

Scootaville 2022

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We arrived at Ban Ban Springs, which is the junction of the Burnett and Isis highways and as the name suggests, it has a fresh water spring as well as a large dedicated rest stop which includes toilets, fresh water, a huge parking area, covered tables and seats, a service station and a well stocked general store/café.



The ute, driven by Kiwi Campbell and Cathy Yang, and which carried all the food, had gone ahead of the bikes and set up a table with lunch ready for when everyone arrived. As a testament to Cathy's skill as a cook, the food very quickly disappeared.





After lunching, it was back on the bikes for the 26km run into Gayndah – our third overnighter.

Boyd Baker, the President of the Gayndah RSL Sub-Branch and Dael Giddins, the very proud of her town Councillor, had organised everything for our arrival. What we didn't expect though was a police road block – all in good fun. The police pulled us up, breath-tested a few, gave us a stern reminder to eat our greens and to ring our mothers each night, then having put the fear of the Lord in each of us, the road block was removed, our visas were stamped and the big orange man stepped forth to try and soothe the atmosphere. Some of our seniors were still trembling with fear, thinking they might have spent the night in a police lockup but the Big Orange Man gave everyone a hug and all was forgiven.



L-R: Wal Shakoff, Neil Snudden, Ian Aves, Big orange man, Jillian O'Toole, Thanya Pattay, (in the background, Chris Dietzel, Ros Curran), Stu Welden with his hot Honda.

Gael informed us that Gayndah was the first town in Queensland to be gazetted – 7 years even before Brisbane.

She then pulled rank and insisted on riding one of the bikes into her town and leading us to our overnighter. Boyd and the RSL had pulled a few strings and had arranged for us to use the large pavilion at the Gayndah Showground.

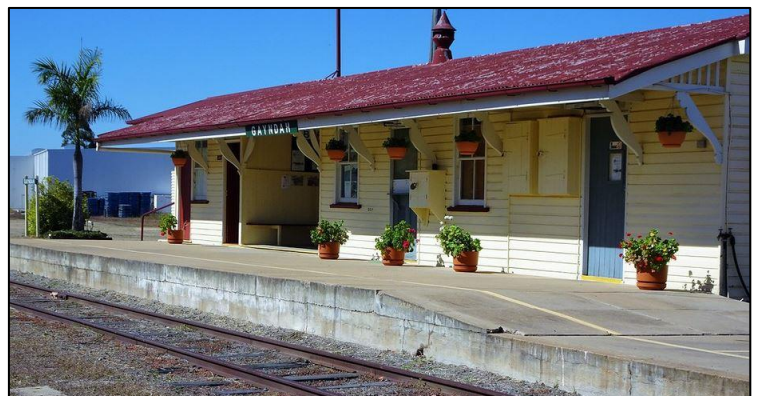




This pavilion was perfect. It was huge, had a fully equipped kitchen, toilets and showers and under cover parking for the bikes. We were being spoiled.



Ever the ambassador of all things Gayndah, Dael offered to take our mob on a sightseeing tour. We all climbed into the two buses. First stop was the old railway station. It opened in 1953 to cater for a passenger service between Maryborough and Gayndah, but with the gradual sealing of the roads, road transport began to replace rail and it closed on the 31st December 2014.



Today the old rail-yards are used by caravanners as a camp site.



Yeah, thanks to the people who said it was ok to allow my pet to sleep on my bed at night.
My goldfish is now dead!

Gayndah is situated beside a large hill on which is Archers Lookout. Apart from being a favourite night time "cuddle spot" it is also an excellent day time lookout and led by Gael we headed for the summit to get a look at Gayndah from the heights.



We then returned to the showgrounds and after everyone had parked their bike, found their spot and made their bed and had a shower, it was time to quench a raging thirst. The big yellow Esky still held a bunch of cold Castlemaines so the roll was called and the load on the Esky was lessened.

That night the RSL provided a wonderful dinner then came a surprise.

Gayndah has a group of musicians who practice most nights in a hall not far from the showground. The unstoppable Dael had approached them some time earlier, told them that a bunch of silly old buggers would be passing through, raising funds for Legacy and would be overnighting at the showgrounds. "Would there be a chance you could move your practice night to the showgrounds".

For Dael, of course they could, and they did, and we were treated to a wonderful night's entertainment.



See [HERE](#).

Next morning, at Dael's suggestion, we headed for the big orange for a coffee and scone breakfast. Dael insisted that the big orange made the best scones in the whole wide world, so we had to give it a go.

We did and we have to agree with her.



After breakfast we lined up for the compulsory photo in front of the big orange, bought a bag or two of their juicy oranges then set sail for Mundubbera, 36km up the road.



David Roach is the President of the Mundubbera RSL Sub-Branch and we had arranged to meet him at the big train in the Bicentennial Park on the Burnett River for smoko. Unfortunately, Dael's scones had held us up a bit and we were late. Once again it was fortunate we were on the 125s and not the Mopeds otherwise we wouldn't have got there before dinner, but led by Marie who set a blistering pace, we arrived shortly after our expected arrival time.



