

The Road Less Travelled

Some people are put on this Earth to be an example to others; I think I might be one of them. Don't do what I did...

There was method to my madness, honest. With a trip to Middle Arm on November 26 on the horizon, I wanted to know the best way to get there and what the roads were like.

Indra and I had enjoyed the sights and tastes of the weekend away in Mudgee. We meet up with our fellow club members at Blaxland, but since we moved to Bundanoon in August 2021, we have tried to avoid driving through western Sydney twice, so returning to the sunny Southern Highlands from the brilliant Gnoo Blas Car Show in Orange in February this year, we tried the 'inland way'.

The drive to Bundanoon via Goulburn takes in some stunning scenery. In February we took the Orange, Millthorpe (beautiful town!), Blayney, Trunkey Creek, Tuena, Crookwell, and Goulburn route.

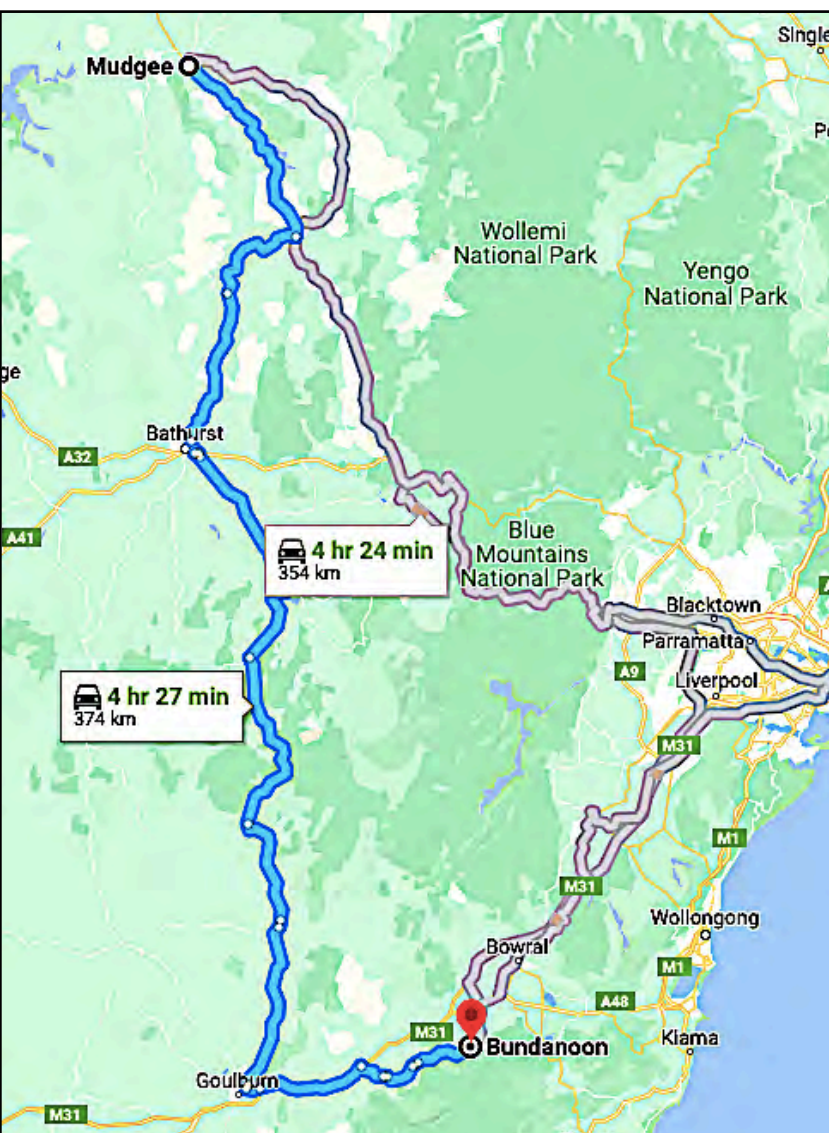
This time it was a little different; I wanted to go home via Middle Arm, from the north - much to the surprise and exclamation of someone else in the car... Besides, I like to explore.

So the route was planned: first stop Sofala for breakfast, then on to Crookwell via Bathurst and Trunkey Creek.

Sofala, what a beautiful place. It is a little on the remote side but well worth a diversion if you like exploring. One of the first sites is a Morris Oxford van rusting away in a park on the corner of the main street. The Holden grill didn't do it any favours.

We can highly recommend a stop at the *Rustic Cafe*, great food, awesome coffee, fantastic service, and all in a cute, 'rustic' atmosphere.

The Rustic Cafe, Sofala





Interesting street decorations in Sofala

The drive to Crookwell; beautiful countryside, and strange things popping up from time to time, like the pink Ford Prefect on top of a storage container (no, I don't know why). Abercrombie Caves is well worth a visit (I am a bit biased here as I spent several holidays, Boxing Day to New Year, in my much younger days in the camping ground at the caves. The roads back then were all unsealed. Swimming in the nearby Abercrombie River was a daily event, and drives via Trunkey Creek to Bathurst were common).

After Crookwell, the 'fun' started... left into Roslyn Rd, right into Woodhouse Rd and left into Middle Arm Rd. Roslyn Rd must be the worst-kept sealed road in the



Pink Ford Prefect on a container...

