

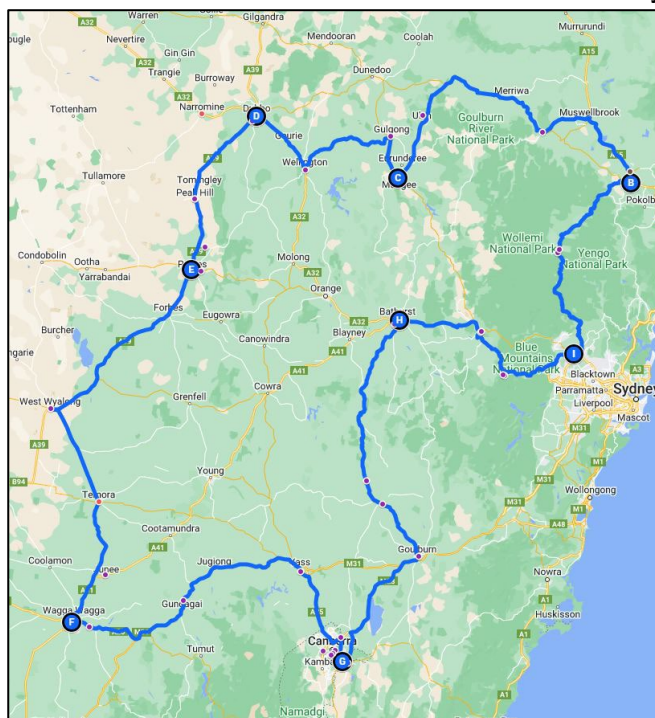
Scootaville NSW, 2024

Scootaville NSW 2024.

On Thursday the 21st November 2024, 20 men and women set out from the Hawkesbury Showground at Clarendon, opposite RAAF Base Richmond and headed off for a 15 day journey which would take them to and overnight (sometimes 2 or more) in the following towns, Singleton, Mudgee, Dubbo, Parkes, Wagga, Queanbeyan, Bathurst and finally back to Clarendon.

This year we were not able to attract vehicle sponsorship and were forced to hire a Toyota Coaster bus and small 3 tonne truck from Avis in Brisbane which we drove from Brisbane to Clarendon, setting out on Sunday the 15th Nov. then driving the route and finally heading back to Brisbane, arriving on Friday the 6th Dec. A lot of miles. We also had to pay to use the facilities at 2 towns. Expenses were high, we need to work on that.

The participants from Qld rode the bus down to NSW with their gear following in the small truck. We picked up a few people along the way and overnights at Taree that night, after stopping at Coffs Harbour for lunch and a nature stop. We had a healthy breakfast at Maccas in Taree next morning and finally arrived at Clarendon after stopping to call in and see John Broughton who is convalescing after losing a toe. John has been suffering from Diabetics for some time, probably as a result of his McWilly's Crème Sherry days back in the late 60's. Recently he injured one of his toes which refused to mend, he suffered it for some time until there was no alternative but to lose it.





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John rolled out the coffee pot for us, after which we emptied his biscuit cupboard, checked out the house plumbing, all wished he was fit enough to join us, said our good-byes and mounted our bus with Patty Bradford at the helm and headed for the final leg down to Clarendon.

The Hawkesbury Showground Trust had allocated us the huge Philip Charley Pavilion in which to spend the next 3 nights. This was perfect, there was room for all of us as well as for our vehicles and scooters, we could spread out and if there happened to be a nightly baritone amongst us, he/she could be sent to the bakka Bourke.



Interior of the huge pavilion.



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On arrival, Kiwi's small truck was unloaded, people selected their spot, bed spaces were set up and in an hour or so, it looked as if we'd been there for weeks.



That night, as we were all a bit jaded after our lengthy bus trip, we decided to dine at the Clarendon hotel which someone had very conveniently placed just a short walk up the road from the showground. Food was great.





Many years ago another hotel stood here. That hotel was officially called The Aerodrome Hotel but was known affectionally simply as Mah's. It was a great favourite of the blokes and blokettes from the Base across the road and many a Wednesday afternoon sporty was spent there. Unfortunately it burnt down in 1980's

Tuesday 17th Nov was a Lay-day, a day for those already there to have a look around, a day for others to arrive, a day for some of the newbies to blend in and get to know how we did things – an easy day. We made the most of it.

The average age of our group this trip was 69 years. We figured this was getting up a bit and we thought it would be a smart idea to be prepared just in case one of us should have a bit of a turn. Well before we'd left, we approached our local Ambulance Station to see if we could borrow one of their AEDs but as they are all allocated to specific vehicles we were out of luck. We were told if we were to get one, to get the Philips HeartStart HS1 model as it is the easiest to use.



We checked them out and found they cost \$1,750 – which we couldn't spare, so we submitted a claim for a cash grant to DVA. People too often most unfairly poo poo DVA saying it doesn't do enough to help Vets – we have consistently found the complete opposite. We submitted our claim which in no time was approved enabling us to get our own AED.

This little device will now accompany us on all outings – hopefully we will never need to use it.

My Ambo mates had told me it was a very easy machine to use, you just opened it and it spoke to you, giving step by step instructions. That's all well and good but we find it's better to be shown rather than being told, so we approached the St John Ambulance people based on the Showground and asked if they could come over to our pavilion and show us all how to properly use it.



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Only too eager to help, Ambo Dennis came straight across and spent at least 30 mins with us giving us the good oil on the little machine. The more I meet them the more I'm convinced most people are just nice.

We were to see Dennis again in a few weeks – but more on that later.



Next day was set aside to get the scooters. We'd arranged to hire them from Scootering, a hire firm that is in Lewisham, not far from Sydney city on Parramatta Rd and about 55 km from where we were staying – so it was up early, grab the bone dome, jacket, hi-vis and gloves, hop onto Patty's bus and head off.

Lewisham is a busy part of town with narrow streets and Patty had a job finding somewhere to park the Tojo, but park it she did, we got off, were allocated a scooter, then with Patty and the Toje acting as a "Follow me jeep", Wal Shakoff, on his black beauty, took the lead and we headed for home.





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Traffic in Sydney is a bit busier than anywhere else in the civilised world and it took us an hour or so to cover the 55km but cover it we did, all arriving safe and sound back at our overnighter early in the afternoon.

That night we were treated to a meal in the wonderful old Officers' Mess at RAAF Richmond.





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The 87-year-old mess closed its doors from 2022 to 2024, undergoing a two-and-half year refurbishment to remediate rainwater damage and preserve the building's rich history. At a total cost of \$19m, there were significant repairs made to the roof and balconies to prevent water entering the building, including guttering and drainage work to allow water to effectively drain.

The interior of the building was affected by mould, which required cleaning of the whole building and refurbishment of the accommodation areas. Being a heritage building, structural defects were also encountered during the project including concrete cancer. Lintels and slabs were replaced under the ground-floor bathrooms as part of the remediation process.

The Mess, which is set on wonderfully cultured grounds, has 88 short stay accommodation rooms, 20 amenities blocks and a fully refurbished commercial kitchen and although the old building has some magnificent amenities, sadly its glory days are gone.



These days Mess life is not as vibrant as it once was. The live-in culture is no more, Service life is now more aligned to civvy life. Unless on an away job, men and women do their day's work on base but at knock off it's into the car and out the gate. The days of knock off and down to the boozier for a few drinks and to talk about the day no longer exist. Times have changed.

The close camaraderie that once existed in all Messes, Officer's, Sergeant's and Airman's, has gone and although it seems foreign to a lot of us it seems to work. When called on to complete a task the ADF certainly pulls its weight.



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Here are some of the amenities – some of these pics will bring back happy memories for those that lived there in the 60's



The boozer.



Billiards room.



Media Room.

Next morning, Thursday the 21st Nov, it was time to pack up the digs, load Kiwi's truck with all the gear, mount the little Hondas and head for Singleton.

This leg was to take us "up the Putty Road" a section of road that over the years has become widely thought of as a very difficult road, one that has to be driven with a great degree of care. We've been driving it since 1966 and although it does have its share of bends with lots of ups and downs, we've always found it an interesting drive, with loads to see and provided you drive to conditions, never found it all that bad.

The Clarendon to Singleton leg is only 175km long, a short run, so we decided to have a few photo stops along the way.

About 25km up the road, just before Colo sits the Col Bra tree. Originally established as a sign of support to women suffering from breast cancer, it now seems to be more of a curiosity than a cause. On close inspection it seems there hasn't been a deposit for some time as the bras adorning the tree have been suffering the weather for some time. We stopped – we took pics.





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Our next stop was at the Grey Gum Café, another 65 km further up the road from the tree of bras. These days the Grey Gum Cafe is normally open only on Fridays 10am - 3pm and Weekends and public holiday Mondays 8am - 4pm as weekday traffic has not resumed since the Covid outbreak.

We contacted the lovely Kim, owner of the café and told her we would be coming past on a Thursday and was there a chance we could get a coffee.



When we explained we were on a charity ride to benefit Legacy and homeless Vets, she immediately offered to open for us. We stopped, had a good look around, enjoyed a break and left refreshed for the road ahead. Whenever you're on that road, if the Café's open, call in and say hello.



Thanks heaps Kim.



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We had one stop that wasn't planned. Not far from the Tin Man, Keith Porter was pulling off the road to adjust his helmet when he hit loose gravel and his scooter bucked, tossed him off then bit his leg.



