



Trip Report (Broken Hill / Darling River)

Quenton and Deb's Broken Hill/Darling River Trip

{day 1}

With one weeks leave available, we decided on visiting Broken Hill and Silverton. Even though I visited the Hill a couple of years ago on my motorbike, Deb hasn't been there for quite some time. Our first night was spent at the Burra Railway Station B&B. We have stayed at this B&B before and really enjoyed it, and knowing our dollars go to help preserving this wonderful old station and ongoing projects like the restoration of the "Edie" kitchen carriage. It was quite chilly, so I got the fire going early. We stopped at St Just's cafe for coffee and for something different, a serve of scones.

Next day we had an easy drive to Broken Hill. A large number of kangaroos and emus dead on the road made us keep an eye out for animals during the day. We saw quite a few, but managed to keep our new

was originally a doctor's home with large rooms. This I figured would be better than a run of the mill motel.

We visited the regional art gallery which had an exhibition on the "Barka - the



forgotten river" an exhibition of the Darling River which tied in well with my plans to later follow the Darling River.

Next morning we picked up a guide from the Visitor Information Centre and walked the main street area visiting all the historic buildings. Lots of old hotels - nearly one on every corner. We really liked the Palace Hotel where the barman let us take our drinks past the many murals, past the "Priscilla Suite" (after the movie "Priscilla Queen of the desert") and up to their huge balcony. This finished with a coffee at "The Silly Goat" cafe which was recommended to us by the motel landlady as a cafe as good as any in Adelaide or Sydney. She was right; the cafe had a great vibe, good coffee and quite busy. We drove up to the "Line of Load" and dined overlooking the town. Also checked out the memorial to all the miners that died on the job.



bull bar intact. Our first stop was at Bells Milk Bar - a 1950's milk bar in Broken Hill South, a must stop while in Broken Hill. We enjoyed a milkshake and thick shake while taking in the ambience of this iconic cafe.

We booked into our room for three nights at the Outback Lodge Motel. Our room was in the main part of the mansion which



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Next day we drove out to Silverton. Here they are building a huge wind farm which the locals have mixed feelings about. Many think they look a blight on the landscape, but businesses are welcoming the influx of business by the workers. Being a Saturday, the Silverton Hotel was extremely busy, so if visiting Silverton, plan to come on a week day. We had a look at the many attractions of this little town such as four art galleries, Mad Max Museum, old school, gaol, all within walking distance. We also visited Penrose Park, once a favorite for picnic trains from Broken Hill and drove out to Umberumberka Reservoir which was bone



dry, and to Mundi Mundi Lookout, a view as far as the eye can see over the plains and the scene from Mad Max 2.

We left Broken Hill and headed to Medindee. Here many of the lakes are dry and the National Parks have closed a few roads around the dry lakes. We headed to



the National Park and in particular to Kinchega Woolshed. Here we had a good look around the many buildings and the woolshed which is in very good condition. The roads in the National Park were very rough and corrugated; they have not seen a grader for some time. We headed towards Station roughly following the Darling River. We were now on a dirt road on the southern side of the river, and it started to rain. The road changed from red dirt to grey clay on the flood plains and is closed at the first sign of rain. We were half way, so we were pleased when the rain stopped and we could dodge the wet areas and the wind soon dried out the track. We arrived at Bindara Station and met our host, Barb. She showed us to our room for the night, the "Boundary Riders" hut. It had two queen sized bedrooms and a flyscreen enclosed verandah with a small new ensuite with gas fired shower and flushing toilet - perfectly comfortable.

We went for a walk along the Darling river and checked out the stations camping area. Here they have large galvanized iron rainwater tanks fitted with flushing toilet and gas fired shower with room for quite a few campers along the river front. I had a look around the homestead that was built in around 1870. Bricks were fired on the property using the local clay, and the rest of the building materials were transported up the river by steam driven paddle boats. This property has quite a bit of history



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including once being owned by Gawler's John McKinlay. The station boasted a store, pub, school and smithy. It was also a port of call for paddle steamers making their trips up and down the river. It was getting quite chilly so Barb had the fire going in the outside kitchen and dining shed. "Happy Hour" was enjoyed by the fire with fellow campers who were on their way to the Big Red Bash at Birdsville. On an open fire Barb had our tea cooking in a camp oven - lamb curry. Of course food always tastes best off the fire and we enjoyed the lamb with a selection of home grown vegetables. Pudding followed for dessert finished with a strong cup of tea, again with the taste only experienced off an open fire. In the morning we enjoyed a "Stockman's Breakfast" cooked on a large steel plate over the open fire. Cereal, yogurt and fruit followed by "Paddock Sausages", eggs, tomato, hash brown and toast set us up for the day of travelling. We left Bindara and headed for Pooncarie on the Old Pooncarie Road.

In the little town of Pooncarie we had coffee in a little cafe down by the old wharf area beside the Darling river (This cafe has just opened and Barb suggested we call in) - the sun was now out, so we enjoyed our coffee on the outside tables with only the bird calls and river sounds to be heard. - until she turned on the music - ah well.

From Pooncarie we headed to our next stop Avoca Station. Avoca Station also has lots of history. The original owners also built "Adare" mansion at Victor Harbor as their summer residence. The homestead and many outbuildings such as station store and post office, single men's quarters etc were built from pine logs. The old Post Office/Store is now a small museum. The homestead was built on with locally quarried stone and now is quite a large home with large rooms. It overlooks the Darling River. Our hosts Ian (now blind) and Barb showed us around the historic and interesting buildings. Here we enjoyed a three course home cooked dinner followed by a cooked breakfast with eggs, orange juice and jams made from the stations gardens.

We drove to Wentworth, passed the laying of the pipeline from Wentworth to Broken Hill (a huge project that no one that we spoke to wanted) and onto Mildura. Here I checked out the new Holden Museum while I dropped Deb off to the shops.

Our short holiday was soon over, but one that we enjoyed, especially the station stays.

[Quenton and Deb]