Only in this stupid worlddo they have drive-up ATM machines with Braille lettering.



Once again the indomitable Kiwi had gone ahead, had set up the table, got the billy boiling, had the cups and coffee placed within easy reach, the Nice and Scotch Fingers unwrapped, oranges cut up, all in readiness for our arrival.

The park is situated on the Burnett River, next to the Mundubbera Durong Rd bridge (see [HERE](#)). It's hard to imagine that when the Burnett floods the water level is above the bridge. That's an enormous amount of water.

After everyone had had their fill, David Roach, on behalf of the Mundubbera RSL Sub-Branch, presented us with a sponsorship cheque for us to pass onto Legacy.

Mundubbera RSL Sub-Branch is not a big chapter and we thank them for their wonderful generosity.



It was then time to head north once again, we left Kiwi to pack the ute, our next stop was the Mulgildie State School, which is about 12km south of Monto.



Once again we had a bunch of 'show bags" to give to the kids and just to see the joy on their faces made the whole trip worthwhile.



Being an old bloke and not able to walk too far, Chuck got on the back of Leo the lion.



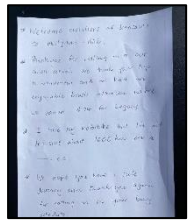


These are country kids and a small motor bike probably wasn't a novelty for them, some could probably ride as good as, if not better, than some of our riders, but we enjoyed their enthusiasm.





The kids then presented Ros and me with an envelope which contained a cheque for \$174 which the kids had raised themselves, a wonderful achievement. The envelope also contained a lovely hand-written note (right).



Click the pic at right to be able to read it.

Australia's future is in good hands.

It was finally time to move on. We had a lunch date with the Monto RSL Sub-Branch, but unfortunately, we were going to be late – again!

It's only a short drive from Mulgildie to Monto and the OIC Monto Police had arranged to meet us a few km out of town and escort us in under the red and blues. He was parked on the side of the road waiting for us and practically every car that approached us, before we got to the patrol car flashed their lights to us – warning of a nasty police radar trap. We thought it was funny!!

After a very public run up the main street, being led by the red and blue, we headed for the RSL Club Rooms. Guy Rauchle, the President of the Sub-Branch and his committee, had arranged a wonderful lunch for us. Thanks Guy.





Lunching at Monto. It looks like Steve Howie had just realised he had eaten an ice cream too quickly. Brain freeze has set in.



Jillian O'Toole, who tried to sneak back for seconds, receiving a stern warning from the Police – and was told to go sit down and be good.



After a wonderful break, it was time to mount up and head up the Burnett Hwy for our next overnighiter, Biloela, just under 100 kms away.

In 1924 it was planned to build a rail link to join Monto with Maryborough but it was never finished, stopping just 60 kms short of Monto. Prior to the cancellation, the railways had intended to build a station, which they called Lawgi, at where the rail eventually stopped. Gradually a town began to grow at Lawgi, a school was opened and a community hall was built. In 1955, when it was realised that the rail link out to Lawgi was not profitable, it was closed and the town gradually disappeared leaving only the community hall.

In 2003, artists Gary Latcham and Jo Lawrence painted the exterior of the hall with silhouettes of bottle trees against a sunset. The area is now a heritage listed rest area with toilets and showers and we stopped for a breather and a rider change.



From Lawgi, it was an easy 30 km run into Biloela where the Banana Shire Council had allowed us to overnight in one of the showground pavilions.





Part of the interior of the pavilion.

After we'd unloaded the trailers, picked up our kit bags, selected a spot, blown-up and made our beds and had the walk across the lawns to the shower block, it was time for dinner. We decided to give cook Cathy the night off and instead headed for the Biloea Hotel. Prior to joining us though, Cathy headed for Woolworths to pick up supplies needed for the following days.



Woolworths, and IGA, had given us very generous gift cards which we could use to obtain supplies. Very generous indeed.





After dinner, it was onto the buses and back to the pavilion for an early night, tomorrow was looking like a busy and long day with the road between Biloela and Emerald being 317 km long.

Our first stop was the Dululu rest stop/camping area, 75 km away. The 125s covered that distance in an hour and it was planned to stop for a break and perhaps a rider change.



Some enterprising people had set up a food van at the rest stop, this didn't go un-noticed for long.

At my age, a trail of clothes leading to the bedroom means I dropped them on the way from the drier.

Next stop was to be Duaringa, a further 85km. Duaringa also has a small primary school and we had arranged with Andrew Clair, the principal, for us to call in and engage with the small kids. We had also spoken with Paul James, the OIC Duaringa Police for him to join us at the school with some red and blues and a siren or two.



Once again, the kids were a delight. Excited, well behaved, pleased to see us, eager to hop on the bikes, to start them, rev them, blow the horn and especially pleased to tuck into their "show bag." It was great to just stand back and watch them.



The kids hard at it checking out the contents of the “show bags.”



As well as tucking into the “show bags” being able to sit on and play with the bikes was also a huge hit. Is that a happy face or what??