The first aid box was whipped out, his leg was bandaged as well as we could, the ambos were called and very soon Keith was on the way to Singleton's hospital under blue and red lights where 11 stitches were put in his leg to plug the hole and stop bits from falling out. With his leg all bandaged up he was able to milk it for a few days and not do a lot but eventually the sympathy wore off and before long he was back on normal duties.



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Our next programmed stop was at the Bulga Tavern, a few km out from Singleton, where we were to meet Kerry Solman, President of the Singleton Classic Motor Cycle Club, with a few of his members and where we were to have lunch. Keith put paid to that – deliberately falling off his scooter and delaying us for an hour.

We did get a message to Kerry who was kind enough to hang around at the Tavern until we arrived and then he and his group led us into Singleton. We did miss out on lunch though.



Kerry and his group then made a substantial donation towards our cause, as did the Ulysses Motor Cycle Group of which he is also a member – we thank them very much.

With the proper bikes out front, we made our way towards Army's Lone Pine Barracks, just a few km out of Singleton, as Army had graciously agreed to put up with us for the night. We must say that Army has been very supportive of us over the years and we are indeed most grateful for it. Actually, we must acknowledge the fantastic support we receive from all sections of the ADF, without which we would be hard pressed to organise the event.



Please - long may it continue.



Surprise night!

That evening Michael Titow, manager at the Singleton Diggers Club, had several wonderful surprises planned for us. That night the Club was going to raffle 101 Christmas hams after which it was going to donate the proceeds to us.



We arrived at the Club about 5.30pm, where we were joined by Mayor Sue Moore, one lovely surprise, followed shortly afterwards by another, Michael had arranged to “shout” us dinner as well, and what a lovely meal it was.

Michael had also arranged a “private” car park area for our trusty bus, which was really appreciated as when we got there, there wasn't room to park a Goggo.

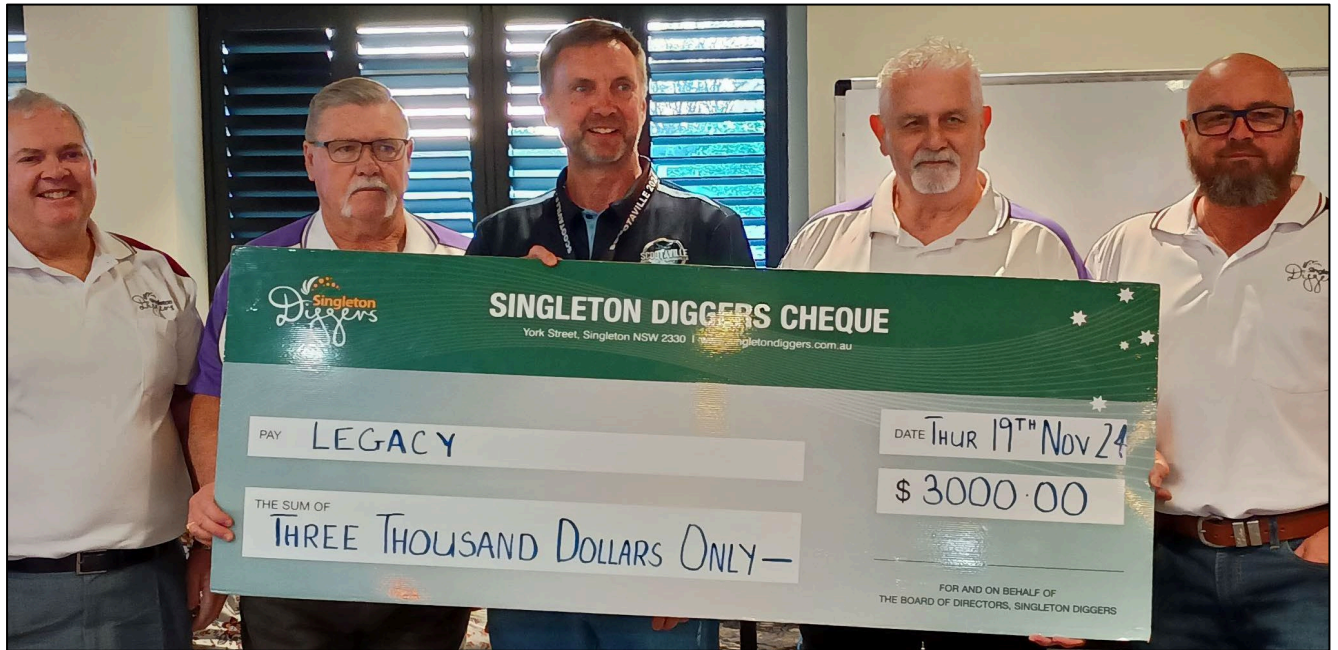
The word had definitely spread throughout the Singleton area that the Club was raffling 101 hams as huge numbers had turned up expecting to win one. We were given a private area where we could watch what was going on and also hope to win but alas we eventually left the Club ham-less.



Andrew Walker at right, preparing to start the raffle.



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Above, Neil Snudden, President of the Radschool Association Inc, accepting the wonderful donation from the Club.



After the raffle had been run and won, experts Dave Pedler and Ros Curran decided it was time to give lessons on how to do the Nutbush. Mayor Sue Moore (left) wasn't going to miss out on this, she and a few others were quick to hit the floor and get lessons from the pros.



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It's a pity they pulled the music so early as people were starting to join in. But what a great night it was.



Our accommodation blocks at Lone Pine.

Next morning we said good-bye to our very comfortable digs at Lone Pine and headed for our next stop, the small primary school at Sandy Hollow – about 100km from Singleton.



The school itself was originally built in 1877, but 15km up the road at the tiny settlement of Giants Creek. It was closed in 1881 due to low attendance. In 1913 it was rebuilt as the old one had deteriorated then in 1970, it was closed again and rebuilt in Sandy Hollow where it is today.



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Sandy Hollow is a small township of 188 people. The little school that services it has a pupil count of between 20 - 25 students, all of different ages, all happy little kids like most country kids are.

We arrived mid morning and after taking the kids for a ride around the school yard on the back of the scooters, we were greeted with a wonderful morning tea prepared by principal Jane Fuiono and her dedicated staff.

We loved it.





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The fireys also turned up with one of their big red trucks and were an instant hit with the kids allowing them to shoot a huge steam of water at anyone silly enough to get in the way.



Then, as it was nearly time to leave, as we normally do, we had several “show-bags” which contained small items donated by our sponsors. We try and have one for each of the kids.

Jame had the kids seated under the shelter shed and we handed them out. It's a shame our sponsors can't see the joy and excitement seen on those little faces. It makes our day.





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Then it was time to leave, we said our Thank-yous to Jane and the kids, climbed aboard the little Hondas and headed for our next stop, Merriwa, a mere 35km up the road.

Merriwa has an excellent pie shop – so it was a compulsory stop. They sold a few that day.



Apart from having a pie shop, Merriwa is also known for some interesting tourist attractions. One that is definitely worth a look is The Hut. The Hut, apart from being the Tourist Centre, is



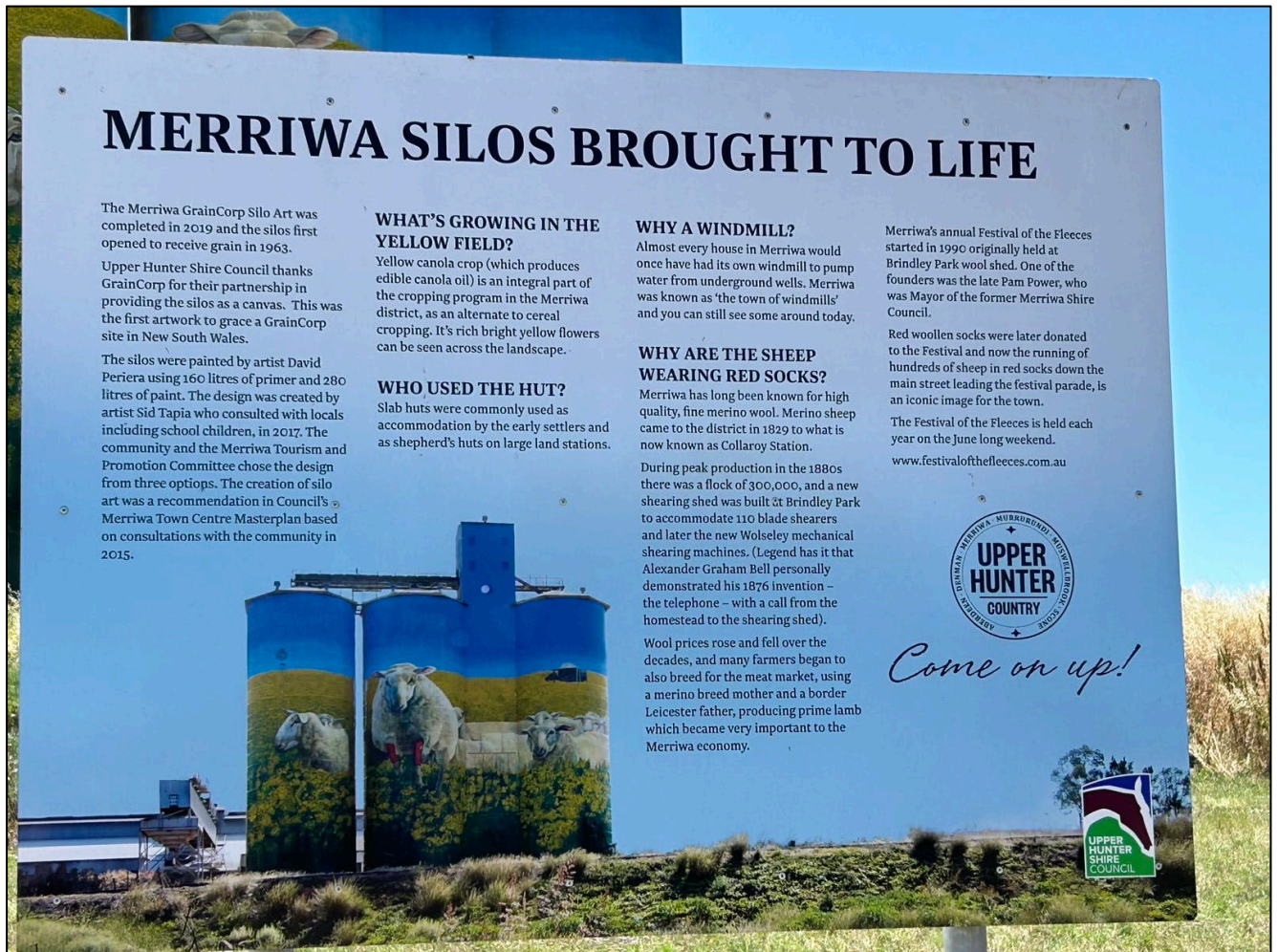
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also a retail outlet where you can purchase local products. Manned by volunteers, it also has displays of antique machinery and a very interesting shearing display.



