

Travelling to Lightning Ridge in NSW and exploring the NSW Silo Art Trail as we go.

14 September to 5 October 2020

Monday 14 September 2020

We left Canberra this morning around 10:00. First stop is a little town called Boorowa. We usually stop here and go to the “The Pantry on Pudman” for a bite to eat and coffee. It is a great little coffee shop. A couple of pics give you an idea of what it is like inside. This local establishment is similar in style to the Long Track Pantry in Jugiong. It shares great country hospitality and local goods for sale. You can browse or just sit with your coffee and cake and take in the sights of this establishment. As well as goods for sale there is a library of books and magazines, and you can browse and read as you pass the time leisurely enjoying your coffee.



Maree relaxing with a coffee – Now what else would you expect.



Pantry on Pudman Inside View.

A little history about the town of Boorowa: Prior to the arrival of Europeans, the area was part of the lands owned by the Wiradjuri Nation with the Gandangara Aboriginal Australians. It is believed that the name 'Burrowa', the original spelling, derives from the local Aboriginal language and refers to a native bird on the plains; a turkey known as the Australian bustard.

The first European to travel through what is now known as Boorowa Shire was surveyor George Evans in 1815. Unofficial occupation of the district began in 1821 with Irishmen Rodger Corcoran and Ned Ryan, both former convicts who had received their 'ticket of leave' from the Governor. The first land grant in the general area was issued to Thomas Icelly in 1829. A mill was operating on the future town site of Boorowa by 1837, along with an inn and several houses.

Governor Gipps proposed the creation of a village named 'Burrowa' in 1842, to be located 9 km north-east of the present site at Kings Plains which had been surveyed in 1828. However, that spot proved unsuitable, and the village was established on its present site in 1843. The early years in the district saw lawlessness and mayhem because of long running boundary disputes, theft of livestock, arson and even murders. The cause of the mayhem mainly stems from the remoteness and lack of law and order. Bushrangers roamed the surrounding unsettled mountainous land, making raids into the town and stations of the district. Squatters took up large tracts of land in the Boorowa area but the introduction of the Robertson Land Acts in 1861 resulted in a new land grab where large numbers of settlers, particularly 'ticket of leave' men, applied for a 'selection' of land with low-cost land parcels available. The district was given over to farming, although it received a push along when gold was found at Carcoar, Browns Creek, and Kings Plains. Gold mines were established although copper and iron were also extracted. Samuel Marsden's copper mine operated until 1900.

From Boorowa we headed off to our destination for today, the town of Canowindra. Along the way we were given to a splendid show of the canola fields in full bloom. Alternating bright yellow fields contrasted with dark green fields made for an interesting patchwork quilt effect. A lot of farmers are diversifying into this crop due to drought issues; however, it was great to see that the local countryside is looking very green. It won't last long when summer arrives to turn everything to

brown once again. This is a great time to travel through this area of NSW. Enjoy the photos of the bright canola fields.



Canola Fields Along the Lachlan Highway – A Sea of Yellow



Canola Fields Along the Lachlan Highway – A Sea of Yellow



Maree showing that at least she is on holiday.

We have booked into the local caravan park which is small but nicely set out. There are drive through concrete sites that are wide enough to park on and still have the awning out over the concrete. They are long enough to leave the car hitched up for our overnight stop.



Our van site for the night – Good length to accommodate 12.5 metres hitched.

We went for a walk along the main street “Gaskill Street”, and we were not surprised to see many stores closed or vacant due to the impact of the covid19 pandemic. There is a lot of history here so read on to learn more about this town.

Canowindra History: The first land grant of 640 acres to a European in the area was to James Collits by Governor Ralph Darling in 1829 as a reward for “pointing out a line of road from Mt. York to Bathurst”. Subsequently Collits’ father, Pierce, was granted land adjacent to the original grant. There is some evidence that James (or the succeeding owner, Thomas Iceley) named the property “Canowindra”. Collits owned other significant tracts of land in the area, together with a store and the first hotel. A settlement slowly grew, and as early as 1844 the village (now referred to as “Canowindra”) was the site of a government pound.[5] A post office opened at Canowindra in 1847 with mail coming from Carcoar, but the village was handicapped as part of a main route to the lower Lachlan, first by the lack of a bridge and later by the construction of the railway to Orange. The first bridge across the Belubula River at Canowindra was opened on 28 July 1875. It was replaced by the Waddell Bridge in May 1901, and by the current John Grant Bridge in 1997.

In October 1863, Ben Hall’s gang took over the village for three days and entertained the whole population, as well as some stray travellers, all herded into the inn. An account of the incident was reported in the Bathurst Times, also quoted in the Maitland Mercury. According to newspaper reports in November 1863 and June 1864, it appears that Hall and his associates made two further visits to the town. A monument to Ben Hall, on the site of Robinson’s inn, the Travellers’ Rest, was erected in 1951, but evidently, further research has indicated that the events recorded here happened at the inn on the other side of the river.

Today the main street, Gaskill Street, has an old-world air, with its kerbside veranda posts lining the dog-leg course of what was once a bullock team track. A total of 34 buildings and features in the town and environs are listed in the New South Wales State Heritage Register including 17 in or adjacent to Gaskill Street.

Canowindra also proudly describes itself as ‘The Balloon Capital of Australia’. It is an ideal location known for its gentle winds and open countryside. Reputedly there are more flights from Canowindra than anywhere else in Australia.

Dinner tonight will be a lovely stir-fry of fresh salmon and seasonal vegetables cooked on the van park very clean BBQs. Most restaurants are closed, opening only from Thursday to Sunday. This is due to lack of patronage from tourists due to the pandemic. We will use the BBQ's provided by the park to save me getting the baby Q out of the back of the car. It is a holiday after all.



The BBQ area in the park. Nice and open and large.

Tomorrow we are off to Dubbo for three nights visiting family friends of Maree.

Tuesday 15 September 2020

This morning we awoke to a strange very loud noise from outside. We lay there listening trying to think what it may be. I thought "there is neither industry nearby, nor a railway line and it certainly could not have been trucks on the highway". Lying in bed over the gas hot water service I suddenly thought "don't tell me it is the HWS and what if". So, I jumped out of bed, looked out of the window and low and behold I saw a hot air balloon being inflated in the paddock in front of the van. What a great sight to see. I grabbed the camera and went outside and joined the other patrons in the caravan park who were already enjoying the spectacle. I should have guessed that it was a balloon being inflated making the noise from the ignited gas, as Canowindra is the Balloon Capital of Australia.

Following are three photos of the balloon slowly leaving the ground and lifting to greater heights. The people in the basket must have had a great sight of all those canola fields we passed yesterday. Maree and I commented yesterday that they would have to be seen from the air to be fully appreciated.



Inflated balloon starting to lift.



The group enjoying their flight.



Up, up and away

We left Canowindra around 09:30 this morning and headed out through Cudal on the way to Dubbo. Cudal is a very small town, and we spied a café as we rounded a bend. Tug goes the sleeve of my shirt as I look around to see Maree's eyes opened wide like a cat "pleading for a saucer of milk". In this case a cup of coffee. So of course, we stopped and had an early brunch. The café is next door to a small motel which is run by the people who own the café. This is a great little business for a small township. The coffee was excellent, and the homemade large sausage rolls, and homemade chutney was extremely tasty. While enjoying the break we were joined by two chaps who were on their way to the sheep sales in Forbes. A chatty pair and we had a nice time winding away the half hour break chatting about the local district. The pair live in Orange and have done so for many years but are still not considered locals. Maree told them that was just like her mum in Batemans Bay. She has lived there for years but still not a local.

