

Scenic & Historic Drives

ROUTE

3

BIGGA AND RETURN

APPROXIMATELY 1.5 HOURS DRIVING TIME—412km

From Crookwell Visitors' Centre - Travel west towards Binda

Approximately 5km from the Visitors' Centre if you look to the left you will see a line of pine trees and if you look closely you will see

1 STEPHENSON'S BURIAL GROUND: (Please respect the owners' privacy) this is on private property and the graves are from the mid 1800s. Keep travelling west towards Binda for another 6km, look to the left and you will see the remnants of

2 BRAY'S STONE COTTAGE: Land grants were awarded in the early 1800s. Most of the land from this point until the Crookwell River was owned by the Bray family. Another 5km's further on you will reach the village of

3 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 Morris'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 Morris, a retired policeman, escaped and tried to get police help but a furious Ben Hall burnt down the store in retribution. As you are leaving Binda if you look on the left you will see the

4 BINDA CEMETERY: This cemetery has Anglican and Catholic graves dating back to the 1840s.

2 km's further on you will come to 'Funny Hill' (Please respect the owners' privacy) which is famous for its Racecourse, this is the second oldest country racecourse in NSW and has held an annual race meeting since 1848. There is also a stone cottage on 'Funny Hill' which was originally owned by the Oake's family. The stone cottage was built with very narrow slits in the walls so guns could be placed through these slits and the cottage would remain protected. Travel another 6 km's and turn left towards Bigga. If you look to the left towards Tuena you will see the Compass Range in the distance. 5km's further on you will see

Mulgowie Rd on your left. This road will take you to 'Markdale' (Please respect the owners' privacy) which is a very famous property owned by the Aughton family for over 100 years. 'Markdale' has an amazing garden designed by Edna Walling and is open to the public approximately once a year. Further down the Mulgowie Rd a large amount of the land was divided up in the 1940s for Soldier Settlers. Return servicemen were placed in a lottery type draw and were given acreage to make a living. Unfortunately they weren't given any capital to set themselves up and so many didn't manage to farm the land successfully. Another 1 km further on your left you will see the very quaint St. Andrew's Anglican Church. Keep travelling for another 10 km's and on your right you will come to:

5 SHECK WEBSTER LOOKOUT—at Snowy Mount: originally the old road to Bigga used to go past the front of the lookout. The view looks towards Oberon, Burriga and Blainey. You will see Mt. Wells to the left in the foreground. Another 4km's further on you will see

6 KEVERSTONE STATE FOREST—State Forest is a NSW Government Trading Enterprise responsible for public native forests. State Forests goal is to manage the forests under its care to provide the widest range of benefits to the present and future generations of people in NSW. This area has a reputation for excellent superfine merino wool - the famous 'golden bale' grown by the Picker family was sold in 1962 at 1,800 pence a pound. Approximately 8km's further on you will come to the town of:

7 BIGGA: The derivation of the name Bigga is unclear. Several theories have been expressed but the most likely answer is that it is an aboriginal name, probably given to some feature of the area by tribes passing through on their trails from the west to the coast. Earliest recorded land

sales in the district were in 1835 when Samuel Blackman purchased 1000 acres at Sandy Creek then by the 1960s there were many new landholders in this area. Bigga has some rather interesting Bushranger history and the following is just a small sample of some of the goings on during the mid 1800s. The following announcement was made in the 'Police Gazette' in January, 1862. ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY POUNDS REWARD. ATTACKING AND WOUNDING THE PATROL WITH FIREARMS. BATHURST DISTRICT. On the 16th July, 1861 Sergeant Middleton and Trooper Hosie, of the Western Patrol, were attacked and severely wounded at the Fish River by Francis Clarke, alias Frank Cardiner, a ticket-of-leave holder, illegally at large from his district; a native of Couburn, NSW, 31 years of age, 5ft. 8 1/2 in. high, a labourer, dark sallow complexion, black hair, brown eyes, small raised scar on left eyebrow, small scar on right chin, scar on knuckle of right forefinger, round scar on left elbow joint, two slight scars on back of left thumb, short finger nails, round scar on cap of right knee, hairy legs; wounded in the above affray on left temple by pistol ball or whip. He was captured and afterwards released by two armed men of the following description: John Plesley, a ticket-of-leave holder, illegally at large from his district; a native of Bathurst, NSW, labourer, about 28 years of age, about 5 ft. 10 in. high, stout and well made, fresh complexion, very small light whiskers, quite bald on top of head and forehead, several recent marks on face, and a mark from a blow of a spade on top of head; puffed and dissipated looking from hard drinking, invariably wears fashionable Napoleon boots, dark cloth breeches, dark vest buttoned up the front, large albert gold guard, cabbage-tree hat and duck coat. Sometimes wears a dark wig and always carries a brace of revolvers. He was in Sydney some weeks ago in company, it is supposed, with Zahn, alias Herring, of the Abercrombie. The other man is about 26 years of age, and about 5 ft. 6 in. high, light hair and whiskers, and small light moustache, sallow complexion. I was most intrigued with the detail of these descriptions.

RETURN TO CROOKWELL OR KEEP DRIVING

You can now return to Crookwell or if you have got the time (Approx. 25 minutes) and you don't mind the challenge of dirt roads then 2km's further on you can turn off to Crabine which is home to

8 CRABINE LAKESIDE STATE PARK: This park is approximately 23 km's from the turnoff. It is an oasis at the end of the road. Crabine Lakeside State Park is located on the shores of Wyangala Dam - and is the ideal escape for those wishing to experience the pleasures of the great outdoors in a tranquil rural setting.

The park offers self contained cabins and 6 berth caravans for hire, it also boasts a 32 bed bunkhouse and a camp kitchen which is ideal for sporting clubs, schools and family get togethers. Modern amenities are situated throughout the park. Water skiing, fishing, sailing, swimming and relaxing in a comfortable chair are the main activities.

The roped off swimming area with pontoon is a great place for children to enjoy, with modern playground equipment nearby. Two tennis courts and a six hole golf course are available free of charge. Bring your own racquets and golf clubs for inexpensive fun! There are many beautiful walks through the high country surrounding the park, with spectacular views of Lake Wyangala, the dam wall and the large expanses of grazing land that this area is noted for.

When the lake is at full capacity it is 2 1/2 times the size of Sydney. Crabine is also dog friendly, if they are kept on a lead.

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