Another interesting attraction, one that is very hard to miss, is the Merriwa Silo Art. Silos like this are dotted all across the Australian countryside and you have to wonder at the talent of the artists who are able to paint them. See the info sheet below.



After we'd pried, toured and visited the small room, it was back on the Hondas and back on the road for the 120km run to Mudgee.

Jackie Perring, an ex-Navy lady and a member of the Never Late Fe-mail Postie Bike Club in Mudgee had offered to meet us at Mudgee airport with a few of her friends with their Postie Bikes and to escort us into town.



We met up, had a short break, introduced each other then with the Postie Bikes out front, it was back into the saddle and off to the showground, where we were to spend the night.

Once again this local Council was very supportive of our cause and made available a large pavilion with toilet and shower facilities for our use. The pavilion was huge and the nightly baritone was given a far corner in which to bunk down.



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Bill Burns, who wears two hats in Mudgee, RSL Sub-Branch and also Lions, had offered to put on a barbecue dinner for us at the showground. We didn't have to think about that for too long - and accepted his generous offer instantly.

Bill arranged for several of his hard working Lionesses and a mere male to don the aprons, grab the tongs and front the barbecue and before long we were being served up a delightful meal.





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Bill, with coke in hand, with his helpers. Thanks to them all for the wonderful meal.



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Next morning it was up early, ready for our run across to Dubbo. This was a short leg, only 140km, but we'd planned a few stops. First up was the Honey Haven, only a short 5 km from Mudgee.



Mudgee's Honey Haven is one of Mudgee's premier tourist attractions. First opened about 40 years ago it is well known for its huge variety of honey products, especially its honey ice cream and honey mead. The Vikings called mead the Honeymoon drink, believing mead to be an aphrodisiac. Whatever the myth, it tastes great.

Wal Shakoff had a good look through the Honey Haven and bought a few things and although we don't know whether he bought any of the mead, what we did notice was what he did buy he had discretely packaged.

Whatever, he did look pretty happy with his purchase.

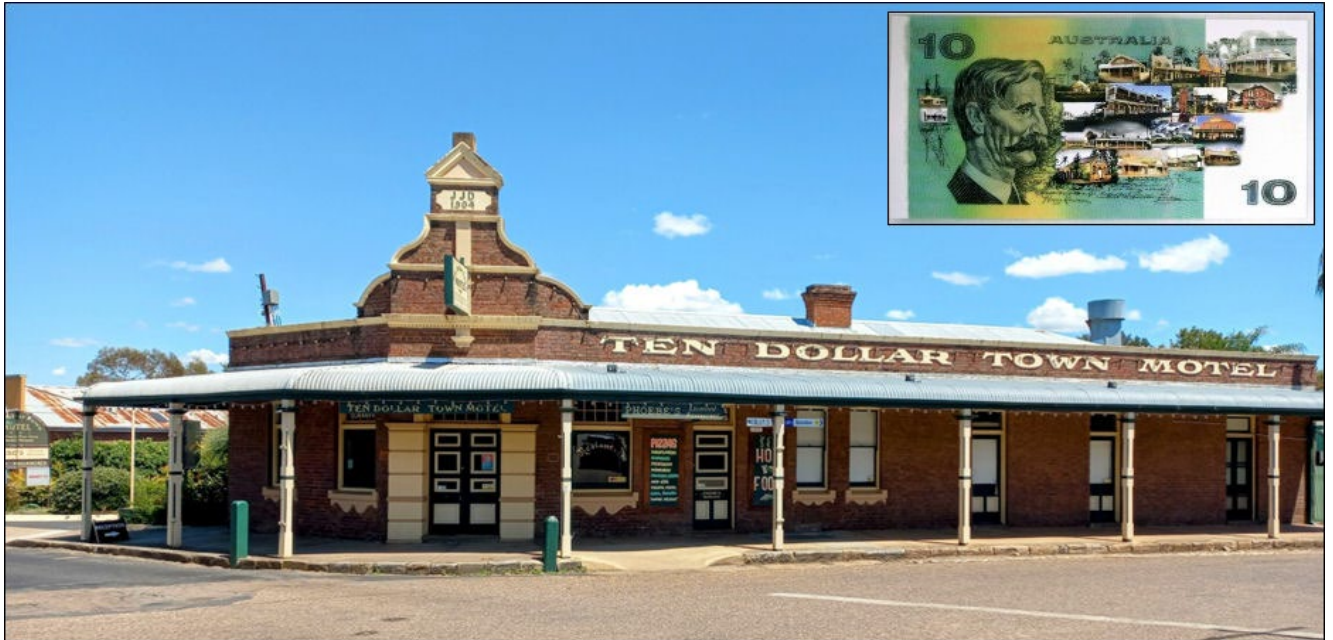




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After we'd demolished a number of honey ice-creams, we set sail for the historic town of Gulgong, a further 30km up the road. Gulgong is famous for featuring on the original \$10 note and of being where the famous poet Henry Lawson spent his childhood.



It is also home of the oldest still operating Opera House in the Southern Hemisphere, the Prince of Wales Opera House, operating since 1871 and where the great Dame Nellie Melba once performed. There are around 130 National Trust-listed buildings in the town, many still adorned with wide verandas and iron lacework.

Today its population is only 2680, but when Gold fever struck the region in 1870, when payable gold was found at nearby Red Hill, 20,000 people flocked to the area. Prior to that, Gulgong was just a sheep run, a large property for raising sheep.





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We had a look at the old gold mine on Red Hill – the brown iron pyramid behind the scooters represents the total amount of gold that was extracted from the mine between 1870 and 1940. In 2016 dollars it was worth nearly \$950million.

In the late 1800s Gulgong was one of the richest gold areas in New South Wales.



Ian Aves thought he'd like to have a go at this gold mining gig but when he saw what was involved, how hard the work was, he had to sit down, completely exhausted.



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After Gulgong, it was off to Wellington, a further 75km west along the Mitchell Hwy where the local Legacy Club and Stephen Hodge, manager of the Soldiers' Memorial Club had very generously arranged lunch for us. We appreciated their generosity very much.



Gary Francis, who lives in the area, turned up to greet us, driving his immaculate 70 year old Austin Healy 100/4. Alyn "Hawk-eye" Hawkes didn't need to be asked twice if he'd like a rip around the block.



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After a wonderful lunch, it was back into the saddle for the final 40km up to Dubbo. Dubbo was to be our first 2 night stay and we were all looking forward to it.

We pulled into the Dubbo showgrounds where this time we had to pay for the use of the facilities.

Having completed 4 Scootaville events, in both Qld and NSW, and raised a bunch of money for Legacy, we have found the degree of generosity offered by organisations, social clubs, governing entities etc to vary considerably. Small entities were always the most generous and although we have no right to expect be treated generously, it was always the small bodies which appreciated what we were trying to achieve and who offered to help.

One large Council even charged us for the electricity we used.



The showground “hangar” we were allowed to use was, once again, huge!. We could have parked a couple of C-17s in there and still had room.

Our baritone was dispatched to a far corner and we all slept well.

That night the Dubbo RSL had offered to put on a show for us, to invite the town and donate the net proceeds to us. They decided on the Wayne Donnelly Hypno-Comedian show which looked to be a very funny show – which it was. Even though it was a Saturday night, unfortunately not a lot of people turned up, but the Club covered costs, all those that did attend enjoyed it and those that didn't, missed out.



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WAYNE DONNELLY
HYPNO-COMEDIAN

**SEE THE SHOW
OR
BE THE SHOW!**

RAISING FUNDS FOR LEGACY

DUBBO REAL CLUB RECUP

SATURDAY 23 NOVEMBER | 7.30PM | \$40

JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OF FUN & LAUGHTER

Tickets available at Club Reception or online www.dubborec.com.au | 18+ show

SCOOTERVILLE

RAISING FUNDS FOR LEGACY

Departing Windsor 21 November to travel by Scooter 1699km round trip returning back to Windsor on 6 December.