From here it was a leisurely drive up to the Maloney Residence in Dubbo. There was little traffic on the road, and this was the same yesterday. This makes for a pleasurable drive and means we can go at a slower pace to enjoy the scenery.

We arrived in Dubbo around 13:00 and sat around most of the afternoon chewing the fat with Jude and Maree Maloney. For dinner we headed off to one of the local pubs for a bistro meal and to meet up with the rest of the Maloney clan. After a very nice evening we arrived back at the Maloney residence, enjoyed another chat, and then decided it was time for bed. Maree and I decided it was easier to sleep in the van which we have set up at the Maloney's. Hooked up to power using the amphibian gives us all the benefits we like while camping, or should I say glamping.

Wednesday 16 September 2020

Today we set out to visit the Warrumbungle National Park. The park is a heritage listed national park located in the Orana region of New South Wales. The national park is located approximately 550 kilometres northwest of Sydney and contained within 23,311 hectares.

The national park is based on the geographical Warrumbungle Mountain Range, sometimes shortened to the Warrumbungle's. The park lies within the Pilliga Important Bird Area, so identified by Birdlife International because of its importance for a range of woodland bird species, many of which are threatened. Warrumbungle National Park was added to the Australian National Heritage List in December 2006 and on 4 July 2016, the park was the first within Australia to be certified as a Dark Sky Park by the International Dark Sky Association.

Located within the large area of temperate savannah grasslands the park incorporates the most spectacular part of the Warrumbungle Mountains, a region of past volcanic activity with unusual lava formations. Some of the most well-known rock formations include Bluff Mountain, Mount Exmouth (the tallest mountain in the park), The Breadknife, Split Rock, Fans Horizon, and Crater Bluff. There are many scenic bushwalks and both rock climbing and abseiling are popular in the area. Though the park was a preserved habitat for koalas in the past; a large bushfire in 2013 decimated the koala population and it is thought that none survived.

Located immediately adjacent to the national park is the Siding Spring Observatory. The observatory officially opened in 1965 and was constructed on the boundary of the park partly because the park provided a light-free environment. This scientific facility consists of several internationally important telescopes and has considerable socio-economic importance to the local Coonabarabran community. The Siding Spring Observatory is part of the Research School of Astronomy & Astrophysics at the Australian National University and incorporates the Anglo-Australian Telescope along with a collection of other telescopes owned by the Australian National University, the University of New

South Wales, and other institutions. The observatory is situated 1,165 metres above sea level in the Warrumbungle National Park on Mount Woorat, also known as Siding Spring Mountain. Siding Spring Observatory is owned by the Australian National University and is part of the Mount Stromlo and Siding Spring Observatories research school.

Following are some images that we took during the day.



Warrumbungle National Park near Coonabarabran



Warrumbungle National Park near Coonabarabran



Warrumbungle National Park near Coonabarabran



Warrumbungle National Park near Coonabarabran

First Crossing of the Ranges for Mountain Pioneers

In the 1930s, local residents were keen to open up a track into the mountains and a volunteer party of district landholders actually formed up several miles of road, hoping to encourage the authorities to proceed with the work.

Interest in the project developed but it was ten years before an expedition crossed the rough mountain terrain, only made possible due to the capabilities of the newly invented four wheel drive jeep.

The principal instigators of the expedition were Mr Jack Benschaw MLA and Mr Len Stockings, the manager of the Tooraweenah property 'Warrawong' and a councillor of the Wingadee Shire Council (now known as Coonamble Shire Council).

Len Stockings and his brothers Herb, Claude and Bill, Keith Blackman, Bruce Knight and the Waterford brothers, Paul and Peter, spent many weekends clearing a rough track through the thick mountain scrub so that a vehicle could get through.

It was just before Easter in March 1947 when the pioneer crossing was made. The party consisted of Mr Len Stockings (driver), Mr and Mrs Keith Blackman, the Hon Frank Flinn (Minister for Tourist Activities and Immigration), Mr Jack Benschaw MLA, Mr George Searle (Shire Clerk) and Mr N Moody (Coonamble photographer).



Photo (from L-R): The Hon Frank Flinn, Mr George Searle, Mr Keith Blackman, Mr Jack Benschaw MLA, Mr Tough and Mr Len Stockings

The expedition followed the Wambelong Creek from Belugury through Strathmore, near Tannabah then along the Belah Creek to Coonabarabran.

One week later Len Stockings was dead, it is thought that he contracted tetanus through a wound in his foot at the time of the crossing.



It was not until 1953 that the Warrumbungle National Park was gazetted. Work on the road across the mountains commenced some ten years after the original crossing and was finally completed in the mid 1960s.

The present road, John Benschaw Parkway, follows a route along White Gum Lookout crossing the Castlereagh River, then along Shaw's Creek to Coonabarabran. Both routes are shown on the map.

The Returned Soldier

Sculptor: Brett (Mon) Garling - Gilgandra Shire Council Centenary of Armistice 2018 Memorial - 11 November 2018

Remembrance Day 2018 has special significance, marking the Centenary of Armistice which ended the hostilities of World War I (1914-1918).

This sculpture depicts a returned soldier stripping off his army uniform while reaching for a plough. Renouncing war, he looks toward his new life on the land.

The returned soldier brings with him a sense of hope and courage. The beauty and strength of bronze, surrounded by trees, rocks and soil establish a sense of peace, resilience and optimism.

The location, with views over the Warrumbungle mountain ranges and surrounding farmland, symbolises the story of the servicemen and women who took up farming land under the Soldier Settlement schemes following World Wars I and II.

Generations of farmers have continued in the Tooraweenah district since, their success a significant legacy of the soldier's story and motivation.

Brett Garling is a descendant of one of the pioneer Garling settlers in the Tooraweenah township. He created this sculpture as a memorial to commemorate the Centenary of Armistice 2018.

Garling is an accomplished sculptor whose work is highly regarded worldwide. He is renowned for his fine craftsmanship and technical accomplishment, however it is his intimate knowledge and contemplation of the local community and environment that unite the style, design and depth of his work.

Garling links the story of his Coo-ee Bronze Sculpture creation in Gilgandra, representing the departure of young men for war in 1915, with the returned soldier at Tooraweenah, marking the conclusion of war and the beginning of a new chapter.