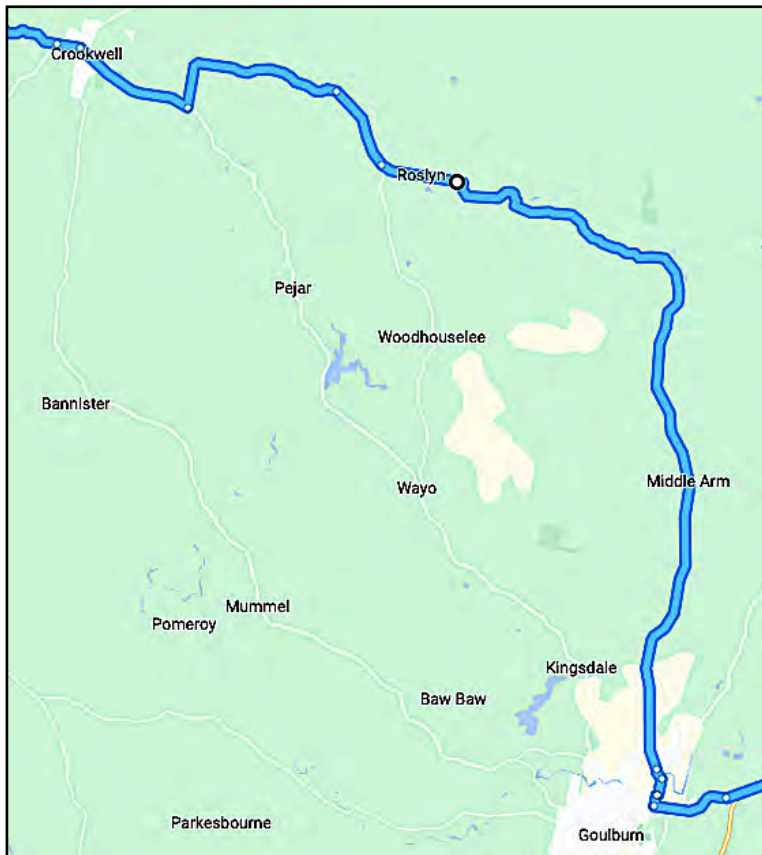
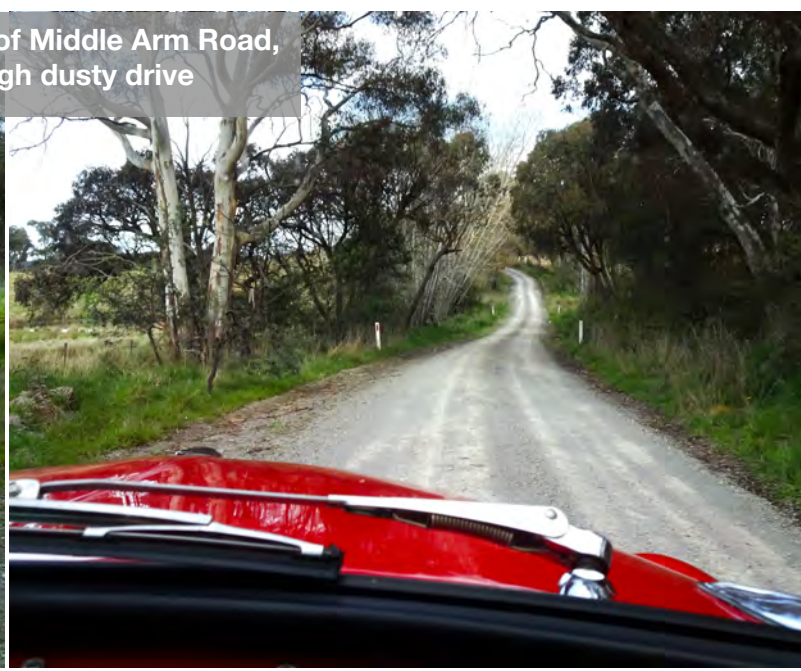


Abercrombie River, between Trunkey Creek and Tuena

Southern Hemisphere, it's a shocker. Yes, it's probably OK in something large like a Land Bruiser, but in a Morrie it was hell on Earth. We crawled along in 3rd gear mostly, singing Tip Toe Through The Potholes, all the while telling each other that it couldn't get any worse - and then it did.

Wall-to-wall potholes followed, back to 2nd gear - and all on a 'sealed' road. Whatever the local council is doing, it certainly doesn't have anything to do with road maintenance.

The northern section of Middle Arm Road, a pleasant though dusty drive



Skippy provided some light entertainment

Woodhouse Rd was a little better, and not long after turning into Middle Arm Rd, the dirt road started. It was actually a much better surface to drive on than Roslyn Rd, although very dusty (dust sealing in a Morris Minor isn't what it could be). There was one positive aspect to our excursion: before our turnoff into Middle Arm Road, we had spotted a total of 11 dead kangaroos and wallabies - but along Middle Arm Road we saw five live versions, one of which kindly jumped along the road ahead of our car, presumably because it wanted its photo taken.

So, take it from one who has made the mistake: if you own a small, fairly delicate old English car and need to drive to Middle Arm, take the route from the south and avoid Roslyn Road - unless you like exploring.
Cheers,
Owen Sinden