"Legacy supports the partners and children of veterans who have seen their loved ones leave our shores to serve in wars from World War 1 and World War 2, to Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq. Many never made the journey home and others returned bearing the physical and mental scars of war."





Next day was a freebie, some did their washing, some rested, some went for a walk, some caught Pattie's bus into town and did the tour of the old Dubbo Gaol.



The Old Dubbo Gaol which is now a heritage-listed site, is a museum and tourist attraction. It was designed by the NSW Colonial Architect's Office and building commenced on the site of the original courthouse in 1847. It was continuously upgraded until 1945.

When closed, the Government of New South Wales planned its demolition and replacement with a multi-storey office block. Protests led by the then Dubbo City Council and local historical society led to those plans being dropped. In 1973 the building was transferred from the NSW Department for Corrections to the city council, with the intention of restoration and creation of a tourist attraction.¹

It is believed to have been officially opened in 1887 however many of the buildings were already in existence by that time.

The structure inside the gaol wall included the main male cell block with 12 ordinary cells and specialised cells comprising two solitary confinement cells, a padded cell and a condemned cell. The female section comprised two cells, a bathroom and exercise yard, an infirmary and kitchen block, as well as a library.

There was also two store rooms and two offices, two remand yards adjacent to a debtors exercise yard and an early toilet block, laundry building with toilets and fenced exercise yards and a sanitary disposal facility.

Life was hard.

Closed as a gaol in 1966, the complex re-opened as a tourist attraction in 1974.



Ian "Bestie" Aves asking for some 6 inch nails and a big hammer, hoping to keep Jilly O'Toole on ice for a while.





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That night, after our busy day, we decided to “stay home” and cook for ourselves. Some time ago, on one of the Qld events, we’d been treated to some of the best tasting hamburgers we’d ever eaten. Johnno “bucket” Saunders, an ex-RAAF cook, had whipped them up for us and we’d pirated his recipe. We had some gift vouchers given to us by Woolworths, one of our sponsors, so it was into town, buy up the necessary bits, mix them all up in a large bowl and then bung them onto the barby.

They were pretty good but not as good as the originals - probably missing the master's touch.

Next morning, which was a Monday, we packed up, loaded Kiwi's truck, those that weren't riding got aboard Pattie's bus, the rest cranked up their scooters and we set forth for Parkes, a short 135km south down the Newell Hwy.

First stop was to see the old Peak Hill Gold Mine, about half way between Dubbo and Parkes.



There have been two attempts to extract gold from this hill. The first operated between 1893 and 1917 and produced about 60,000 ounces from 500,000 tonnes of rock (Remember Gulgong produced 555,000 oz). The initial attempt was done as a shaft mine with the shaft reaching a depth of more than 200 metres.

The second attempt was done by Alkane Resources Ltd using the open cut method and which recovered 145,000 ounces from 4.9 million tonnes of rock. This attempt operated between 1996 and 2002 with the mine being decommissioned in 2006.

Today the old workings are a must see where you can spend at least an hour checking out both the historical works and the more recent open cut mines. There are many easy to follow self-guided walking paths with plenty to read signs along the way.

Peak Hill is a small town with a population of 770 people but it has a most welcoming RSL Club. As we've continuously found over the years, it's the small establishments that are the



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most charitable. When learnt who we were and what we were doing, this small RSL welcomed us with open Arms providing us with a much appreciated morning tea.

We thank them very much for their generosity.



Some of the troops, in the shade out the front of the RSL, getting ready for the next leg of the journey.

Peak Hill also has the distinction of having the first public wheat silo built in Australia. Built in 1918 after government surveys indicated the district had great potential as a wheat-producing region, a single bin silo was built but a 2 year drought meant the silo was not filled until 1920.

We intended to spend 2 nights in Parkes as it has a lot to offer. One attraction, which is a must see, is the CSIRO Observatory which is about 25km north of Parkes township. As we were going past, we weren't going to miss this opportunity.

The Observatory comprises the 64 metre wide Radio Telescope also known as "The Dish", along with two smaller radio telescopes. The 64 m dish was one of the first large movable dishes in the world and one of several radio antennae used to receive live television images of the Apollo 11 Moon landing. Its scientific contributions over the decades led the ABC to describe it as "the most successful scientific instrument ever built in Australia."

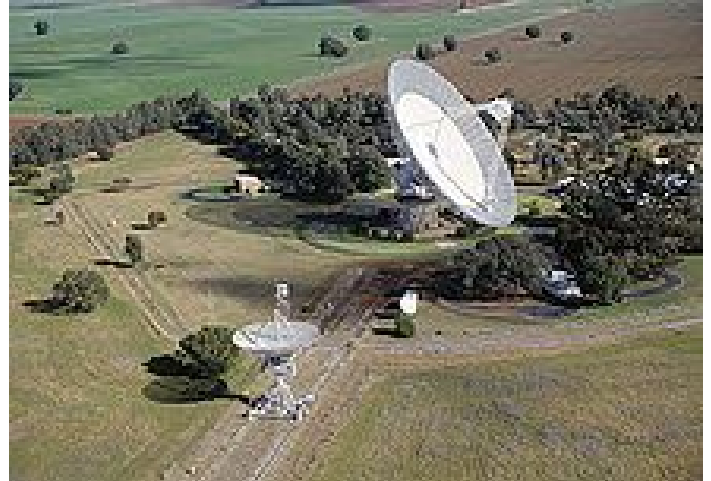


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It was included on the Australian National Heritage List on 10 August 2020.

The Telescope, which was completed in 1961, was the brainchild of E. G. "Taffy" Bowen, chief of the CSIRO's Radiophysics Laboratory. During the Second World War, he had worked on radar development in the United States and had made connections in its scientific community. Calling on this old boy network, he persuaded two philanthropic organisations, the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation, to fund half the cost of the telescope. It was this recognition and key financial support from the United States that persuaded Australian prime minister, Robert Menzies, to agree to fund the rest of the project.



The Parkes site was chosen in 1956, as it was accessible, but far enough from Sydney to have clear skies and be isolated from radio frequency interference. It continues to be upgraded and as of 2018 is 10,000 times more sensitive than its initial configuration.



We arrived, pulled up, parked the scooters and started our tour.



One interesting item at the complex is the array of 2 parabolic dishes spaced about 100 metres apart and facing each other. If you get up close to one, standing so your mouth is close to its focal point and whisper into it, the sound waves are focused to the other dish and reflected back and can be clearly heard by anyone standing in front of it.

A big hit with the little kids - and with some of the big ones.

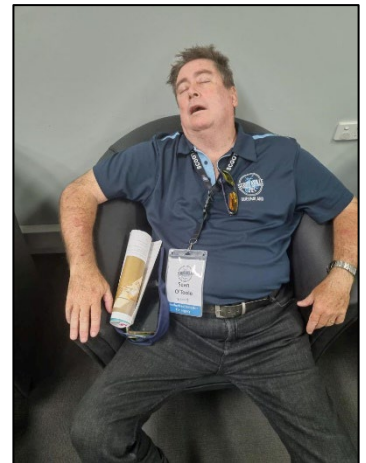


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The complex has several interesting interactive devices describing how the “Dish” works and detailing what it has accomplished over time.

Most of us were very interested.



With the CSIRO café closed for renovations and with the Dish tour under our belts, it was time to complete the final 25km to our overnighner at the Parkes Showground.

Unfortunately when we arrived there was some confusion as there had been the usual staffing changes, some details hadn't been passed down the line and Council was unaware of our coming. We soon sorted that out and before long we were given the room below which is part of the ancient grandstand.



We did some re-arranging of the furniture and before long had it looking like below. Temps in Parkes at that time were in the 30's and without fans in the ceiling it was a bit warm so a few



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took a trip into town to Discount Dave's, possibly the biggest and best dollar shop in the whole universe and returned with a bunch of portable fans.

Bliss.



Parkes was a two night stay as the Parkes to Wagga leg was a long one, 300km, we needed a breather to be ready for it.

On our free day, we had arranged with the Parkes Services Club to have the RAAF hot air balloon flying at the showground and taking primary school kids for a flight. Unfortunately, the RAAF was unable to provide the balloon so we had to shelve those plans.

That didn't mean we couldn't enjoy a meal and a coldie or two at the Club – which of course we did.