The Returned Soldier

Thursday 17 September 2020

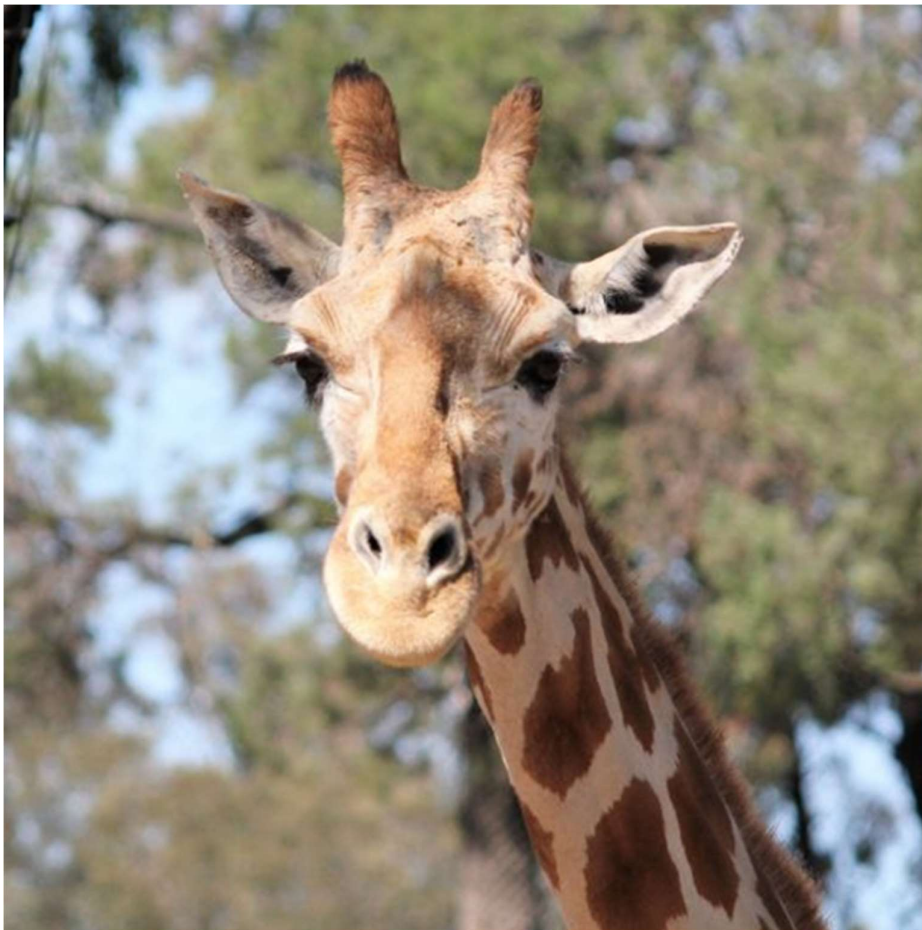
Today was a leisurely day spent visiting the Western Plains Zoo here in Dubbo. We last visited over thirty years ago. Unfortunately, a lot of the animals were tucked away sleeping or shading avoiding the day's warm temperatures. I have done several game safaris in the Masai Mara and nothing else is really the same after witnessing these animals in their natural habitat. But we did take a few photos, so I have put a few up here. The best are the mischievous little meerkats. It will be an early night tonight as we head off to Tamworth in the morning as we head north towards Moree. Tonight, we are having dinner at a local Thai restaurant.



Meerkat Western Plains Zoo



Meerkats Western Plains Zoo



Giraffe Western Plains Zoo

Friday 18 September 2020

Today we leave Dubbo and head east towards Tamworth, passing through Dunedoo, Merriwa, and Willow Tree.

DUNEDOO

We stopped here for a quick coffee and cake and to take some photos of the Silo Artwork in the town.

Depicted on this silo is Winx, the retired champion Australian thoroughbred racehorse and her famous rider Hugh Bowman, who was born in Dunedoo. Also featured is Chris Waller, Winx's trainer, whom without this very famous horse may not have been the true champion that she was.



Silo Art Dunedoo Winx



Silo Art Dunedoo Winx

MERRIWA

The township of Merriwa is in New South Wales and is situated on the Golden Highway, midway between Newcastle and Dubbo. It is an ideal place for a stopover and Merriwa offers many different activities and attractions and now boasts the first ever painted GrainCorp Silo in New South Wales. This is the reason we decided to travel through Merriwa.

The mural depicts an image of sheep wearing red socks in a canola field.

But why are the sheep wearing red socks you might ask? I certainly did!

Every year on the June long weekend is the Merriwa Festival of the Fleeces. It is an event that generates much-needed funds for Merriwa, a Westpac Rescue Helicopter, and District Volunteer Rescue Squads. The festival is an event that the whole community can become involved in and enjoy. It has been a major Upper Hunter event since its creation in 1990. It was established to promote the best of agriculture that Merriwa has to offer with a focus on the history of the Merino Sheep and how this industry shaped a community. Each year a special parade event is held called the 'Running of the Sheep'.

In his own words, 2019 parade Co-ordinator Liam Garment explains the origins of the running of the red-socked sheep.

"One of the sponsors couldn't give us money so they gave us red socks and the committee back then said, 'Well what are we going to do with the socks' Then someone said, 'Well how about we put them on the sheep' and that's how it all started.

So, the sheep now wear red socks as they run down the street."



Merriwa Running of the Fleece – in Red Socks

International art management company Authority Creative represented Melbourne born artist David Lee Pereira, in his first ever silo mural creation. After visiting Merriwa and meeting with Upper Hunter Shire Council and members of the Merriwa community including – and perhaps most importantly – the school kids, David was inspired to create an artwork that was distinctive of the place, unique to the site and represented something the community would be proud of.

The Merriwa Silos are the 29th silos to be included in the Australian Silo Art Trail Collection and were completed on 23rd April 2019.



Silo Art Merriwa – Sheep in Red Socks



Silo Art Merriwa – Sheep in Red Socks



Silo Art Merriwa – Sheep in Red Socks

The June 2020 long weekend was going to be the 30th anniversary of the “Festival of the Fleeces” and a full program, including the ever-popular running of the sheep, grand parade, and Bush Poets Breakfast, had been recently finalised, with expectations of attracting 5000 visitors to the Upper Hunter town. But unfortunately, due to state and federal government restrictions in relation to mass public gatherings of more than 500 people during the pandemic, organisers made the early decision to call it off completely. A great disappointment for the hard-working committee and the town.

TAMWORTH

We have arrived in Tamworth and are staying at the City of Lights Caravan Park. We have decided to eat out tonight at the “Pig and Tinderbox”. They have a great menu but the main reason for eating here is – I just liked the name.

The city is apparently known as the “First Town of Lights”, as it is reported that it was the first place in Australia to use electric streetlights back in 1888. However as most of us know, Tamworth is famous as the “Country Music Capital of Australia”, holding the annual music festival in late January. It is stated that the festival is the second-biggest country music festival in the world, after Nashville.

Back at the van park after our dinner at the Pig and Tinder Box. While the food was very good the service was disgusting. We ordered the entree of the Grazing Plate and told the waitress and waiter that we would hold the menu to order after finishing the entree. They never came back. So, we asked for the bill and that never came. So, we got up, went to the cash register and paid for the meal. I told the guy, the one in charge, that had the waiter or waitress come back to the table after we had finished our entree, we would have ordered another course. However, we got sick of waiting. His response “next time just put up your hand up”. Not a good response. As I said food was good but service was terrible. I cannot recommend this place and we will not return.

Tomorrow, we head off to Moree via Barraba where we will visit another of the Silo Art locations.

