

Upper Dawson WPSQ Outing to Lake Dunn. In response to an invitation from the Upper Dawson Branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld, to meet at Jericho around 10 am on Saturday, May 28, Ken and I set out from Toowoomba, with our 'Karavan' on Wednesday May 24.

Water lying by the road side was evidence of recent rain, as we traversed the Darling Downs with a lunch stop at Chinchilla, then passing through Miles and Roma and making camp near the pub at Muckadilla. The air quickly chilled after sundown, and we awoke to what was our coldest morning of the trip.

Leaving the farming country, we passed paddocks of healthy beef cattle of various breeds, Brahman, Hereford, Santa Gertrudis, and Charbray. An interesting break at Murilla Shire Historical Museum on the bank of the Maranoa River in Mitchell occupied Thursday morning. Passing through Mungallala, we remembered Robyn Storey's account of her father's life and especially his WW II experiences in her book, "We're Off to See the Wizard, via Mungallala, the Middle East, and Borneo."



We observed some road kill, included kangaroos and feral pigs, as we travelled through mulga country to Morven, where we detoured South to Tregole National Park, to see a beautiful stand of rare and endangered Ooline trees, the last signs of the former rainforests that flourished in the this area in past millennia.

Heading North, we passed some paddocks of sheep and goats, but mainly beef cattle, before arriving at Augathella where we saw colourful murals and silo art, and dozens of caravans parked near the Warrego River. The very modern, clean and welcoming, Tambo Caravan Park with its excellent warm camp kitchen was our comfortable overnight stay. After 3 years of urban living, I marvelled at the black velvet sky filled with sparkling stars.

Blackall was the next destination with fascinating visits to the Ram Museum, and restored Wool Scour, where we saw and felt the clear, hot, artesian water, an amazing resource for outback Queensland.

Early Saturday morning, on our way to Jericho, we were delighted to meet with a group of 8 emus about to cross the road. We happily parked our vehicle beside the road and waited for the curious group to saunter, close to us for a photo opportunity.

Arriving at Jericho earlier than the WPSQ group, gave me time to read the explanation and examine closely, the Crystal Trumpeters sculpture, constructed by local volunteer labour. The attractive and fascinating structure, tells pictorially the Biblical stories from the Books of Exodus and Joshua from slavery in Egypt to arrival in the Promised Land.

The Upper Dawson Group, having camped at the Gemfields, gradually trickled into Jericho for a coffee break before setting off on the Lake Dunn Sculpture Trail. With Margery and deBurg leading, we soon spied the first of Milynda Rogers' amazing barbed wire and scrap metal sculptures, a very life like eagle holding a snake in its beak, perched on a branch above its nest.

In keeping with the artist's theme of local flora and fauna, along with figures of historical and social significance, the next colourful sculpture was a beautiful bottle tree, festooned with 'eartag' leaves.



Milynda Rogers' amazing barbed wire and scrap metal sculptures,



Metal cockatoos perched on the Boongoondoo sign

Already we were astounded at the skill and imagination of this outback artist. A couple of metal cockatoos perched on the Boongoondoo sign, marked our lunch stop, followed by the surprise of a giant kookaburra n gum tree beside the dusty road a little farther on. More delightful wildlife depictions included a koala confidently sitting in the fork of a white-trunked eucalypt, a cheeky goanna and huge butterflies on other tree trunks.

Representing aspects of the local pastoral industry, were a helicopter musterer at Clare Station, a determined jillaroo on her station

horse, facing down an un-cooperative mickey bull, and a competent cowboy astride a bucking bronco.

The lovely Lake Dunn eventually came in to view, but the accommodation was anything but lovely. Those of us who had dragged our lodgings over the long and dusty roads, were thankful to have our own clean, comfortable, and warm beds.

Moonlit Lake Dunn was the lovely backdrop to our campfire dinner. No birdlife was evident on the full lake, but several species of aquatic birds were observed in the early morning on the adjacent wetlands, where white water lilies and creamy yellow acacias were flowering. After breakfast and the WPSQ meeting beside the sparkling lake, everyone was packed and ready to set out on the next 2 sections of the sculpture trail.



frilled neck lizard

A very large frilled neck lizard sculpture had the men discussing what parts of tools and old machinery had been welded together to make this iconic piece. Tall jabirus (black necked storks) stood grandly overlooking a dry waterhole, while a couple of large plain turkeys surveyed the wide horizon and a colourful mosaic carpet python lazed in the sun. The artist had carefully chosen the settings appropriate to the species.

Cycling kangaroos and goanna were examples of the artist's whimsical humour. The cattle duffer Harry Redford and footballer Jonathon

Thurston were two 'cowboys', superbly sculpted and admired by our group and many other tourists travelling along the sculpture trail.

After turning on to the Aramac to Jericho road, a suitable shady lunch spot was found, before proceeding down the dirt road for more sculptural surprises. My favourites of the many sculptures in this section were the outstanding creations of an eagle and chicks, perched high on rocky red outcrops, and a returning soldier on horseback overlooking the plain from a high vantage point; very special indeed! As the day drew to a close, local wildlife including feral pigs, blue/grey and red kangaroos, eagles and whistling kites were observed in the nearby paddocks and colourful Horse Tailer's Gorge, the name of which is a reminder of the days when horse and coach travel were the norm.



Cycling kangaroos and goanna

We managed to travel in to Aramac before dark, ready to enjoy a last meal together at the local pub. When the rest of the group returned home, Ken and I

enjoyed a further interesting 10 days exploring the sights of Central Queensland, and catching up with friends and relations.
Many thanks must go to Margery Joyce for organising this fascinating trip.
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