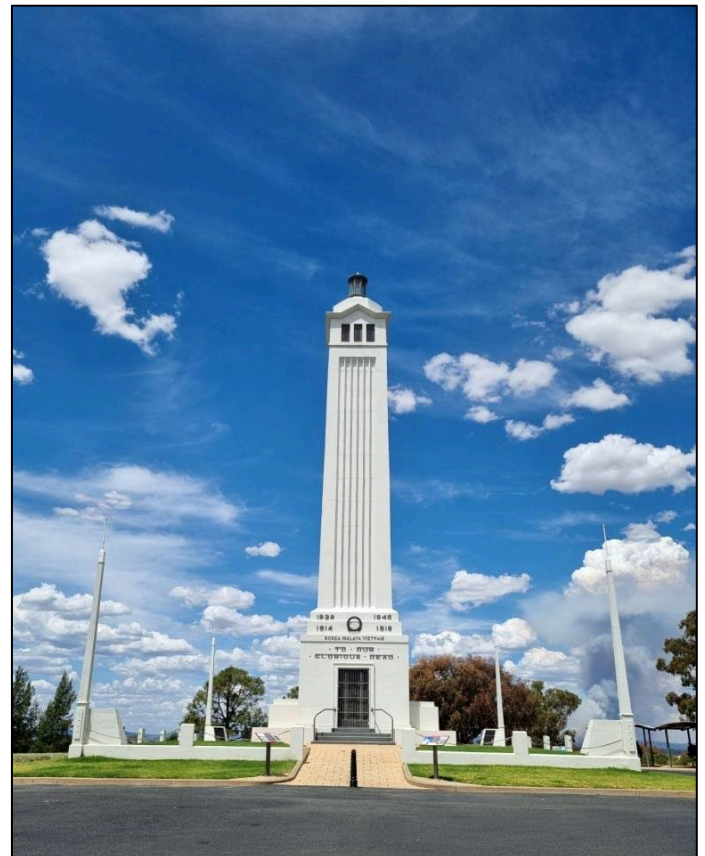
On the Tuesday, the free day, those who could ride grabbed one of the scooters and went exploring.

One place that got a lot of attention was the Parkes War Memorial, a 33 metre tall tower which is situated on Memorial Hill.

Unveiled in 1953, it contains two parchment books of remembrance with the names of those who died in World War I and in World War II.

During World War II, like Dubbo, Parkes was home to a RAAF Base and was also home to the RAAF's No. 18 Inland Aircraft Fuel Depot.


The inscription below tells the story of the memorial.



War Memorial - Shrine of Remembrance

PARKES
Heritage Trail

On 22 November 1963 the Memorial was unveiled by Lieutenant General Henry Gordon Bennett (CB CMG DSO VD) and solemnly dedicated by Chaplin William Noel Hook (THL) to the:

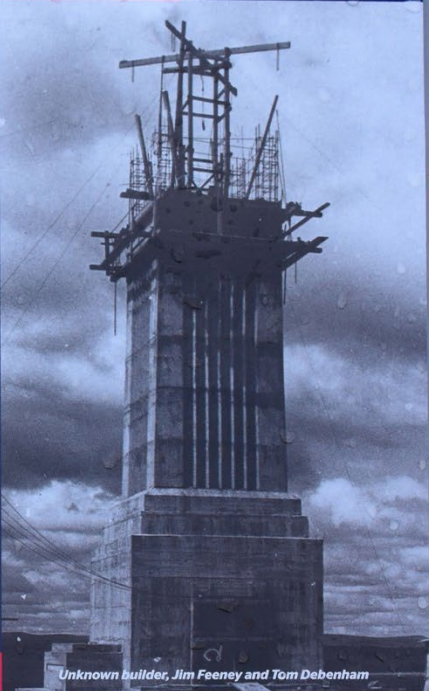


Sacred Memory of the Men and Women who made the Supreme Sacrifice in the Great War and World War II

The War Memorial - Shrine of Remembrance has been a local focal point since it was first seen on the hill in 1939. The Memorial is a 33 metre concrete tower topped with a beacon light. It was first proposed in 1922 at a time when so many communities were looking to show their respect and remembrance of those that died in the Great War of 1914 - 1918. Public meetings took place to start the project and a committee was formed. The Great Depression put the project on hold until 1934.

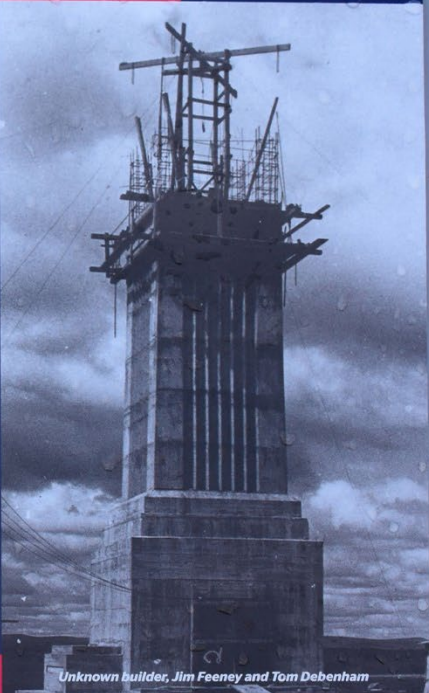
The lights were first switched on the practically completed Memorial on 1 November 1939 (Armistice Day) by Mr Clive Packham, President of the Parkes Sub Branch of the Returned Services League. During WWII the beacon was used for navigation by the pilots training at the Parkes RAAF Training Base (now Parkes Airport).

The Memorial was finally completed in 1949. This work was carried out by the Parkes Municipal Council and the Central West County Council. Mr Henry Kelly was the architect engineer and supervisor from commencement to completion of the Memorial. Its most important role is as a visible and potent commemorative structure to the men and women who have been part of the Australian Defence Forces, representing and fighting for our safety and values.




Unknown builder, Jim Feeney and Tom Debenham

Images courtesy of Helen Bernadi (nee Debenham)




Foundations showing steel reinforcement for the walls of the tower, looking East.



Hut used by Tom Debenham to live in during construction. Other builders rode push bikes to and from Forbes each day.

read more about Memorial Hill at www.visitparkes.com.au





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Parkees is also well known as the home of the annual Elvis Festival which is held every year in the second week in January, coinciding with Elvis Presley's birthday. Recognised as one of the top three Festivals and Events in Australia, the Festival attracts 25,000 fans with a global reach of 1.874 billion.



There is an Elvis Museum at the information centre as well as a vintage car museum, both of which got a bit of attention.

Next morning it was up early, breakfast, pack up, load the truck and off. We had a 300km trip to look forward to with a few interesting spots at which to stop along the way.





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First stop was the lovely town of Forbes, only 35 km down the Newell Hwy.

Forbes, which is situated on the Lachlan River and which is known for its wonderful old grand heritage buildings, was founded in 1817. Initially a small settlement the population boomed to in excess of 30,000 when gold was found in 1861.

Forbes is also known as being associated with legendary bushranger Ben Hall. One of Australia's most notorious bushrangers, Ben Hall's three year bushranging career began in 1862. He was linked with hundreds of robberies including the heist of an escort coach at Eugowra Rocks east of Forbes, reportedly carrying 14,000 pounds worth of gold and money. Hall's career came to an end at Billabong Creek near Forbes in 1865 when he was shot down by a police party. He was buried at Forbes Cemetery, two days before his 28th birthday.

Next stop was West Wyalong, the township that is a few km west of Wyalong. West Wyalong has a great bakery which sells great pies – we had to stop.



It also used to feature a DC3 in the Lions Park – but it's now gone, possibly to get a spruce up as last time we saw it, age hadn't done it any favours.



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After we left the bakery, we needed to refuel the scooters before heading to our next stop, the Licorice and Chocolate Factory in Junee – another 125km down Goldfields Way. Our little Hondas only had a 5 litre tank which would normally be good for 200km but as they were driven as flat as a tack, we never got that out of them. We carried two 20litre drums of fuel in reserve and we only used them a couple of times as normally fuel wasn't a problem. There are at least 5 million petrol stations in outback NSW.

We got to Junee mid afternoon and planned to stop for at least an hour.



Built in 1935 but abandoned in the late 1960s the old flour mill stood vacant for 30 years until bought by organic wheat farmer Neil Druce. As flour is one of the main ingredients in licorice, Neil had a dream of creating a licorice factory in the mill. People thought he was mad.

At first things didn't go too well, the initial licorice he made wasn't the best but by 2003 he'd perfected it and then decided to add chocolate. That's when the tourists really started liking Junee.

Nowadays the factory produces licorice and chocolate five days a week, employing over 60 locals.



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We stopped, we sampled, we bought, we coffeed – we loved it.

With our bags full of healthy produce from the old mill, we set off for the short 35km run down to Wagga where we'd stay for 2 nights.



The Wagga Council had generously allowed us the use of the Kyeamba Smith Hall on the showground. This hall was opened back in 1927.

During WW2, from June 1940 until February 1941, the Wagga Show-ground was used as a temporary camp for RAAF recruits. Two exhibition Halls on the Showground, the Hammond



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Hall and the Kyeamba Smith Hall were converted into sleeping quarters and the sheep pavilion was converted into a dining room. Eventually about 1,000 recruits were stationed at the camp. We moved in with room to spare.

Wagga is a big city – with nearly 70,000 people calling it home. It is a growing city with the population expected to breach 80,000 in about another 20 years.

It is the locality of two major ADF Bases, with the RAAF to the east at Forest Hill and Army to the south west at Kapooka. Both are major training Bases and both inject huge finances into the town each fortnight.

On the Thursday, which was our free day, we had arranged to visit the RAAF base and to have lunch in the Airman's mess.





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We had a great windscreen tour of the Base then filed into the Mess for lunch. As usual, food was great.



Being a training base, most people live on so the Messes are used to their fullest. It was great to see – just like it used to be.

These days RAAF recruits complete their full training at Wagga as RTU was moved to Wagga from Edinburgh some years ago. Rookies complete their 9 weeks of training, then move a few metres to another accommodation block and start their trade or admin training which can take some months, depending on the course. Radio training has also been moved from Laverton to Wagga and is now called Avionics. Looks like Radtechitis is a thing of the past.