Saturday 19 September 2020

Today we left Tamworth to travel to Moree. We decided to travel via Tamworth so that we could stop and visit the Silo Artwork in the small town of Barraba on the way. I have attached three images of the artwork on the silos. I included the one with the caravan and territory in the picture, so you know I am here as well. I am the only one that can tow the van as Maree has no training in towing and it would be too dangerous to let her tow without getting her to undertake a towing course as a minimum. Unfortunately, most towing courses do not include the actual towing on the open road which is fundamental if doing a course. The ones around Canberra concentrate on all other aspects of towing, weights, balance, reversing etc and while these are necessary, on road driving is not part of the course. They do get the person to tow the van around the training ground, but I feel on highway driving is necessary. So, until then it must be me doing all the driving. I have over 12 years trained experience towing.



Silo Art in the town of Barraba



Silo Artwork in town O Barraba and guess what? Maree is on holiday too.

We have arrived in Moree, setup the caravan and I am about to start cooking dinner. This is the first location where we have had the opportunity to setup properly as we are here for four nights. The

caravan park has access to natural thermal pools so we will be having a swim in them tomorrow. To tired tonight as although the drive wasn't long (260 kms) the wind was very strong restricting me to between 85 and 90 kph. Also required a lot of concentration as well, but still a very enjoyable drive.

Sunday 20th – Tuesday 22nd September 2020

Moree is a town in the Moree Plains Shire in northern NSW. It is located on the banks of the Mehi River in the centre of the rich black-soil plains. Moree is a major agricultural centre, noted for its part in the Australian cotton growing industry which was established there in the early 1960s. The population of the town of Moree is around 7,300. The area is home to artesian hot spring baths which are famous for their reputed healing qualities.

We are staying in Moree for the next three days and as there isn't a lot to do in the town we will just laze around the thermal pools and go into town for coffee and pastries.



Maree swimming in one of the Artesian Thermal Pools

Wednesday 23rd September 2020

This morning we left Moree for Lightning Ridge. On the way we had to slow down as there was a five kilometre stretch where the farmers cows and bulls were grazing on either side of the Gwydir Highway and of course the cows just had to cross the road to get to the other side. Then they would change their mind and wander back to the other side. Other than this and pulling over to the side of the road for an over width transport to pass, the trip was uneventful.

We arrived at Lightning Ridge at around 13:00 and we proceeded to our caravan park where we are staying for five nights. We were surprised how large the town is and amazed at the size of the Super IGA store in town.

Tomorrow we will head to the Visitor's Centre and start doing the touristy things of looking around the town. Dinner tonight will be Greek marinated pork loin roasted on the Weber Baby Q and served with a nice fresh potato and an egg salad.

Views of the Opal Caravan Park we are staying in. It has excellent facilities, friendly staff and is massive in size. It has everything you could want, and it is by far the best caravan park we have ever stayed in.



Opal Caravan Park Lightning Ridge



Opal Caravan Park Lightning Ridge



Opal Caravan Park Lightning Ridge



Opal Caravan Park Lightning Ridge

Thursday 24 September 2020

After a leisurely morning we decided that we would go and have a look around town and then start some of the tours. There are self-drive tours marked as “Door Tours”. These quirky journeys are Lightning Ridge’s answer to ‘self-drive’ tours and are a great way to start our visit to The Ridge. The four tours are demarcated by colour coded and numbered car doors.

Blue – Highlights of the Blue Car Door Tour include the Walk-in-Mine which offers self-guided tours down an opal mine and Bevan’s Black Opal & Cactus Nursery with over 2300 species of cacti.

Red – The Red Car Door Tour will take us through several opal fields including Hatter’s Flat, Pony Fence, and the Telephone Line fields. The tour also includes Amigo’s Castle, the Astronomers’ Monument and Kangaroo Hill.

Green – This tour will take us through various opal fields, including the multi-billion-dollar Coocoran Opal Fields (mined 1988 to 1996).

Yellow – This tour allows us to see first-hand various pieces of opal mining equipment as you drive through the various opal fields which include the 3 Mile Opal Field and Lunatic Hill. There are many rusting relics to be seen on this tour. Without doubt, the highlight of this tour is the ‘Chamber of the Black Hand.’ This is both an opal mine and a sculpture gallery. We are visiting the chamber on Saturday. Bookings are heavy for this tour.

There is a fifth door tour (Orange Door) which requires travelling further afield and it is this tour that we did first. First you drive some 55 kms to get to the dirt road to start the tour. The road is called “Rotten Road” The road does live up to its name and also does have dirt on it, but it is more rocky than dirt and there are some sharp rocks and stones to watch out for. Due to the state of the road and although ok for two-wheel drive vehicles, we restricted ourselves to visiting only the first stop – The Golf Club in the Scrub. I have attached some photos we took that shows us driving through the golf course to get to the club house, yes, we drove through the golf course, but don’t expect the everyday ordinary golf course you expect to see. Check the images out below.

We stopped at the club house, had a soft drink, and then slowly made our way back to Lightning Ridge. While it would have been good to travel the extra 12 kms on the rocky road to see The Hilton, Sheeppark Inn and the Dog’n Duck Road, I wasn’t game to put the territory tyres through the risk of being pierced by the sharp rocks.

On our return to Lightning Ridge, we did some supermarket shopping for dinner and had a lovely homemade Thai meal outside at the van site.



Map of the Area we are travelling with Lightning Ridge marked in red.



Stanley the Emu

STANLEY

Created by John Murray

Stanley was conceptualized whilst John was driving on the Birdsville Track back in 2007; the idea was to create a statue of a big bird on the Birdsville Track – like a tribute to a pioneer. Although he was originally to be located at Birdsville, on the Birdsville track, the tyranny of distance, remoteness and beurocracy led to Stanley being a no-show at Birdsville.

As is often the case, the people and spirit of Lightning Ridge came to the rescue! Lightning Ridge is a wonderfully unique town known for its positive "can-do" community spirit – the place is built on mate ship and having a go. Once it was decided the possibility was there to home Stanley in Lightning Ridge, a myriad of willing volunteers came forward and helped turn this possibility into a reality.

The welder, Tim Parsons, was visiting the Gallery and saw the conceptual painting of Stanley. He fell in love with the idea, and uttered the words "Gee I'd love to be involved in that" – these words have been the catch-cry of everyone involved in the creation of "The Big Bird".

All the workers, steel, VW's – pretty much everything involved in the venture – have been donated, there were simply no Government or Arts Grants that fitted the project.

In between two summer floods that halted activity, we carted VW's and steel, cut, grinded and welded. In the heat of summer 2012, Stanley was close to completion. The final touches of priming and painting on rust, joining his head to his body and touchdown to his landing destination on the Castlereagh, took place in late September amid a torrent of donated time, machinery and enthusiasm!

Stanley stands proudly on the site of The Ridge that Lightning Ridge was named after – built by the generosity and willing spirit that is the people of Lightning Ridge. (Stanley faces in the direction of Birdsville – his spiritual home – and is proof that what is too hard for others, is easy for The Ridge!)

This has been the story of Stanley's birth from paper to the proud monument that he is.

