

FINAL COUNTRY MUSIC CAMP OUT 23 – 25 October 2009

The Leskes were eager to get away on the Friday night being the only two from Gawler 4WD Club wishing to attend the camp out with unpowered sites. We joined Jane and John camping with the Nissan 4WD Club who made us feel extremely welcome in their group spending the remainder of the night mingling with other Nissan people and listening to country music before retiring to bed. Even though windy conditions prevailed, we erected the new Gawler 4WD banner draped over our caravan to show many other campers several 4WD clubs were present.

The official opening on Saturday was made by Dave Williams from Wellington. Dave is a long time supporter of the Blanchetown Country Music Camp Out and the Royal Flying Doctor Service where all the weekend proceeds will be donated to.

Saturday at 9.00 am, 16 vehicles lined up in convoy fashion waiting for land holders Arthur and Dorathy to give us a history 4WD tour through Bindmurra Station (the property the camp was held on).



Leskes and Jansens were among the 16 but over two days, the newly introduced 4x4 tour on the property, took 70 people on a five hour tour to look at crops, see homes of the early settlers hearing some of their stories, learn how the centre pivots work for potatoes crops, vineyards and how the property owners have changed their method of irrigation to accommodate the low water allocation.

Water tanks were put in the early 1900s when shepherds watched their sheep from Wild Dog's Hill at the station. Water holes dried up quickly so troughs were built.

The dog proof fence was paid for in their Council Rates and trappers would cut ears off dogs, foxes or dingos, present them to the Council, and get a refund.



Bindmurra was originally made up of 9 small settling houses totally then up to 1,000 acres but a lot larger today. This year's crops should bring in 3 – 4 bags to the acre – a good year should bring in 10 bags. This area is just outside Goyder's line with very light rainfall (average rainfall 6" or 150mls per year), but next year the station plan to try direct drilling. They would travel some 810kms each day in summer to check the water supply which could take 4 – 5 hours but now they have solar pumps.

A wagon was used to cart stones off the land and tip in heaps, but a wheel collapsed and now rests on the fence line.

Our tour continued to view charcoal pits and open cut Gypsum pits, but the highlight of the tour was driving over some rough ground and attempts to get vehicles up some steep sand hills.

We have since heard that Committee members have agreed the campout was one of the best. The weather stayed fine and the attendance was up on previous years by approximately 100 to 509.

The Saturday night camp oven tea of \$15 per head was served to 266 people with food and drinks available to purchase for the whole weekend. \$62,000 had previously been donated to the Royal Flying Doctors over a period of 5 years. In 2004, the artists who performed in the first Camp Out signed their name on a blue denim shirt that was later put up for auction as a money raiser. This year the same shirt never been worn, was offered back to the committee, who made the unanimous decision to gift the shirt to Dave Williams. Dave has a museum of country music artist and mobilia, and he said he had just the perfect place for it to go on show.



Raffle tickets were available for sale, spinning wheel competitions and pony rides for younger children. MC was Noel Kneebone who constantly recognized the performing artist and a very long list of sponsors. Amenities included mobile toilets, generators for lighting and a few showers.

A Gospel concert was enjoyed by many who stayed. Only one more job to do before the committee can fold up as a fund raiser for the RFD is to audit the books, and make one final donation. A rather sad ending.

[Max and Lyn]