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Wagga is now a tri-service training base, Army and Navy now send their future aircraft maintenance persons to Wagga where they are taught the basics after which they return to their own Bases for specialist training on their particular aircraft.

We left the Base early afternoon to return to the showground and on the way I asked to return via the civvy section of the airfield. Back in 1972 I did my training at what was once the Airways Ops building at Wagga airport. Back then we occupied the left hand end of the building with the DCA radio techs and their equipment at the right hand end. Pilot briefing was conducted in the centre.

All gone.





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That night Legacy Wagga had offered to provide dinner for our group. Legacy Wagga occupies a wonderful old home on Tompson St which they opened up for us and went out of their way to provide us with a wonderful evening.



After drinks, it was out to the back room where a five-star “banquet” had been prepared. We couldn’t believe it, there was no talking for a while, everyone just sat and enjoyed the wonderful meal. We thank them very much.





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After dinner and a few more drinks, it was time for the customary photo, we formed up out the front of the building with one of our scooters, had the pic taken then said our good-byes and headed back to our digs to get ready for the big trip down to Queanbeyan tomorrow where we were to stay 3 nights.

Thanks Legacy - it was most enjoyable.



The trip to Queanbeyan was another long one - 250km, but we'd planned a few stops and we'd need fuel somewhere down the line, so it was up early and on the road.

First stop was Gundagai, on the Hume Hwy, 90 km from Wagga.

On 28 November 1932 the Australian prime minister Joseph Lyons unveiled the statue of the Dog on the Tuckerbox, five miles from Gundagai, NSW. As the town's "pioneer memorial" the statue became a popular tourist stop, helped considerably by its location on the Hume Highway roughly half-way between Sydney and Melbourne. It was arguably the twentieth century's most successful purpose-built tourist attraction in Australia, at least until Coffs Harbour's Big Banana of 1964. For tourists journeying between Australia's two largest





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cities, it became a standard stop, a conversation piece, and the subject of a million tourist snapshots. Yet its meaning was always—arguably intentionally—clouded in obscurity.



We, or course, also stopped for a photo.

We'd been lucky for most of the trip, most days were fine, plenty of sun, but from Forbes the weather had started to turn bad and the riders needed to Glad Wrap up in order to keep dry.



The Glad Wrap boys – all ponchoed up to beat the rain.



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Next stop was to be at Bob Richardson's wonderful [Argyle Park](#) Alpaca raising property, not far from Yass.

Bob had a wonderful career in the Air Force, retiring in 2003 with the rank of Air Vice Marshall. See [HERE](#).



We had hoped to have an outdoor lunch amongst the Alpacas but Mother Nature had other ideas. Bob had set up everything on the lawn in front of his home but the rain sent us packing into one of his sheds.

Some weeks prior to setting off on the NSW trip and knowing General Sir Peter Cosgrove was very heavily involved with Legacy, and knowing that everyone in our group thought very highly of him, we thought it would be nice if we could meet up with Sir Peter somewhere down the line and spend some time with him.

We rang his office in Sydney and after we explained who we were and what we would love to happen and when his office checked to see when and if it could happen, we found he had a few spare days in his busy schedule and could spend a few days with us, starting with lunch at Bob Richardson's place in Bowning. Would that be ok we were asked, you bet it would be we answered.



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Sir Peter arrived with his lovely wife Lynne and very soon both were mixing with the group as though they had been with us for years. Wonderful people.

Neil Snudden presented Sir Peter with the Scootaville Coin.





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Neil also presented Bob Richardson with a Scootaville Coin and thanked him for his wonderful hospitality.



The very brave Dave Pedler, with his life in his hands, up close and personal feeding one of Bob's roguish Alpacas.





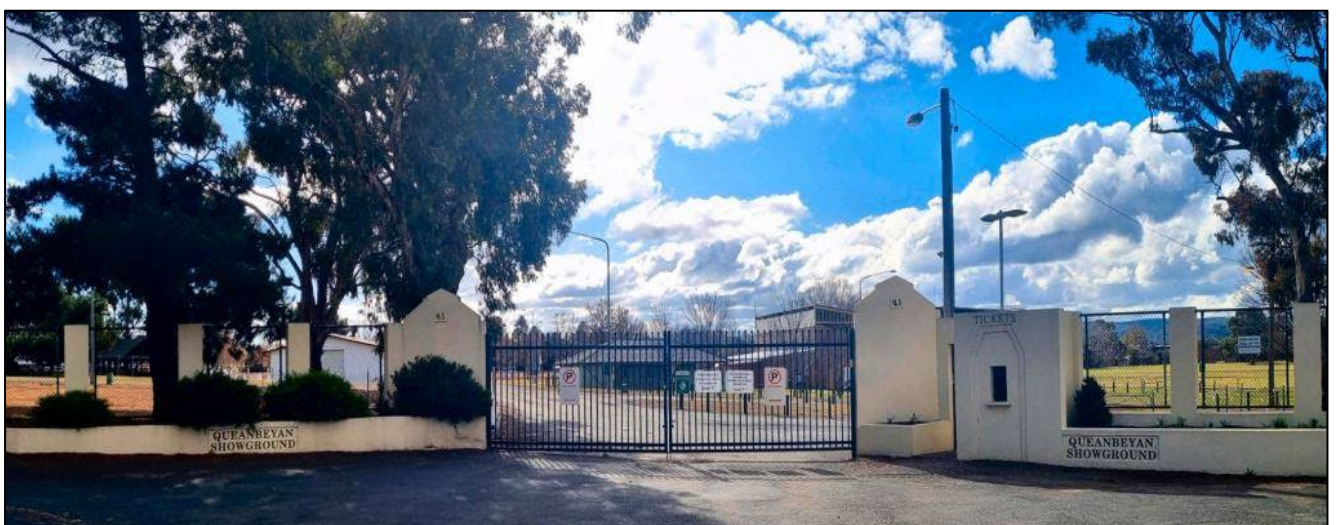
Scootaville NSW 2024.



It was finally time to leave Bob and his wonderful little Alpacas and to complete the final leg of our journey, down to the showground at Queanbeyan.



Queanbeyan Showgrounds – our home for the next 3 nights.



Once again, the very generous Queanbeyan Council had allowed us the use of one of their large rooms in which to overnight. This room was contained under the showgrounds'



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grandstand, had toilets and showers and a wonderful kitchen in which our resident cook, Sue Trimmer, prepared breakfast for us each morning.

We arrived late afternoon on the Friday and very soon, after a week or so of practice, were able to set up our bed-sites in no time at all.



There was also plenty of room for our resident musos to strum away on their trusty ukuleles, much to the delight of our trusty scooters.



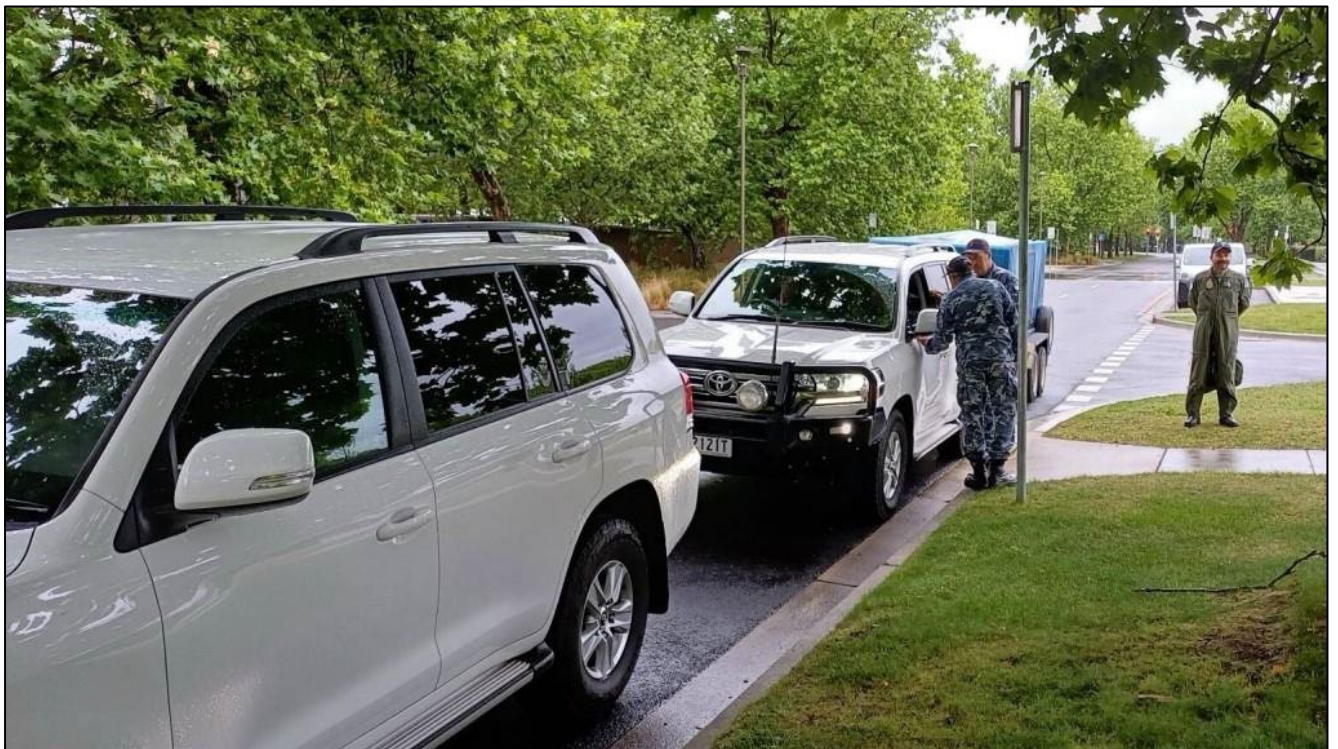


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Next morning, a Saturday, we had arranged with the Air Force for them to fly their hot-air balloon from the Patrick White Lawns in front of the National Library. The balloon would have been tethered and taken small kids for a ride up to about 20 ft then back down again but sadly it didn't happen. Everyone turned up except for the ACT bureaucracy whose sole job was to open the gate to allow the Air Force to set up. After wasting time at the gate for at least an hour and after trying to contact someone with keys, we gave up.