Big thanks to:

Tim Parsons Welder/Co Creator, Paul Weeks of PW Concrete and Gravel, Mick Smith, Grant Gawthorpe, Skell, Lee Bohm, Ron Morriss, Homere and Neno of Rema Drilling, Peter and Mick Cook, Peter Waterford, John Norden, Stan Single, Peter Worthington, Geoff Peady, Butch Witlow, Andrew Bruer, Mark Nugent

Special mention to:

Men's Shed, Marty Maxwell, Peter Smith, Matt Goodwin, Andrew Wilson, Vincent Barrett, Sam Rush, Brett Mascord, Peter McKenzie, Aaron Bruce, Jerry Lomax, John Slade, Charlie Carpenter, Bob Barrett, Tony Turk, Andrew Turk, Lori White, Viki Murray and the Lightning Ridge Tourism Association.

NOTE: There is a time capsule "egg" that has been placed inside Stanley that will be opened in the year 2057.

Plaque at the Stanley the Emu



The Golf Club in the Scrub



The Golf Club in the Scrub - Tee Off Entrance



The Golf Club in the Scrub - Tee Off Entrance



Road Leading to Golf Course in the Scrub



The "Opal Bug" at the Golf Club in the Scrub



Door advertising the Hilton Pub on the Orange Door Tour

Friday 25 September 2020

Today we headed out to do another Car Door Tour. This time we picked the Green Door as it promised a great site to watch the sun set over the valley. Due to yesterday's road conditions, we thought we would check this one out first before going out tonight to see the sun set. Well, the road condition wasn't much better, but we persevered as we only had to drive 3.5 kms to get to the end of the road. The drive wasn't too bad until we got close to the end, and we had to cross a cattle grid. Not usually an issue but this one had the road leading to it and the road departing from it being a lot lower than the grid itself. This left the grid above the actual road level by about 10cm. The grid wasn't that wide so it meant that the front and rear wheels would still be on the road either side of the grid. I have the clearance in the territory, so I proceeded slowly across with no sound of anything underneath rubbing on the grate.

What was interesting was the vehicle we saw on our way back that was soon to cross the cattle grid. It was a small two-wheel drive sedan with four heavy people inside. We noted it was travelling very low to the road. I flagged the driver down and warned him about the cattle grid and issues either side of the grid. I suggested he inspect the grid before attempting to cross it. As we drove away, we noted him driving up to the grid and then getting out to inspect it. We didn't wait to see what he decided to do. If he did get stuck there was a four-wheel drive at the end of the road that would be better able to assist him to get out.

Images of the area include the "Beer Can House", views of the scrub and the outback and the Spiritual Labyrinth.

Dinner tonight will be weber roasted salmon with stir fry vegetables.



Beer Can House at Lightning Ridge



Outside Wall Beer Can House



Beer Can House



Wall inside the Beer Can House



Beer Can House



Maree inside the Beer Can House



Welcome sign for the Beer Can House



The Scrub at the end of Green Door Tour



Panoramic View of the Scrub at the end of Green Door



Spiritual Stone Labyrinth



Spiritual Stone Labyrinth



Spiritual Stone Labyrinth

Saturday 26 September 2020

Today is a leisurely day but Maree wanted to do a tour of the “Chambers of the Black Hand”. This place is unusual and symbolises the quirky and creative sides of the Ridge. Artist and miner Ron Canlin has created an amazing art gallery at Chambers of the Black Hand. The first level is 11 metres underground with images carved and painted in the sandstone walls and pillars. There are carvings in sandstone of Jack Sparrow, Shrek, Puss in Boots and Donkey, Terracotta Soldiers from China, and a Samurai warrior. The Jungle Room has lions, tigers, chimpanzees, and an elephant plus the little meerkats.

The following images are a sample of the ones Maree took while on the tour. The carvings are made directly into the sandstone walls of the cave. The artist's implements for creating the carvings were simply a "knife and fork". No other tools were used. The artist has painted several of the figures.



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge – Terracotta Warrior



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge – The Hulk and Spiderman



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge – Jesus on the Cross



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge – Buddha



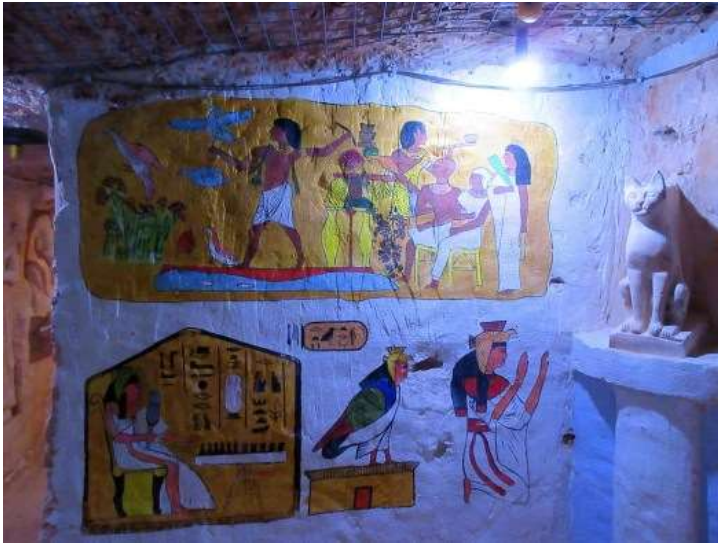
Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge – Star Wars



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge – Star Wars C3PO



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge – Egyptian Room



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge – Icarus



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge – Characters from Shrek



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge – Minions



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge – The Last Supper



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge – Australian Animals



Sandstone Carvings in the Chamber of the Black Hand Lightning Ridge

Sunday 27 September 2020

Today we had a leisurely start before heading off to a cafe in the Lightning Ridge Bowling Club (LRBC) for lunch. While at lunch we looked at some of the artwork done by John Murray, local artist, for the LRBC. The artwork is quite amusing and a patron at the LRBC advised us to go and have a look at his exhibition showrooms in the main street. This we did and we purchased two framed pieces that we really enjoyed and that will remind us of the great stay in Lightning Ridge. As well as the purchase we were allowed to take photographs of the mural artwork outside his gallery and the paintings displayed in the LRBC. So, enjoy some of the images of this artist's paintings and you must also have a look at his website at <http://johnmurrayart.com.au/>



John Murray Art Gallery Lightning Ridge



John Murray Artwork for the Bowling Club at Lightning Ridge



John Murray Artwork Lightning Ridge. His latest work for the LRBC



John Murray Artwork Mural on outside wall at his Gallery at Lightning Ridge



John Murray Artwork Mural on outside wall at his Gallery at Lightning Ridge



John Murray Artwork Mural on outside wall at his Gallery at Lightning Ridge



John Murray Artwork Mural on outside wall at his Gallery at Lightning Ridge



John Murray Artwork Mural on outside wall at his Gallery at Lightning Ridge



John Murray Artwork Mural on outside wall at his Gallery at Lightning Ridge

Monday 28 September 2020

This morning we left Lightning Ridge for the town of Coonamble. We are staying in this town overnight before travelling a further 47 kms tomorrow to the town of Gulargambone which has extensive street art and water tower art. Coonamble is a town on the central-western plains of New South Wales. It lies on the Castlereagh Highway, north-west of Gilgandra and south of Walgett. The town has a 25-metre-high water tower that was painted by Lightning Ridge local artist, John Murray. The painting was commissioned by the Coonamble Shire Council and features Australia Pink and Grey Galahs, fence posts to signify the rural aspect of Coonamble, plus the sun, moon and the southern cross. The Aboriginal Dreamtime artwork is also a feature on the water tank, this part was completed by local artist Sooty Walsh. Following are some photos we took of the tower this afternoon.



