

Aussie Border Bash – October 23 - 28 2009

John Begg continued his series of country events for our Club with his “Aussie Border Bash” on the NSW North Coast on the 23rd – 28th October. This differed from earlier events of this type as it involved travelling greater distances between venues and the structure of the event allowed considerable freedom in attendance and selection of activities. The participants were:

NSW Branch

Brent & Lyn Baker
John Begg
Merryl Godfrey
David Gore
Robert & Sheila Peel
David, Pam & Merinda Rose
Alan & Valerie White
Sue White

Queensland Branch

Christopher & Janelle Hazelhurst
Carl Heydon
Gwen Trimble
Geoff & Jan Victor

South Australia Branch

Pauline, Peter & Ray Zeffert

Guests

Ron & Cynthia Cochrane – Silver Cloud II owners
Mr & Mrs P Nixon – Country Energy
George Shores – past ACT/NSW Branch member
Jenny Enright

The participants enjoyed the following activities:

R.M. Williams Outback Spectacular: With entry permits organised and watches set back one hour, we were transported to Queensland for a welcome to the outback before going back in time to join the Australian Light Horse in the events leading up to and including the historic charge at Beersheba in 1917. We then returned to the present day outback before an emotional finale paying tribute to the Light Horse and to our outback heritage.

Catch a Crab Cruise and Lunch: We were taken on a Tweed River cruise to hand feed pelicans, pump yabbies, catch fish and trap mud crabs before returning for a seafood luncheon including freshly cooked mud crab.

Tropical Fruit World Tour: This is the world’s largest orchard growing over 500 varieties of tropical fruits from around the world. We touched, smelt and tasted a large range of rare and exotic fruits before going on a guided tour of the property that took longer than expected when certain participants were very reluctant to cease using their Macadamia nut cracking skills. A lady named Sue repeatedly showed a rock was faster and more effective than the mechanical devices provided.

Sunset Dinner: We gathered at Kingscliff Surf Club for an informal dinner on the balcony before returning to our accommodation in Tweed Heads.

River and Rainforest Cruise and Lunch: We cruised up the Tweed River to the small village of Tumbulgum with its historic hotel before returning to Tweed Heads whilst enjoying a bar-b-que lunch. A highlight of the cruise was the feeding of birds of prey that live along the river. The scheduled afternoon visit to the Condong Sugar Mill operating in its crushing season regrettably had to be cancelled due to the late return of the cruise.

Sunset Jazz Cruise: A leisurely cruise on the lower reaches of the Terranora Lakes with certain participants eventually succumbing to the music to display their dancing prowess or lack thereof. An ensemble from the Tweed River Jazz Club provided the music.

Lismore Power House Visit: This heritage-listed diesel engine power station is typical of how electricity was supplied to country towns before the advent of the NSW electricity grid. The station contains the largest surviving Paxman [UK] diesel engine in the world; an 8 cylinder VPE8 unit. A particular point of interest was sand in the sumps of two engines – the reason for this was these engines were below flood level of the adjacent Richmond River. The sand facilitated the separation and draining of floodwater from the sump oil to allow the engines to return to service as soon as possible after the floodwater subsided.

Nymboida Hydro Power Station: This heritage-listed power station opened in 1924 producing 800kW of electricity. It is now capable of generating a maximum of 4.5mW using approximately 9 cubic meters of water per second. We were fortunate to observe the starting of a turbine and the manual synchronisation at 50 cycles per second of the alternator output to the national electricity grid using a meter and two ordinary light bulbs.

Nymboida Coaching Station and Museum: The Nymboida Coaching Station Inn overlooking the Nymboida River was built on the woolpack road from Armidale to Grafton around one hundred years ago. Original hand sawn cedar & red mahogany beams, parallel walls and open log fires maintain the historical atmosphere of the 19th century when Cobb & Co. stage coaches, bullock teams, timber cutters, graziers and other pioneers stopped here. We received a private guided tour of Russell Crowe's museum with its wide range of exhibits ranging from motorcycles and race cars to displays on local history and not to be missed, the giant "Leviathan" stage coach, the largest horse-drawn Cobb and Co Coach ever built. Also featured are costumes and historical items relating to Russell Crowe's movies. This venue saw a most unusual event, the running of "The Great Honeymoon Suite Race" when our ladies discovered John Begg had been upgraded to the honeymoon suite and decided this could not go uncontested.

Croker Oars: This is one of Australia's least known export success stories, a small family-owned business producing high-technology oars for rowing competitors around the world. Many rowing Olympic gold medal winners have used Croker oars. Their oars are also used by crews of the iconic Australian surfboats. We were given a tour of their Oxley Island manufacturing facilities on the banks of the Manning River and saw broken traditional wooden oars being repaired alongside the manufacture of new feather-light high-tech carbon fibre composite oars.

The Old Schoolhouse - Bohnock: One teacher schools were located all over NSW until recent years and comprised a one-room schoolhouse with a verandah and outside toilet in a large paddock with a house for the school teacher and his family, The paddock was a playground and holding area for horses ridden to school by the pupils. This school also had a jetty as pupils also arrived by dairy factory cream boats. The schoolhouse has been converted to guest accommodation by the owners and retains the essential features of the original building including the blackboard, wood-fired heater and water bubblers. The visit concluded with afternoon tea on the banks of the Manning River as the sun went down.

An event of this type required many hours of preparation, visiting the venues and finalising the arrangements. Special thanks go to John Begg and Meryl Godfrey who undertook these responsibilities. They were supported by Alan White [NSW North Coast] and Sue White [NSW Mid-North Coast] who provided local knowledge and contacts. During the event, John Begg was presented with two finely crafted Japanese knives as a token of our appreciation. Rumours that he will use these for "hari-kari" when he feels it is time to organise another Bash in the future are false however, they may be used for self-defence if he is ever allocated another honeymoon suite!

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN BEGG & DAVID GORE



What were they thinking? White Pants and Mud Crabbing?
L to R: Cruise Captain, Sue White, Sheila Peel, Meryl Godfrey, Jan Victor & Pam Rose

Image Title: Crabbing.jpg



Catch of the Day!
L to R: Meryl Godfrey & Sue White

Image Title: Catch of the Day.jpg



Tropical Fruit Temptations!
L to R: George Shores, Sue White, David Gore, Pam Rose, Jenny Enright, Alan White, Sheila & Robert Peel, Merinda Rose

Image Title: Tropical Fruit World.jpg



Presentation to John Begg by participants in the Inaugural Goulburn Bush Bash in October 2003.

L to R: David Gore, John Begg, Meryl Godfrey, George Shores & David Rose

Image Title: Presentation.jpg



We Want What He's Got!
L to R: John Begg, Janelle Hazelhurst, Meryl Godfrey, Sue White & Gwen Trimble

Image Title: Great race 1.jpg



Who Won the Race?
L – R: Sue White, Gwen Trimble, Janelle Hazelhurst, John Begg & Meryl Godfrey

Image Title: Great race 2.jpg