Sir Peter Cosgrove had offered to join us later in the morning, to greet the kids, talk to the parents, but we had to let him know it wasn't on. Big disappointment.



That night the very generous Queanbeyan Leagues Club had offered to hold a bunch of meat raffles and donate the proceeds to us. The Club would supply the meat, raffle books, the PA system, instructions on how to do it then let us loose.

We arrived at the Club about 5.00pm, sorted out who would do the selling, who would handle the tickets, who would collect the cash, who would operate the EFTPOS machine - then away we went.



The Club made a number of announcements on their PA system, advising their patrons who we were, what we did and what we were doing. Response was fantastic.



Before long we had sold all the tickets and it was time to draw the raffles.



We needed someone to be the drawer of lucky numbers and to announce the winners over the Club's PA. Lucky for us, Dave Pedler put his hand up and did one helluva job, but being a Radtech one wouldn't expect anything else.

Dave has now another permanent job, apart from being our resident entertainer and dance instructor, he is now also our events MC.

Sunday was to be a big day. Allan George had organised a tour of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) for us after which we would lay wreaths at the Last Post Ceremony.

Allan himself would lay a wreath in honour of Wallaby Airlines, RTFV-35 Sqn (Vietnam Caribou Sqn), remembering the over 60,000 Australians who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975, especially the 523 that made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Jillian O'Toole in honour of the men and women of the Australian Army who experience inner turmoil upon returning from serving the Australian people on overseas deployment.

Neil Snudden remembering the men and women trained by the Air Force to maintain or operate its radio equipment.



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L-R: Allan George, Jillian O'Toole, Neil Snudden.

Because of the size of our party, we were split into two groups for the tour, each group led by a volunteer guide - both of whom had served in the RAAF. Our thanks to them. Sir Peter Cosgrove had agreed to meet us and spend some time with each group. His and the volunteer guides knowledge of the Memorial was amazing, they were able to describe every exhibit in complete detail. We were privileged and honoured that Sir Peter gave up another hour or so of his time to provide some personal insights into one of Australia's national treasures.

Our tour guides.



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L-R: David Freeman, Nicola Donnelly (AWM Supervisor), Craig Meaghan AM, Greg Hood AO.



After the Wreath Ceremony, we lined up in front of the AWM for the customary photo. This will be a keeper.



Trev Benneworth and Sir Peter Cosgrove – at the AWM

Monday morning arrived and it was time to once again pack everything up, say our good-byes and head for our next stop which was to be Bathurst, another long run of 280km. We had planned a few stops along the way so it wasn't going to be that bad.

We left Queanbeyan early and our first stop was to be at the RAAF Memorial Grove which is on the Federal Hwy, just inside the ACT boundary.

Administered by the Air Force Association (ACT Division), but maintained by the ACT Government, the Grove is situated adjacent to the Group Captain Hughie Edwards VC Memorial Park. See [HERE](#).

Officially consecrated on the 22nd February 2002, the Grove, with its central memorial cairn, is not intended as a substitute for the Australian War Memorial (AWM), the RAAF National Memorial on Anzac Parade or the Canberra Garden of Remembrance, however, it does offer an alternative location for commemorative ceremonies and for the installation of plaques that do not meet the eligibility criteria for mounting at the AWM or the ACT Garden of



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Remembrance. Such plaques include those dedicated to groups, units or members of the RAAF, ex-AFC, ex-RAAF, ex-WAAAF, ex-WRAAF, RAAF Assn, ex-RAAF Assn or similar persons or groups.



Trev Benneworth and Neil Snudden, resting on the Radschool Memorial.



We left the Grove and headed for Goulburn, a short trip of only 90km, travelling on the divided Federal Highway, and passing the ever changing Lake George.

Lake George is an endorheic lake. It is approximately 40 kilometres north-east of Canberra and is located adjacent to the Federal Highway en route Canberra to Goulburn.

An endorheic lake is one that normally retains water and doesn't drain by having an outflow to other external bodies of water (e.g. rivers or oceans) instead, the water which flows in only leaves via evaporation.

The water level in the lake can vary from being 7.5m deep to sometimes being practically dry. At times the water will lap the highway beside the lake, other times you will see sheep grazing where the water once was.

When full, the lake is 25km long, 10km wide and will have an average depth of only 1 metre.



There is a busy commercial centre on the southern outskirts of Goulburn, at the freeway interchange. It contains several service stations, food outlets, one being an excellent bakery, and also features a giant tourist attraction – the 15 metre high Big Ram.

Originally built back in 1985, it once stood further down the road towards the town itself but the Hume Hwy was diverted around Goulburn, and in 2007 it was moved 800 metres up the road to the commercial centre where it sits today.



It now contains a gift shop and a staircase that leads to the Ram's eyes from which you can view Goulburn.



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We continued further onto Goulburn to the Goulburn Workers Club which had generously agreed to provide us with morning tea. We had approached the other Club in Goulburn, one that suggests it is military associated but putting on coffee and biscuits for a group of ex-Service men and women who were collecting for Legacy and homeless Vets was just all too hard for them – so we rang the Workers Club which readily agreed.

The Workers had set aside a quiet section of their Club, had morning tea set out for us and made us most welcome. Thanks Workers.

We know which Club we'll use in Goulburn in future.



From Goulburn we left the Hume Hwy and headed off towards Crookwell, on Crookwell Rd. There are several ways to get to Bathurst from Goulburn, we thought we'd go via Crookwell as it too has a very generous Services Club and this way would take us past the delightful little primary school at Binda.

Once again it's generally the smaller Clubs that are the generous ones.

Some weeks prior we had rung the Crookwell Services Club, told them who we were, what we were doing and what we hoped to achieve. Without hesitation, they offered to provide us with lunch. When compared to the much larger military styled Club in Goulburn, Crookwell Services Club shined.

We were met at the Club by the local newspaper which printed a story a few days later, showing us out the front of the Club. You can see it [HERE](#). Sorry about the quality.

HHH



Crookwell Services Club.



Lunching in the very generous Services Club in Crookwell. We find generally, not always, the smaller Clubs are people Clubs, whereas the bigger ones are commercial enterprises - makes a difference.

If ever you're passing through Crookwell, call in and say hello, we certainly will. Very welcoming Club.



After lunch we headed off for the little school at Binda – a short 20 km run down Binda Rd.



We arrived at the small Binda school at about 2.00pm which would give us an hour as school finished for the day at 3.00pm. Diane Hickey, the school principal welcomed us and had the delightful little kids lined up to say hello.





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We got together under a shelter at the back of the school, bought a few of the scooters in and the kids had a great old time starting and stopping them, revving the cob-webs out of them and of course, blowing the horn. The little ones loved it – as did a few of the bigger ones – see [HERE](#).



We asked the Binda Rural Fire Station if they could spare a truck for an hour, bring it to the school and let the kids have a look over it and have a go with the hose. For the kids! – of course they could. Kids being kids, they of course had to squirt someone – so we copped it.

After all the fun with the Fire Engine, it was time to give out the “Show-bags”. It’s a shame IGA and Smiths (our sponsors) can’t see the delight on these kid’s faces.





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Then unfortunately, 3.00pm came around far too quickly, the school bus arrived and it was time for the kids to head home. We thanked principal Diane for allowing us the opportunity of spending some time with the kids, we donned the jackets and helmets for the umpteenth time and headed for Bathurst, 125km of hilly and windy road.

Prior to leaving Crookwell we were given some advice by one of the locals – and if you've got any brains you listen to what the locals tell you. This time we were told that the General Store in Tuena, 60km up the road towards Bathurst, sells the world's best Paddle Pops.



Tuena NSW is an historic gold mining village located 60km north of Crookwell and 88km south of Bathurst. It was built after gold was discovered in 1851. Shortly thereafter in 1852, as the population rapidly increased, the first post office was established and many stores and hotels sprung up. In 1859 Tuena was officially named a town.





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Jenelle Parsons owns the Tuena General Store, her family has owned and run it since 1886, a whopping 139 years – and our Crookwell local was right, Jenelle's Paddle Pops were the best.

We pushed on from Tuena towards Bathurst, passing through other small villages, like Trunkey Creek which owe their existence to the 1850's gold rush and finally arrived at the Bathurst Showground about 5.00pm. We were here for 2 nights.

Thanks again to Tracey Seaman for allowing us the use of the wonderful Cec English Pavilion in which to overnight.