Coonamble Water Tower



Close up of the Coonamble Water Tower Artwork and Artists Signatures of the Artwork on the Coonamble Water Tower



Aboriginal Dreamtime Artwork on the Coonamble Water Tower



Aboriginal Dreamtime Artwork on the Coonamble Water Tower

Tuesday 29 September 2020

This morning we headed off to the small NSW town of Gulargambone. Gulargambone, or Gular as it is known to the locals, is a small town in the central west plains of New South Wales. It sits on the banks of the Castlereagh River in the Coonamble Shire. Gulargambone has various artwork attractions around the town. There is also the statue of “The Ghosts of Bullocks Past” and a memorial to those from the local area that served in WW1 and WW2.

We wandered around the town and took photos of the different artwork.

GHOSTS OF BULLOCKS PAST

Working bullocks provided the muscle needed in our infant colony. While Australia ‘rode on the sheep’s back’ the wool that brought our prosperity rode the dusty miles from outback stations and properties to the port on lumbering bullock wagons. Today, when people nostalgically recall the good old days, it is the colourful bullocky and his mighty, patient bullocks who are often recalled.

This piece was commissioned by the Gulargambone Community Enterprises Co-operative through the MDB Energise Enterprise Fund, the concept of this art installation was created by local artist Alison Dent. Local Coonamble artist Brian Campbell sculptured the concept to reality, taking six months to complete the six individual bullocks made of steel rod and recycled wire netting. The assembling of the sculpture was carried out by volunteers.



Gulargambone Ghost of Bullocks Past



Gulargambone Ghost of Bullocks Past



Gulargambone Ghost of Bullocks Past

STREET ART AROUND THE TOWN

In April 2018, ten renowned artists from around Australia visited Gulargambone to create the wildest of make overs to a town. Twelve buildings, one water tower and two footpaths were chosen for the wonderful murals including 3D interactive artworks.

Visiting artists were Peter & Lisa Browne, John Murray, James Giddy, Claire Foxton, Rudy Kisler, Goddie, D'Nart, Kaff-eine, Jenny McCracken and Sam Brooks. The photos that we took of some of the artwork follows:



Gulargambone Water Tower Painting



Gulargambone Water Tower Painting



Gulargambone Painted Buildings



Gulargambone Painted Buildings



Gulargambone Painted Buildings



Gulargambone Artwork on local bus stop shelter painted by Lightning Ridge's Artist, John Murray



Gulargambone Artwork on local bus stop shelter painted by Lightning Ridge's Artist, John Murray



Gulargambone Artwork on local bus stop shelter painted by Lightning Ridge's Artist, John Murray



Gulargambone Artwork on local bus stop shelter painted by Lightning Ridge's Artist, John Murray



Memorial to those locals who served and gave their lives in WW1 and WW2

Wednesday 30 September 2020

This morning we left Gulargambone and headed down to Forbes for the evening. This is just a stopping point on route to West Wyalong where we will stay for two days. There is a town outside West Wyalong that has more silo artwork that we want to see. We need to travel 60 kms to see this artwork so we will make a base in West Wyalong for this purpose.

No images of our stay in Forbes but a bit of history about the town follows.

Forbes is a town in the Central West region of New South Wales, Australia, located on the Newell Highway between Parkes and West Wyalong. Forbes was home to the Wiradjuri people before non-indigenous settlement. John Oxley passed through in 1817 during one of the first inland expeditions. Oxley named the site Camp Hill. He was unimpressed with the clay soil, poor timber and swamps and he concluded it is impossible to imagine a worse country. The first settlers moved into the district in 1834.

Gold was discovered by Harry Stephan, also known as "German Harry", in June 1861. Initially about 30,000 people moved to the goldfields, but by 1863 this had declined to about 3,500 because of the difficult mining conditions. The goldfields were originally named "Black Ridge", and the name "Forbes" celebrating Sir Francis Forbes was declared from Sydney as the result of a possible government administrative error. It is said that the name was meant for the town now known as "Hill End" between Orange and Mudgee where gold was discovered around a similar time. The Albion Hotel, once a Cobb and Co. stagecoach stop, had tunnels situated underneath which were used during the gold rush to convey gold and money to and from the banks to minimise the chance of theft. The Albion Hotel burnt down on 10 February 2009, losing years' worth of history and memorabilia.

One of Australia's most renowned bushrangers, Ben Hall, was shot dead in an early morning police ambush about 20 kilometres to the north-west of Forbes on 5 May 1865. Hall and his gang were famous for stealing 77 kilograms of gold and £3,700 from the nearby town of Eugowra in 1862. He is buried in the Forbes Cemetery. Kate Kelly, the sister of bushranger Ned Kelly, lived in the town. She drowned in Lake Forbes while saving an Aboriginal child during a flood in 1898 and was found in a lagoon of the Lachlan River just outside Forbes. She is also buried in Forbes Cemetery.

Thursday 1 October 2020

Today we left Forbes for the town of West Wyalong. We have decided to stay here for four nights as we want to travel around to see more of the Silo Art Works. There are two silo locations: one in the township of Weethalle and the other in Grenfell. The two locations are in opposite directions so we will do one tomorrow and the other on Saturday. Sunday we will likely take in the local sites around town. We haven't taken any photographs today but a little history of the town of West Wyalong follows.

WEST WYALONG

The Wiradjuri people were the first to inhabit this region. The people are a group of indigenous Australian people that were united by a common language, strong ties of kinship and survived as skilled hunters and gatherers in family groups or clans scattered throughout central New South Wales. In the 21st century, major Wiradjuri groups live in Condobolin, Peak Hill, Narrandera, and Griffith. There are significant populations at Wagga Wagga and Leeton and smaller groups at West Wyalong, Parkes, Dubbo, Forbes, Cootamundra, Cowra and Young. Gold was discovered at Wyalong in September 1893 by Joseph Neeld. In 1895 West Wyalong was developed 5 kilometres from Wyalong around the bullock track resulting in curious kinks in the road where it avoided trees. The

goldfield was declared the most productive in the colony in 1899. As mining declined West Wyalong became the main service centre for agriculture in the surrounding district, although for many years there was rivalry between the towns. Both towns wanted the Temora railway line but settled on a compromise of a station midway between the two towns, called Wyalong Central. Development since the 1970s has expanded Wyalong in the direction of West Wyalong with several motels built at Central Wyalong. A shared bicycle and pedestrian track were constructed in 1994 to link Wyalong with West Wyalong. The population has stabilised due, in part, to the Cowal Gold Mine adjacent to Lake Cowal, 45 km northeast and the Pace Farm's egg production facility.

Friday 2 October 2020

This morning we headed off to see the silo art in the small town of Weethalle, 60 kms from West Wyalong. Following is a map of the area we are travelling in.



Bland Shire Map of the Region we are visiting for four days.

