



*June 2023 Newsletter*  
*Magazine Section*

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*FRIENDSHIP, FELLOWSHIP*  
*AND FUN*

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*PROBUS TOUR TO MOREE*  
*(Home of the Black Soil Plains)*

You may remember in the 1950's being shown holiday snaps. Ok if you were in them but boring if you were not, and very boring if they were of another family's holiday with a detailed narrative from an uncle

Well, the next few pages are a bit like that and contain photos of some of the things we saw while on our trip. You have been warned!

Journey out; Cessnock huge open cut coal mines then past the closing Liddell power station

Through Bellata, then one-horse town where Roger Morrow lived in the 1940's as a young schoolboy before his dad moved to another school. There was no "come back Roger!" sign, However I did blink said Roger.

Three locomotives pulling 50 coal wagons from new England to Newcastle. Then as we travelled west and over the black soil Liverpool plains the locomotives pulled 50 wagon grain trains. The railway ran beside us much of the way

The Dragon Phoenix Resort run by George, a Chinese "Arthur Daily" provided us full English breakfasts, great Chinese banquets and country sized roast pork and roast chicken! And an artesian pool to soak in, but not as hot as the one at Lightning ridge. Moree's water comes from 300 meters down and that of Lightning Ridge 800 meters. The Great Artesian Basin covers 22% of the surface of Australia.

Terrain is flat for hundreds of miles with huge paddocks stretching out into the distance.

We learned some agriculture. The 2 types of cotton - dry land cotton and irrigated. Harvesting was under way and bales of cotton waited in the paddocks for collection. The pecan nut farm had some 30 varieties imported from USA. We saw different kinds of grain growing in the fields.

We saw grain silos, some painted with pictures and very large farming machinery. And on the roads long haul trucks some with trailers and some carrying stock to the abattoirs.

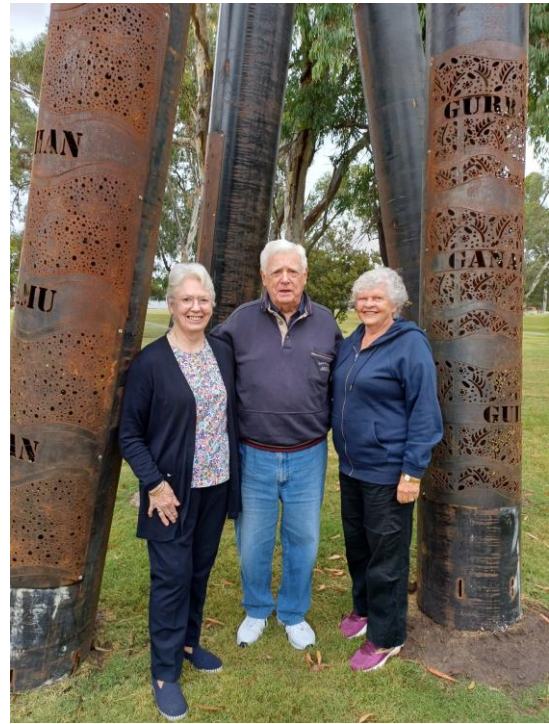
The country towns sometimes looked a bit tired with few too many empty shops and fewer pubs than previously. Nearly all had a Woollies or IGA and a good coffee shop.

Local wildlife - roos, emus, raptors and occasionally, flying over one of the very long paddocks, a crop duster. Also a GPS controlled drone spraying cotton.

I can safely say that none of the 31 of us that went to Moree will have a Chinese banquet nor country sized dinner for quite a few weeks

Thank you Margaret for a great time.

**Geoff Jones**

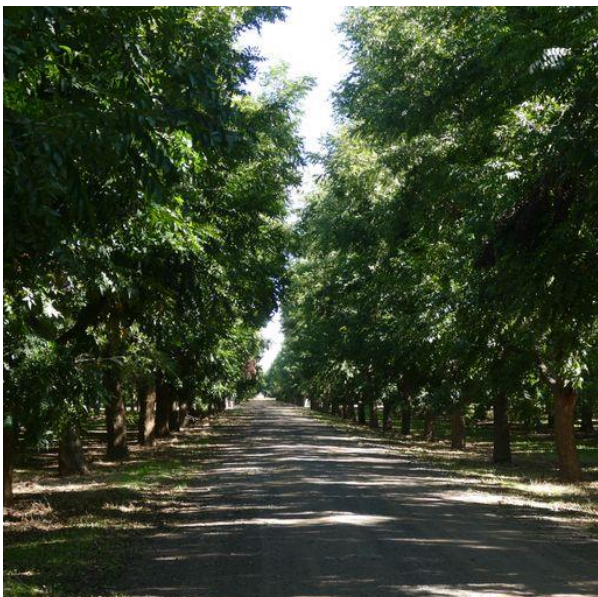


# COTTON

Drone spraying cotton, cotton growing beside the highway, harvesting and transporting.



