

# Scenic & Historic Drives

# ROUTE

# 2

## REDGROUND/BINDA/BOOBALAGA/CROOKWELL

APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR DRIVING TIME—56km

*Turn left into Redground Road off Laggan Road, just near the saleyards*

The Crookwell reservoir will soon be seen on your left and as you climb above the town look back for the lovely views to the South. (About half of this country route is on dirt road but don't be put off, it is usually in good condition and with easy contours.)

There are more beautiful views to both sides and the route continues through lightly wooded pasture, past the old Laggan Mile Post (Laggan 10 miles) and emerges at a T-junction at Queen Street, Binda. Turn to your right and on your right is the pretty church of St James and the village of:

**BINDA:** originally the main administration centre for the Abercrombie District and boasts the first Post Office, Police Station, Court House and the first Government School in the Crookwell Shire. Note the stone houses and St James Church, built in 1863. Binda store is open daily from 8.30 am to 7.00 pm - petrol, telephone, tourist information and toilets.

There are many Bushranger stories from this area but perhaps the best is that of Ben Hall, John Dunn and John Gilbert who rode into town with three local girls on Boxing Day 1864 to go to the Christmas Ball! First they held up Morriss's Store, took the takings of 100 pounds, rounded up all the village folk and forced them to come to the dance, where they locked them all in. Mr Morriss, a retired policeman, escaped and tried to get police help but a furious Ben Hall burnt down the store in retribution.

From the village of Binda turn left into Woodville Road and travel approximately 6km to a bridge crossing the Crookwell River. The left of the bridge was the site of the Oakes Estate; they had grants of land on the Crookwell River. This locality was a haunt for bushrangers, and the early settlers had many exciting and thrilling experiences. The original homestead was burnt down by a gang of ex-convicts, under the leadership of a man named Whitton, who was afterwards hanged at Coulburn. They first shot an assigned servant, who was engaged with others harvesting. Francis

Oakes, junior, rode into Coulburn, and, accompanied by a party of police, followed the desperados for some days, when a fight ensued. One bushranger was shot, and the others were captured. The dead man was strapped on a horse, which was entrusted to the care of a terrified Aboriginal tracker, who allowed it to escape. It stampeded through the bush for some days, and was eventually found with its gruesome burden still securely fastened to the saddle.

Continue on for another 2 km's of attractive country and then turn left into Lost River Road. Travel approximately 2 km's and turn left into the Boobalaga Road (back on the metal). This has some gorgeous outlooks to the left and again further on. Another 10 km's turn left into Boorowa Road and travel approximately another 3 km's and turn right at Binda Road, and you return to Crookwell via perhaps the best view of all as you descend Wades Hill. Wade's Hill which was named after Thomas Wade who owned the land in the 1860's. He was a stepbrother to the famous bushranger Ben Hall, keep travelling back into the town.

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