WEETHALLE

The Weethalle Silos were the ninth silos to be included in the Australian Silo Art Trail and the first to be completed in New South Wales. The silos were built in 1930 and hold 2400 tonnes of grain. They are also 21 metres high and 31 metres wide. The silos are located across open parkland on Railway Street which is the Main Street of Weethalle. The Weethalle silos were painted by renowned Melbourne based artist Heesco Khosnaran who was selected above nine other artists from across Australia. The large-scale mural is a tribute to the rich agricultural heritage of the small community of Weethalle and the surrounding Bland Shire Communities. They portray a shearer, a grain farmer and a small flock of sheep perched high on a balcony keeping a watchful eye over the land. It was all made possible from grant funding through the Country Arts Support Program, local sponsorship and the generosity and co-operation of the silo owners, Paul, and Jenny Northey.



Maree in front of Art Silo Weethalle NSW



Art Silo Weethalle NSW – Note Sheep on the Balcony Keeping Watch

Note that the image above has a balcony. There are sheep painted on the balcony to keep watch over what is happening. A larger image of the balcony follows.



Art Silo Weethalle NSW – Note the Sheep are Keeping Watch from the Balcony.

We also stopped at the local cafe in town. Maree just loved the name of the cafe, so we had to stop. Also, we are stopping at each town we visit and trying to add our contribution to support the town as we pass through. Anyway, the image below is the cafe in Weethalle. Have a laugh; we did. The food was very good by the way.



Cafe "Roadkill Grillz", Weethalle NSW

After our trip into Weethalle, we headed off using the back roads to the small town of Ungarie.

UNGARIE

Ungarie is located 42 kilometres northwest of West Wyalong on the way to Lake Cargelligo, approximately 75 kilometres to the north-west. We travelled to the town from Weethalle taking the back roads through some interesting but very flat country. On arrival in Ungarie, we visited the home to the Biggest Football in Australia. The “Big Football” weighs 800 kilogram and is made of fiberglass. It stands in Bing Wallder Park as a permanent tribute to Ungarie and Australia’s most famous footballing family – the Danihers. Ungarie born and bred Terry, Anthony, Neale, and Chris Daniher are legends of Australian football and to this day remain as the only set of four brothers to step onto the field together in an AFL/VFL premiership match. The Danihers played for Essendon.



The Big Football in Ungarie NSW

A TRIBUTE TO THE DANIHERS

Terry, Neale, Anthony and Chris made VFL/AFL history on Saturday 2 September, 1990 when the four brothers from Ungarie, NSW, took the field for Essendon together in round 22 of the VFL against St Kilda. This was the first and only time in the illustrious history of the VFL/AFL that four brothers played on the same team in the same game.

The four brothers also played together for New South Wales in a state game against Victoria (which they won).

Together the four brothers hold the VFL/AFL record for the total number of games played by a generation of brothers appearing in 752 games in total.

The sons of Jim and Edna Daniher, the boys are four of eleven siblings who were proudly raised in Ungarie where the Daniher legend remains to this day.

| Terry Daniher | Neale Daniher | Anthony Daniher | Chris Daniher |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Born 15.08.1967 | Born 14.02.1961 | Born 23.01.1963 | Born 23.03.1966 |
| Played 1979 - 1982 | Played 1979 - 1990 | Played 1981 - 1984 | Played 1987 - 1997 |
| VFL/AFL Games 213 | VFL/AFL Games 62 | VFL/AFL Games 223 | VFL/AFL Games 124 |
| State Games 13 | State Games 3 | State Games 5 | State Games 2 |
| Preferential 1984, 86 | Games 32 | Games 9 | Games 46 |
| Credit 403 | Essendon Captain 1982 | All Australian 1991 | Preferential team 1988 |
| Essendon Captain 1982 - 88 | Moorebank 1982-1985 | | |
| Essendon OAF 1982 | | | |
| 88 Australian 1983, 85 | | | |
| 88 (Captain), 86, 88, 89 | | | |
| ETC Team of the Century | | | |
| AFL Hall of Fame | | | |

The Big Football in Ungarie NSW – Tribute to Daniher Brothers

From here we drove to the Giant Globe standing in the Ungarie RSL Memorial Park. The Globe depicts theatres of war where Ungarie servicemen and women have served from the Boer War in the 1890's until present day conflicts – highlighting the significance of Ungarie in Australia's war history.



Globe Plaque



Globe showing World Conflicts



Globe showing World Conflicts



Globe showing World Conflicts

In this RSL Memorial Park there are War Murals painted by artist Simon White. The murals honour those from Ungarie who served from the Boer War through to, and including, the current conflicts. The mural is more than 60 metres in length across two fences and contains up to 50 different images from the wars. I took many images, but it is too large a mural to put up here as one panorama image. I have therefore selected several of the images and put them up as a single photograph.



Mural Paintings RSL Memorial Park Ungarie – Australian Light Horse Charge on the Water Wells of Beersheba Palestine – WW1 1914 – 1918. The Battle of Beersheba was fought on 31 October 1917, when the British Empire's Egyptian Expeditionary Force attacked and captured the Yildirim Army Group garrison at Beersheba, beginning the Southern Palestine Offensive of the Sinai and Palestine campaign of World War I. (My father served in Palestine during his army years so I know he will appreciate this image)



Mural Paintings RSL Memorial Park Ungarie Egyptian Training Ground WW2



Mural Paintings RSL Memorial Park Ungarie – Boer War South Africa 1898 – 1902



Mural Paintings RSL Memorial Park Ungarie



Mural Paintings RSL Memorial Park Ungarie



Mural Paintings RSL Memorial Park Ungarie



Mural Paintings RSL Memorial Park Ungarie

There is also a separate tribute to the nurses which has been painted on a shed erected in the Memorial Park.



RSL Park Memorial in Ungarie NSW – Memorial to the Nurses



RSL Park Memorial in Ungarie NSW – Memorial to the Nurses



RSL Park Memorial in Ungarie NSW – Memorial to the Nurses

Saturday 3 October 2020

This morning we headed off to Grenfell to have a look at this town and of course to see the silo artwork. The trip out was uneventful but what was interesting was the paddocks full of the poisonous weed known as either Patterson's Curse or Salvation Jane. There was so much of the weed growing it looked as though it was being purposely cultivated. When we arrived in Grenfell, we went to the Visitor Centre to get a tourist map and to also try and get an answer as to why there was so much of this plant growing in the area. The Information Centre advised us that the weed had been eradicated from the paddocks by farmers but the recent heavy rains after a long drought has seen the resurgence of the plant. This is very frustrating for the farmers as they must be wary of their cattle and sheep grazing in the fields where the plant is growing. It is also especially a major problem for horses if they digest the weed. But at least I got an answer to my questions about why there is so much growth of the plant in the area.

After getting our tourist map, we first stopped to have a coffee and a bite to eat at a local bakery. From here we went to see the artwork at the local silos before travelling around town looking at the various attractions, which included travelling to the site of the birthplace of the Australian poet Henry Lawson. From here we went back into town where you can see from the images below, we stopped for Maree to have a quiet word with Henry Lawson himself.



Grenfell NSW – Maree sitting with Henry Lawson listening intently to what he had to say. Wow she says, “What an interesting chap and he had so much to say to me”.



Grenfell NSW – Maree sitting with Henry Lawson while he contemplates what he is going to write next; probably hoping his visitor is going to leave him so he can get on with his writing.

