

Lorraine's April Blog

Our house sit at Goomeri at an end, and a family gathering in Walcha to attend to, it was time again to hitch up "Dunmowin" and hit the road. Moving via The Stop Shop at Memerambi for an ice-cream and Kingaroy for a "photo shoot", we ended up that night at Cooyar, camped at the Swinging Bridge campgrounds, where we walked over the swinging bridge, came back, and then walked over again. John took a lot of delight in jumping on the bridge, but it did not faze me.



A few drinks and dollars spent at the pub that night must have made an impact in the small village's bank balance.



Nearby, Muntapa Tunnel was on the agenda. I felt we had been there before with Brodie, but could not place it on previous trips through the area. The tunnel is all that remains of the branch line between Oakey and Cooyar, now just a rail trail, the tunnel is heritage listed.

As we had business to attend to in Ipswich, we decided to leave the van at Nobby for the day while we travelled down the range, catch up with our financial advisor, and make the trek back up again. Nobby of course is home to Rudds Pub, where Steele Rudd wrote his famous Dad and Dave stories.

Arrival back at Nobby, it had rained most of the day, and our house battery was pretty low, so decided an overnight at Craig's Caravan Park in Tenterfield was the go. We did not want to arrive at our Easter Freedom Family camp with no power! We have stayed at this caravan park previously, and are amazed at how clean this old park is. Amenities dating back eons ago, old but spotless certainly give the Big4s a run for their money.



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We had planned to meet up with my brother Geoff and wife Anne at Glen Innes, where we caught up on road trips, they on washing, and planned the next phase of our trip together. The plan was to get to Walcha, by Wednesday prior to Easter. It was like the "meeting of the clans" by the time we got to Guyra another brother and his family passed through on their way to Walcha as well. Funny that, must be a family reunion! On our way to Walcha, we took a detour from Uralla, as Anne and Geoff had not seen Gostwyck Chapel. I knew that given it was autumn, that it would be covered in red Virginia creeper. We were not disappointed.



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Yes, the family reunion – some camped at Glen Garry, others staying in town, was a huge success. Glen Garry, just outside of Walcha, is where my mother grew up; we camped in the River Paddock, where she used to ride her horse. All of my siblings were there, some grandies, a few greaties, and a handful of cousins, and of course all our respective partners, lovers and/or wives & husbands thrown in. What a fantastic weekend we had.



Our private ceremony to spread mum's and her cousin's ashes went off well, despite the threat of rain. A small plaque has been left on the hill, and a hidden (a cache) visitors book if any family pass by. All came back to our camp site where we enjoyed afternoon tea – including hot cross buns made by Anne and myself.



The grandies and greaties enjoyed visiting mum's place of her childhood, the owners of the property



supplied us with a leg of lamb, and vegetables out of the garden. The last night of the stay on the property, we had a huge cook up. Roast lamb, potatoes, pumpkin & marrow picked by the children, all cooked over the fire. Planned dinner around the fire at 6.00 pm, skies opened up at 5.45! Never mind, all were fed, be-it in their own caravans, camper trailers or tents.

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It was great to spend so much valuable time with some of the younger members of our family.



Easter Sunday, we organised an Easter Egg hunt, the children went up to the farm house, I hid the eggs – as geo caches. The older grandies supervised the younger ones – they found all the eggs. A great time was had all.

Most of the family had left by Monday, some stayed until Tuesday only Anne & Geoff and John and I staying a few more days. Tuesday was freezing but who cares, we have our diesel heater!

We had a farm sit lined up at Delungra between Inverell and Warialda, so reluctantly left our cosy camp at Glen Garry with a couple of nights to spare.

Calling through Uralla we stopped for a look around town, and a visit to the Sweet Shop! Sorry we did that, spent way too much money on not needed chocolates! Stopped off at Yarrowyck Nature Reserve, where we did a short 3k hike after lunch to visit some aboriginal rock art, then found the freedom camp at Bundarra on the river for the night. Met up with two couples travelling together from Tamborine, in their caravans, and another younger couple “testing the waters” with a tent.

Our final night was spent in one of our not favourite haunts – a rest area - on the Gwydir Highway, where we had happy hour with some GNs from the Lockyer Valley and Scenic Rim – our old back yard.



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We arrived at Glen Derra, our home for the next six weeks, to a warm welcome and sponge cake with jam and cream, a freezer full of lamb and a flourishing veggie garden and an overflowing bowl of quail egg!. Our hosts were off in their caravan to South Australia, and left us in charge of a heard of Brahman cattle, a mob of dorpler sheep and some goats, some hens, the inevitable guinea fowl, and a quail, not to mention Dougal an old deaf kelpie (appear we are making our names to sitting with deaf or blind elderly dogs), Moggie the mongrel cat, and a beautiful feral tabby cat, that we only see through the kitchen window at night.



Oh, and Yvette, a jersey milking cow and her quiet companions.



Yvette is the middle brown, her calf is on the left. I call the calf Claude, the other jersey I call Monet, and the Brahman is Sybil!

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John milks her weekly, giving us at least 3 1/2 litres of fresh milk, which I have been separating the cream from the milk and making butter out of the cream, then scones from the buttermilk. I have also been making baked custards – we have a bountiful supply of eggs – quiches, muffins, cakes and deserts. Looks like I will be putting on more weight while we are here.



Just to prove it - John is tickling Yvette's titties



We have had several trips into Inverell, which is the closest major town and spent an afternoon in the Pioneer Village. Our generator is sitting at the Boat/Caravan shop in Inverell for sale, along with our Sevyllor kayaks. Decided to downsize the genny, and get rid of the kayaks, that we hardly ever use.

Glen Innes (*left*) copped another visit from us, and we did Bundarra, Tingha, Howell and Bingara circuit. Bundarra has some beautiful heritage buildings, Tingha has Wing Hing Long Museum, and Bingara has the Roxy Theatre! Wing Hing Long is a 'general' store, dating back to the late 1800s, and still have some items "in stock" from its former days. Howell, not far from Copeton Waters is a ghost town, with only a few cobbled streets remaining. We went there in search of a cache!

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Inside Wing Hing Long Museum



Cobbled streets of Howell

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There is not much at Delungra but a roadhouse, a community post office, a pub and a bowls club. The Post Office is run by the community, and only opens Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Our host is normally one of the volunteers, so we went down and did a stint one morning. To be honest, I can't see that they needed four of us for 1 ½ hours, only two customers came in for mail, and the only sale was ours, I bought some stamps! If it was not for the volunteers, the post office would close.

Nearby Cranky Rock caught us by surprise. We had not heard of it previously, so when we arrived there for a picnic, we were blown away by the beauty of the granite boulders precariously balancing on each other. Interesting place for a hike – and of course another cache. We met a couple of caravanners there, one a solo, who was looking for more hobbies on the road. After telling him about geocaching, he got quite excited, he had a GPSr given to him, and did not know what to do with it, now it finally had a purpose.



We have been lucky enough to avoid the bad weather that has hit the east coast. The weather here has been reasonably warm – for autumn – and while we have had a little rain, nothing to complain about. We light the slow combustion fire in the kitchen for heating our water, and I have used the hotplates to cook on, but am not game to use the oven – the temperatures are in the old school, and I have no instructions on how to modify the heat.

We only have two more weeks before we move on, which means, I had better get cracking, I have another travel feature to write up on the area, along with a couple of festivals to attend.