



The grid, Mt Panorama

Gnoo Blas, Orange 11-13 Feb

Hello, hello! Listen carefully, I will say this only once: Go to Gnoo Blas. As first-timers, Indra and I went with high hopes for an enjoyable weekend - and our expectations were wildly exceeded. If you haven't been, go to Gnoo Blas.

As newbies, we really didn't know what to expect. "Come along, you'll enjoy it" was the wise council we received from previous regulars. We were welcomed into a stranger's house for a BBQ for an entertaining Friday evening - and the whole weekend followed in the same vein. One of the state's best car shows, a country brewery, wonderful food/cafes; what's not to like? Go to Gnoo Blas!

The Sydney and Southern Tablelands mobs met at the usual place at Blaxland in the Blue Mountains, six Morris Minors plus a modern, prior to our convoy to Lithgow for refuelling. Then it was on to Bathurst for a not-so-fast lap of Mt Panorama, with the view more than justifying the name.

We settled into our digs at Orange (Town Square Motel) before the short drive to Don & Wendy Gorton's home, where, with daughter Lucy, we were warmly welcomed and very well looked after.

David Bursill, the winner of Sir Rom's caption competition from the Nov-Dec 2021 edition of *Minor Torque*, received his much-deserved prize.



Panoramic view



Through the chicane at the end of Conrod Straight - lap record for fastest Morris Minor that day



David Bursill receives the Sir Rom award for best caption



Great evening with the Gortons

and that show-winning Borgward Isabella, too. And the Volvo P1800s. Plus the XY Falcon GTHO Phase III. Nearly forgot that Force 7V...

One of our Morris had a visit from the police. The worried owner (moi) was relieved that the officer was only interested in the dash/instrument layout, as he owned



Saturday was the main event of the weekend, the huge Gnoo Blas Classic Car Club's show at Sir Jack Brabham Park, Orange. What a variety of top quality cars, trucks, bikes and buses on display, amazing!

Apart from a s-l-o-w entry to the park, the day was all go, after a coffee and bacon and egg roll for breakfast. And the weather, hardly a cloud and no rain.

Our little camp site had a morning visit from the Gortons, on their way to Sydney - and Antarctica! Is there a club award for best excuse for missing a car show? Don & Wendy obviously couldn't stay long but Lucy spent the day there.

To be honest, I needed more than a day for a really good look around, although I did see my life flash in front of me when caught by the fast-talking-but-just-a-bit-boring-and-hard-to-get-away-from Isuzu guy.

My personal favourite (apart from all our Morris Minors of course) was a stunningly restored Triumph Herald. Oh,



The local constabulary liked our cars

a Morrie and was doing it up. He even thought the 5 musical airhorns was a nice touch.

After a long and thoroughly enjoyable day (you have to go to Gnoo Blas!), a quick nap set us up for dinner at the Orange Ex-Services Club, a slow 3-min stroll from our motel. Lucy was good enough to join us too. Afterwards, most of us retired to the Goulds' room to sip a port or two and have a fun time solving the club's, state's and country's problems.



Outside Pioneer Brewery, Bowen Park

looks of Morris Minors, so some took to buckets (and held a hose) to spruce up our cars back at Orange. Another afternoon nap, dinner at the Ex Services again, then more 'problem solving' back at the motel.



Morris Minor colours challenged the Pioneer beer cans



Sunday morning: we met with most of yesterday's car show people at the beautiful Cook Park, so many classic cars again! However, John and Sue Ballard had organised something special for the MMCCNSW, so off we drove to a...brewery!



Part of the Pioneer Brewery tour



Clockwise from above: Rob Keen with his platypus carving and painting skills; Sue Ballard with grand-daughter Zoe Wood



OMG, the Pioneer Brewing Co at Bowan Park, what a brilliant set-up! We received the royal treatment, shown around the equipment and given a thorough run-down of the environmentally friendly workings. Afterwards, we were encouraged to sample some of the products, an offer too good to refuse, but some Morrisies nearly didn't fit all the purchases.

Lunchtime beckoned and the Platypus Cafe at nearby Cudal had already booked (exemplary organisation again), with delicious food and equally outstanding service from John and Sue's granddaughter, Zoe Wood.

Unsealed roads don't do much for the

Monday morning, breakfast at a cafe in town, then the not-too-long drive back home. A huge thank-you to John and Sue Ballard, superb organisation yet again. Honestly, go to Gnool Blas in 2023, it's just the best weekend.

Owen Sinden

Photos: L Whale & O Sinden



Holding a hose, Morris Minor style

Gnoo Blas

I feel like singing "These are a few of my favourite things..."



Force 7V

50TH ANNIVERSARY 1974-2024



Volvo P1800



Triumph Herald

And not-so-favourite... Quick question: on any sane 1-100 list of desirable historic cars to shove a stonking big supercharged V8 into, how far down the list would you have to go to get to a mid-70s rear drive Toyota Corolla? Yep, not even on the list. No, I don't know why either, but it must have cost a bomb. Oh, that's why - it's advertising! Wait for it... 'Mr HDT Race Cars & Engines'. A Corolla???



Borgward Isabella