With still a long way to go, we reluctantly left the kids and headed for Blackwater, 84km further west. We had arranged with Rebecca Avis, the manager of the International Coal Centre and Coal Mining Museum in Blackwater for us to stop for smoko and a rider change, which we did. Opened in 2008, the Centre operates as a non-profit organisation and is a major tourist attraction.



Floyd Wilson in one of the two huge drag-line buckets on display at the Centre.

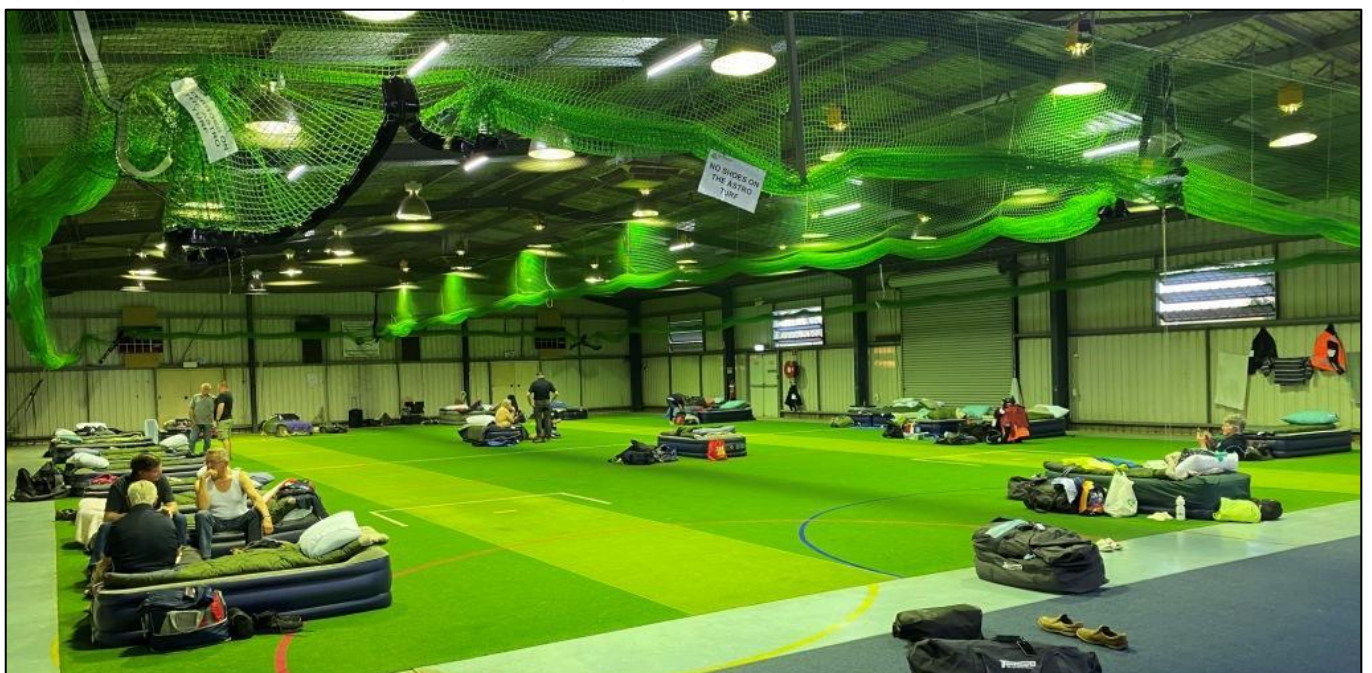


Coffees in the Centre's café went down well.



While the “young ones” had a good look around the Centre, the old blokes made the most of the break to just sit and relax. **L-R:** John Broughton, Geoff Spackman, Trev Benneworth.

With a further 76km to go to reach Emerald, our next overnighter, we didn't dilly dally too long in the Centre, those that wanted a break gave up their bikes and hopped in one of the buses, those that had rested donned the helmet and took over. Marie Henson wasn't allowing anyone on her bike, she reckoned she had it going just right and didn't want anyone mucking it up. She was going to ride it all the way – come hell or high water, and she did!





Emerald Council had offered us one of the showground pavilions, one that is as an indoor cricket arena. We planned to spend two nights in Emerald to recoup after the day's long drive and the facilities they offered us were perfect. The floor was soft and spongy, toilets and showers were next door and there was a long bench from which we could serve breakfast.



Breakfast was a "help yourself" affair.

Emerald Lions knew we'd had a long day and as their Club Room was also on the showground, they very generously invited us around for dinner that night. We readily accepted.





The Lionesses had decked out the clubrooms and prepared a most welcome meal while the Lions manned the bar which also seemed to be well accepted.



Debbie Shields, the President of the Emerald Lions Club, then presented Ted McEvoy, our President, with a sponsorship donation which the Club had raised from amongst themselves, a



very generous effort. Once again, we thank them very much. John "Johnno" Saunders was very quick to snavel the money and encase it in his magic bucket.



A few of the lovely Lionesses that spoiled us.

After a wonderful evening, we strolled back to our "lodgings" as the Sub-Branch had planned a big day for us tomorrow.

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