After spending around two hours in town we headed back to West Wyalong taking a different route home so we could visit the mineral pools in the small town of Barmedman. Unfortunately, the pools were closed until their reopening at the end of this month. So, we just headed back to West Wyalong

where we arrived late in the afternoon. Just in time to have a rest before yours truly had to start preparing dinner.

Anyway, enjoy the write up below about the sites we went to in Grenfell and enjoy the photographs taken during the trip.

GRENFELL SILO ART

The 1926 Grain Silos at Grenfell are owned by Grenfell Commodities, and it was the initiative of the founder, Peter Mawhinney, to commission the silos to be painted. Peter was inspired by the artwork on the Weethalle Silos and could envisage that the silos at Grenfell were the perfect canvas for Heesco Khosnaran to create another masterpiece. The motivation behind the project was to create a legacy for the town in acknowledgement for the years of loyalty received from the local community from which Grenfell Commodities has prospered. This outstanding and highly detailed mural took Heesco five weeks to complete with the work completed in March 2019. The artwork used 180 litres of paint and 800 spray cans. The artwork is a compilation of images which represents the contemporary farming industry and landscape of the Weddin Shire. The foreground features sheep, cattle, and native birds, set in a farming landscape crowned by the Weddin Mountains National Park. The skyscape incorporates the natural sepia colour of the silo topped with light cloud coverage.



Grenfell NSW – Silo Art



Grenfell NSW – Silo Art

GRENFELL NSW – HENRY LAWSON

Grenfell was the first town to honour Henry Lawson after his passing in 1922. The Grenfell Municipal Council erected the white obelisk in 1924 on Portion 376, Parish of Brundah, the site where Henry Lawson's parents mined in 1866 and where Henry Lawson was born on 17 June 1867. This monument honours one of Australia's most prolific authors who excelled at both short story and verse. Lawson was a gifted man who lived a troubled life. Lawson used his life experiences and the experiences of other working-class Australians to inform his works.



Grenfell NSW – Maree standing alongside the Henry Lawson Birthplace Memorial

The birthplace is dominated by a large sugar gum planted by Lawson's daughter, Bertha on the day the obelisk was unveiled. There are 12 interpretive plaques positioned along the curved walking path. These plaques explain the circumstances of Lawson life and celebrate his many achievements while acknowledging the challenges he experienced. Each plaque has a different theme and tells the story of Henry Lawson's life from its beginning in Grenfell in 1867, to his passing in 1922.



Grenfell NSW – Henry Lawson Memorial Tree with Maree standing beneath the tree.



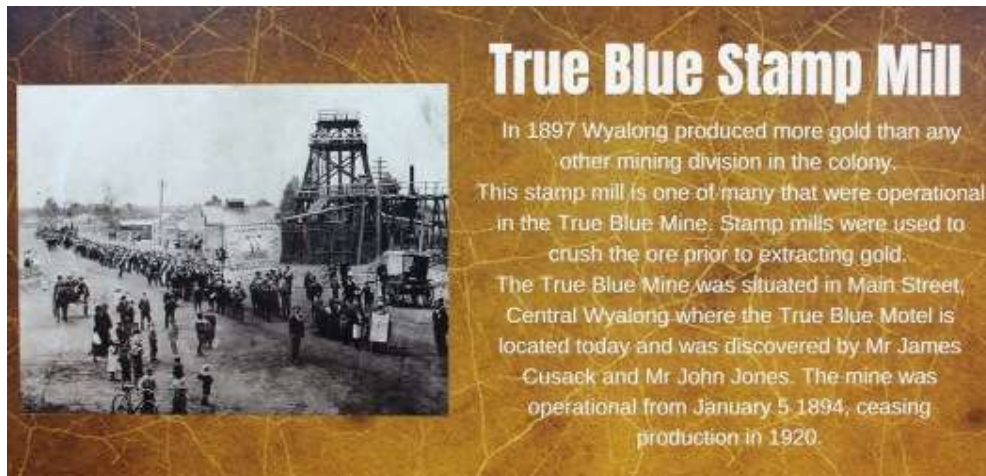
Grenfell NSW – Henry Lawson Memorial Tree with Maree standing beneath the tree.



Grenfell NSW – Henry Lawson Memorial Tree

Sunday 4 October 2020

Today we took a leisurely walk around the towns of West Wyalong and Wyalong. Wyalong is the original settlement about 1 kilometre to the east of West Wyalong. So just a few pictures and information placards for you to enjoy. Tomorrow, we depart for home after an enjoyable 21 days travelling in Northwestern NSW.



True Blue Stamp Mill – Background



Replica of the Original True Blue Stamp Mill

Chainsaw Tree Sculptures

One of the world's best chainsaw carvers Brandon Kroon from Melbourne has created a spectacular wooden sculpture from a Redgum tree stump in West Wyalong's McCann Park.

The sculpture showcases two local birds, the Wedge Tailed Eagle and the Mallee Fowl out of the very tough timber using a chainsaw.

The Wedge-Tailed Eagle is Australia's largest bird of prey with a wingspan reaching more than two metres and as one of the biggest eagles in the world, the species is considered the most common of the world's large eagles. It prefers wooded areas and is found commonly around the Bland Shire.

The Wedge-tailed Eagle is one of 24 diurnal (day-active) raptor species in Australia. Like other birds of prey, it has a hooked bill and large talons. It can weigh 4kg, measure 1m from head to tail-tip and has a wingspan of up to 2.3m (females are larger than males).

The Wedge-tailed Eagle features in Aboriginal creation stories. Many Dreamings resemble the eagle as a symbol of power; they can rise over the world, seeing and understanding all. Possessing keen eyesight, they can have a higher perspective on things. They bypass "not seeing the forest for the trees" and can indicate a talent for problem-solving. Eagles can see the smallest movement and act quickly.

The Malleefowl is native to the Bland Shire area, they are ground-dwelling, shy and seldom seen.

Adults reach 60cm in length and weigh up to 2.5kg – about the size of a large domestic chicken. Male and female Malleefowl are similar in colour – their heads are grey, their breasts a cream-white and their wings are a striking mottle of white, grey, brown and black. Put together, they're well-camouflaged, and they use this ability to sneak away from predators.

Malleefowl are one of three mound-building birds – also known as megapodes – in Australia, and the only species that live in arid areas. The Malleefowl moves tonnes of sand and debris to build and maintain a nest mound in which the female lays her eggs. Malleefowl nest mounds can be over 1m in height and 4m across. The male buries wet leaf litter in the mound, which gives off heat as it rots, acting as a natural incubator for the eggs.

As their name suggests, Malleefowl prefer areas dominated by 'Mallee' – multi-stemmed, low-growing, Eucalyptus vegetation. They need lots of leaf litter to build their nesting mounds. They're mostly ground dwelling, but surprisingly given their rotund frame are also strong flyers and roost in trees at night.

A replica of a Malleefowl nest has been created in Cooina Park together with an interpretive panel with more information about the Malleefowl habitat.



Information Placard for Chainsaw Carving of Mallee Fowl and Eagle



Chainsaw Carving Mallee Fowl West Wyalong



Chainsaw Carving Mallee Fowl West Wyalong

Chainsaw Carving Mallee Fowl and Eagle West Wyalong



Chainsaw Carving Eagle West Wyalong



Wyalong Wetlands



Wildflowers in the Wyalong Wetlands