The Bathurst Showground is a heritage-listed showground and is owned by the Bathurst Showground Trust and the New South Wales Department of Trade & Investment, Regional Infrastructure & Services. It was added to the New South Wales State Heritage Register on 4 September 2015.¹

There are roughly 35 buildings on the showgrounds, dating from 1879 to the present.



The CEC English pavilion, in which we stayed, (above) was designed by Bathurst architect James Hine and built in 1886.



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C. E. C. English was a long-serving steward of the Show and the pavilion was named after him in 1967.

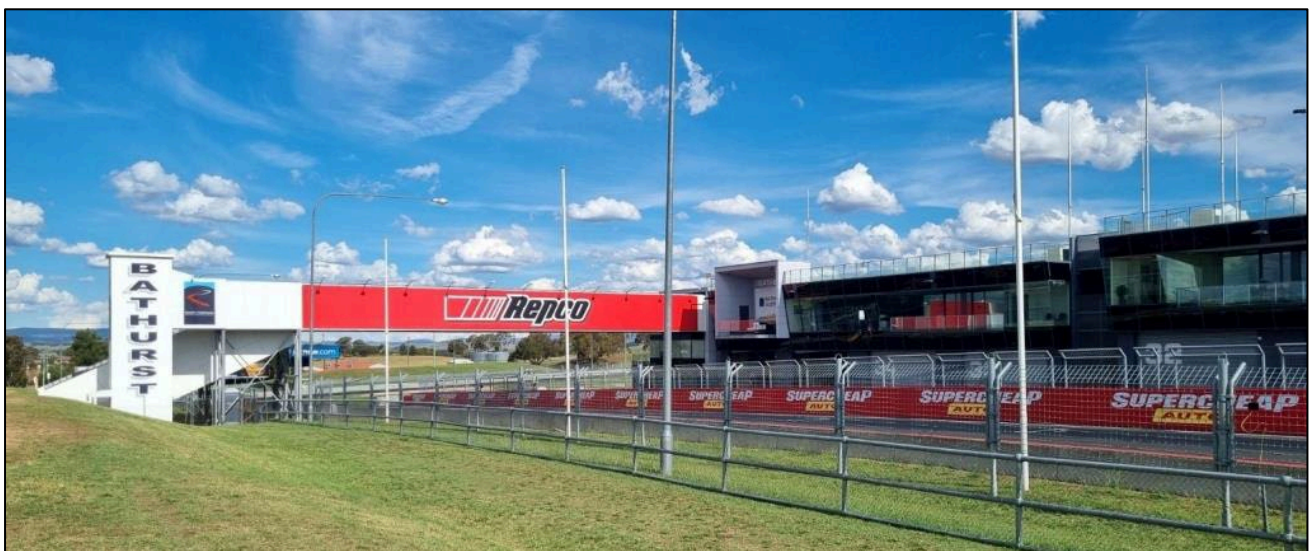
The Beau Brown Pavilion, below, although not the oldest structure at the Showground, is the most striking. The building commenced its life in suburban Sydney in about 1886, when it was erected as a skating rink at the Ashfield Recreation Ground, however, by the end of that decade the management of the Ashfield Recreation Ground, a private company, was in financial trouble and the decision was made to sell its buildings. The Association purchased the Pavilion and the Grandstand and re-erected both at the Bathurst Showground in time for the show of 1892.



A major renovation programme was instigated in 1987, mainly to halt perceived structural movement. This included steel bracing, a new concrete floor and relining the walls with the present boarding.

But – a trip to Bathurst without checking out the Mr Panorama Circuit would be unforgiven. Those that rode were very quickly onto the scooters and heading for the circuit, the others scrambled into the bus and followed suit.

Next year we hope to hold the Legacy walk on the circuit, we had planned it this year but unfortunately that had to be cancelled.





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The troops on the circuit with Wal Shakoff on his supercharged black beauty way out in front.



That night we dined at the recently refurbished Oxford Hotel with plans to come back in 2025.

Next morning, Wednesday, was sadly our last day, tomorrow we would go down the mountain to once again, the Hawkesbury Showground, return the scooters and head for home, but first we had a few stops along the way.



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Up early on the Thursday morning and after we'd breakfasted, packed up the kit, loaded the truck, showered and said our good byes, it was time to head for home. Our first stop was to be Lithgow Small Arms, or Lithgow Arms as it is known today.

The factory was established by the Australian Government in 1912 as the Lithgow Small Arms Factory to ease reliance on the British for the supply of defence materials.



The factory initially manufactured SMLE III rifles (and Pattern 1907 bayonets) for the Australian military during World War I. During World War II, production expanded to include Vickers machine guns, Bren guns and, postwar, branched out into sporting goods including civilian firearms and golf clubs, tools, sewing machines, (from the mid-1950s) the F1 submachine gun, general purpose infantry rifle prototypes, general purpose machine guns and similar products.

The Lithgow Small Arms Factory was first "corporatised" as Australian Defence Industries by the Hawke government, then later sold in 2006. It is now owned by Thales Australia and continues to manufacture the F88 Austeyr rifle and F89 Minimi currently used by the Australian military.



Thanks again to Bruce Hutton, GM of Thales Lithgow, for arranging the tour for us - it was super interesting.



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After Lithgow, our final stop before home was to be Katoomba. We planned to lunch at the RSL then do the tourist bit, check out the 3 sisters then the Skyway and Train of Terror at Scenic World. Although a tall order, we fitted it all in, but only just.



Katoomba RSL – where we lunched.



We lined the scooters up for a photo in front of possibly one of the most photographed spots in all of Australia, at the 3 Sisters. Wal with his Black Beauty on the left.



Scootaville NSW 2024.



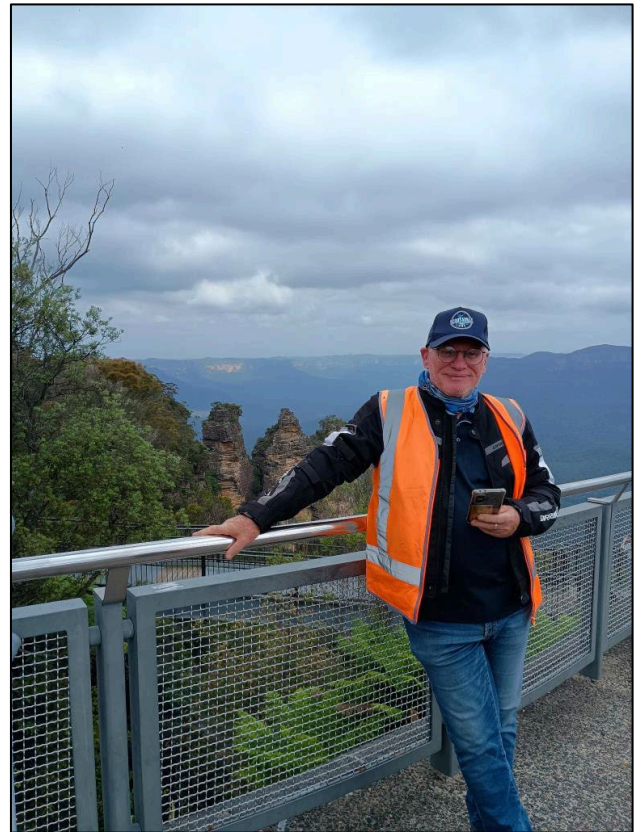
Bob Anderson, in front of the 3 Sisters.

The Three Sisters is the Blue Mountains' most spectacular landmark. Located at Echo Point Katoomba, around 2.5 kilometres from the Great Western Highway, this iconic visitor attraction is experienced by millions of people each year.

The Three Sisters is essentially an unusual rock formation representing three sisters who according to Aboriginal legend were turned to stone.

The character of the Three Sisters changes throughout the day and throughout the seasons as the sunlight brings out the magnificent colours. The Three Sisters is also floodlit until around 11pm each evening looking simply spectacular set against the black background of the night sky.

Each of the Three Sisters stand at 922, 918 & 906 metres tall, respectively. That's over 3000 feet above sea level!



What it's all about.



After the 3 Sisters, we drove around to Scenic World where, of their own free will, silly people voluntarily ride in that glass box which is suspended above a humongous drop to mother earth only by a bit of steel rope, anchored from one steep cliff face to another.

The original Scenic Skyway opened in 1958 as Australia's first cable car. Today it is the largest aerial cable car in the Southern Hemisphere. Unfortunately we got there right on closing time so missed out on a ride in the thing or on a ride on that downhill railway that sillier people also ride. The Scenic Railway is in the Guinness Book of World Records for the steepest passenger railway in the world - it still holds the record!

We left Katoomba for the downhill run to Clarendon, a 90km run which would take us along the Great Western Hwy to Springwood, then down Hawkesbury, Springwood Rds through Agnes Banks to Richmond, then past the Base to the Showground.



Next morning we returned the scooters, returned to our digs and packed up ready for a non-stop trip back to Brisbane on the Saturday.



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Altogether a great 18 days. Unfortunately we didn't raise a lot of money, our costs were too high but it was our first trip into NSW, we made a lot of contacts and we're confident that in 2026 when we do it all again we'll be able to make up for the meagre financial results this trip.

Thanks to all who made the trip, it was a pleasure spending the weeks with you all.

Thanks to all those wonderful people who helped us along the way, who fed us, accommodated us, contributed to our war chest, you were marvelous, we can't thank you enough.

See you all again in 2026.