of the best I have had, lots of salmon and a lovely lemon mayonnaise. We had lunch at the local bakery on the Main Street.

After lunch we headed for Harden, once again using the back roads rather than the main highway. Harden has joined with the adjoining town and is now known as Harden – Murrumburrah.

We arrived at the Harden Showgrounds about 40 minutes later. When we entered the show grounds parking area, we were surprised to see so many vans here. Then we saw a sign about a dog meeting. Apparently, we have picked a time of the annual three day dog event held in Harden. Not a problem as everyone is friendly and there are ample places to park. There are four power point posts erected regularly around the paddocks and only \$20 per night. A very lovely spot for our last night.



View of the Harden showgrounds with the hills in the background.

For dinner we headed to the Terracotta Restaurant in town. We have eaten here before and the food is excellent. An Irish couple runs the restaurant. Following are the pics of our main course. Excellent food and terrific value for money. all washed down with a genuinely nice bottle of Pinot Gris from the Victorian Yarra Valley.



Maree's main course, on the left, at the Terracotta Restaurant in Murrumburrah NSW. Maree had chicken fillet with prawns and almonds and fresh seasonal vegetables in a white wine sauce. She said it was delicious.

Steve's main course at the Terracotta Restaurant in Murrumburrah NSW. Steve had eye fillet, medium rare with seasonal vegetables and a sauce consisting of onion and capsicum. Also, delicious.

Tomorrow, we head home to Canberra completing our 16-day journey through the NSW Riverina and visiting NSW outback towns. We are only 119 kms from home so only a short journey in the morning.

#### **Saturday 8 May 2021, Harden -Murrumburrah to Canberra**

Last night at dinner the restaurant owner asked us whether we had seen the town's new silo art. As we didn't realise there was artwork in the town, we decided we would have a look this morning before heading home. So, we hitched the van, left the showground, which was a bit of an ordeal as there was a continual stream of vehicles arriving for the dog show and headed to the local bakery for breakfast. After coffee and a croissant, we went looking for the silo art.

We found that artwork painted on the sides of the old mill.

The mural portrays a depiction of the deep history and significance of the mills to the Murrumburrah-Harden community. The land for the Mill, purchased in 1858 by Miles Murphy, and the flour mill completed in 1865. In 1868 Thomas Allsopp purchased the mill and introduced new concepts into the production of milling. The famous "Allsopps Silver Spray Flour" won many awards including 25 country society recognised awards.

In 1919, a major fire occurred on site, and the flour mill complex was rebuilt during 1919-1922, including the building of the concrete twin silos within the complex. The new system included the train carriage of raw product to the site, off the Sydney-Melbourne train line system directly to the

twin silos for storage. An electrical auger system implemented to carry the product up into the twin silos, was quite "revolutionary" at the time. In 1991 the silos and storage were discontinued.



Silo Art on the mill in Harden – Murrumburrah



Silo Art on the mill in Harden – Murrumburrah

From here we drove home. It has been enjoyable sixteen-day journey. Our next travel will be in July and August 2021, and we will be travelling through NSW, South Australia, and Victoria for 46 days. Join us again and read about our adventures.

Cheers. Steve and Maree