# PECAN NUT FARM



## SAWN ROCKS



The forty (40) metre high cliff face visible at Sawn Rocks is the sheared off remains of a basalt lava flow from the (now extinct) Nandewar Volcano which dominated the area 21 million years ago. The striking columnar fractures are a result of the cooling process: the basalt cools from the outside toward the centre, causing shrinkage cracks to form, commonly, in a hexagonal pattern. The shape of the columns is attributed to tensional stress. When the molten rock within the basalt lava flow cooled slowly and, importantly, evenly, this enabled the individual crystals within the molten rock to align perfectly with each other.

While this type of six-sided (hexagonal) 'organ piping' is not rare to lava flows it is exceptionally rare to find them so perfectly formed and preserved and Sawn Rocks is recognised as being one of the best examples of columnar jointing in Australia.

At the base of the formation, the rock is fractured into octagonal shapes identical to the cliff face. It is believed that these plunge a further 60 metres

into the earth below. Over thousands of years, enormous slabs of rock have fallen to the bed of the Bobbiwaa Creek, resembling the crumbled pillars of an ancient roman temple. It's hard to believe that the geometrically perfect shapes aren't hand chiselled.



## *PAUL WILD RADIO ASTRONOMY OBSERVATORY*



### **What is radio astronomy?**

While we normally think of astronomy as being carried out using visible light, modern astronomy now explores a wide range of different wavelengths. This allows the astronomy to study different aspects of the universe. Whereas light is good for studying stars, radio waves allow us to study things like

- cold hydrogen gas clouds,
- energetic electrons spiralling around near massive black holes,
- pulsars (rapidly rotating "dead" stars)
- the glow left behind by the Big Bang 13-billion years ago.

## *LIGHTNING RIDGE*



Remains of opal mining shafts



# *CRANKY ROCK NATURE RESERVE*

A jumble of giant boulders heaped in the most fantastic positions by a past volcanic upheaval



Peter Loveday is the tiny figure at the lookout half way up the sloping rock top left

# NEW ENGLAND WOODTURNING AND SCULPTURES

*(All made from old farm  
equipment parts)*







## A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIFE



*The sculptor with a didgeridoo he has made and which he played for us. He said he sells them internationally to professional orchestras.*



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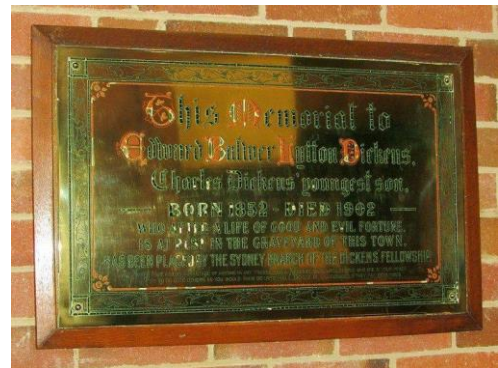


In an unnamed grave in the cemetery at Moree rests the body of Charles Dickens's youngest son— Edward Dickens, once a pastoralist near Wilcannia, next a member of Parliament, and finally an inspector under the conditional purchase system (remarks the Sydney Daily Telegraph). The grave is unmarked, because all attempts made to locate its position have been fruitless. It is intended, however, by the Dickens Fellowship, of New South Wales to place a tablet in the church to the memory of Edward Dickens, and the proceeds of a concert given at the King's Hall, Phillip Street, on Thursday night, will be applied to this purpose.

Mr. Fry, of Tamworth, had suggested, that the society should undertake this duty, and in a brief speech prior to the concert Judge Backhouse said that to Mr. Fry they were much indebted for the interest he had taken in the matter. The hall was crowded, and the concert, in which 'Dickens items' made up the greater part of the programme was very enjoyable indeed. The outstanding feature of the evening was the contribution by Mr. G. S. Titheradge, "The Death of Sydney Carton." He scarcely raised his voice once above the conversational level. But his speaking voice is still a beautifully flexible one, and by pause, by inflexion, by sometimes a whisper, yet without gesture or any kind, Mr. Titheradge so portrayed that scene of the great moving tragedy which forms the crowning glory of Dickens's authorship as to deeply stir his hearers.

It was a remarkably fine effort. The Sydney branch of the Fellowship, has a membership of 400, and numerically is one of the strongest overseas

branches of an organization having branches in every English-speaking country.



The plaque erected by the Sydney branch of the Dickens Fellowship commemorates Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens, who was the youngest son of English novelist Charles Dickens and his wife Catherine. Edward Dickens died in Moree in 1902 and is buried in the Moree cemetery. The plaque reads.....

*This Memorial to  
Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens,  
Charles Dickens youngest son,  
— BORN 1852 - DIED 1902 —  
WHO AFTER A LIFE OF GOOD AND  
EVIL FORTUNE,  
IS AT REST IN THE GRAVEYARD OF  
THIS TOWN.  
HAS BEEN PLACED BY THE  
SYDNEY BRANCH OF THE  
DICKENS FELLOWSHIP*

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*Never take a mean advantage of  
anyone in any transaction &  
Never be hard on people who are in  
your power  
Try to do unto others as you would  
them do unto you &  
Do not be discouraged if they fail  
sometimes.*

*Charles Dickens last letter to his son.*