



High Range 4WD Club of SA Inc

Mintaro Maze
Sunday 15 May 2011
Submitted by Helen

Mintaro is an historic town in the eastern Clare Valley, around 128km north of Adelaide.

The town was founded in 1854 by Joseph and Henry Gilbert on land purchased by Henry Gilbert in 1849. Originally, Mintaro was a watering stop for bullock teams travelling between the copper mining town of Burra and Port Wakefield, transporting copper and coal for the Patent Copper Company. The bullock teams were replaced with mule teams in the 1850s and up to a hundred mule teams were seen to pass through the town each day. The town's economy collapsed when the teams were rerouted to the new railway at Gawler from 1857, but soon recovered with the growth of slate quarrying and agricultural production. The town now has tourism as its current primary industry.

Mintaro features many original Victorian buildings, including Martindale Hall which was used in the 1975 movie, Picnic at Hanging Rock, Mintaro Slate Quarries and numerous vineyards and wineries, as well as the Mintaro Maze. In 1984 Mintaro was the first entire town to be declared a State Heritage Area.

We were to meet at Spotlight car park at the Munno Para Shopping Centre at 8.45, departure at 9.15am. It was pleasing to note all participants were on time and promptly our six vehicles departed at 9.15am.

We travelled through the beautiful back roads around Humbug Scrub and the Barossa Goldfields, where we discovered that you can take a fantastic historical walk around the very informative area of the Goldfields. We learnt about some wonderful history behind the goldfields from Graham. The conservation parks around this area are spectacular at this time of year. The area is green and lush and the air is damp and fragrant with the smell of autumn bush. Some of the roads were damp also!

We stopped at beautiful Tanunda for morning tea (excellent toilets!) The weather was calm and warm with a hint of winter, and we enjoyed the warmth of the autumn sun on our backs.

Back on the road, through the backwater Clare Valley historic towns, hidden dirt roads, off the beaten track farm houses, and beautiful fields of russet grape vines, proudly showing off their golden autumn leaves in the warm sunshine. We came across wind farms (24 windmills) and discussed the hidden drawbacks of these mighty green machines. We did not get lost once, but marveled at how those pesky farmers had the nerve to move the roads around!

At around lunch time we arrived at Mintaro, found the maze (easily!) and went to the Mintaro Bowling Green to spend a lazy hour basking in the sun in the beautiful nearby park. Here it was easy to imbibe in a couple of glasses of the nice stuff (non drivers!), and loll about in our chairs taking in the conversation and soaking up the sunshine.

Back to the maze, where we discovered that finding the hidden haggis (what the hell is that!) would snag you an entry into the competition to win a bottle of scotch! Well after wandering around in the maze for a while, we found the middle and then easily found our way out! But no haggis, but some enterprising person found it and passed on the information to everybody and we all entered the competition – still awaiting notification however! Then we set about playing the other games scattered

around the maze park. As the sun was still warm, it was easy to once again settle in for a rest and conversation!

Alas, it was time to leave and after telling everybody entering the maze where the haggis was, we all left and made our way home.

An enjoyable day indeed, thank you Ken and Val for leading us (and not getting lost once!).

Weather conditions

Sunny, calm, warmish around 18 degrees.

Mishaps

None – no flat tyres!

Vehicles

Ken & Val (Landcruiser), Helen, Phil, Jim, Caitlin (Ford Territory), Jo & David (Hyundai Terracan), Carolyn & Ron (Nissan Xtrail), Rob & Barb (Nissan Patrol), Angie & Graham (Mazda Tribute) 6 vehicles (14 people)

Photo Gallery (thank you Jo for the photos – note to myself – check battery on camera not flat!)



Heading in the maze!



I am not leaving till I get this puzzle!



Too easy to stay in the sun!





Morning tea at Tanunda