

GEMBOREE 2022 - MUDGEE

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

The 58th GEMBOREE at Mudgee was a great success. The organizing committee chose the Australian Rural Education Centre as the site for this GEMBOREE. It was chosen for some very good reasons. The facilities there are second to none. Most people who attended the GEMBOREE agreed that it was one of the best on record. We owe special thanks to the A.R.E.C. manager, Cassandra and the assistant manager Crystal as well as to Ashley, the ground caretaker. They could not have helped us more.

VENUE

The A.R.E.C. site provided a huge camping area all with underground electricity outlets for each camping site. There were 110 campers, caravans and tents located in the main camping area with an additional 45 Outside Traders able to camp behind their stall. This is the first time ever at a GEMBOREE that this option has been made available. All the Outside Traders were so happy with this arrangement.

Also on site was the main modern shower and toilet block that was cleaned and serviced daily by the A.R.E.C support staff. We thank them so much for this excellent service. There were two other toilet blocks on site.

The main new Exhibition Hall is huge. It covers in excess of 2000 square metres. As a result, 33 Inside Traders were easily able to be accommodated. The Competition display area was likewise well spread out so as to do justice to all the completion entries which exceeded 1000 in total. In addition the Information table was spacious as well as the CABOOLTURE 2023 GEMBOREE table which is taking place at Dayboro.

In addition to the main hall, there is a separate hall that was able to be used for the GEMBOREE competition and administrative staff as well as being used for meetings and the Presentation Dinner which was able to cater for a sit-down meal for 100 diners.

Of particular importance for a GEMBOREE is the provision of parking. Since A.R.E.C. are set up for large Field Day crowds they have an enormous paddock that easily allowed for the parking of 200 cars each day. The public who attended were very pleased with the free parking.

INSIDE & OUTSIDE TRADERS

The layout of the Exhibition Hall was capable handled by Bob McLean (Port Hacking Club). All the inside Trades were happy with their allocated area, both their position and booked table space. The supply of electricity to each Trader was made easy with the internal power outlets. There were 33 Inside Traders who were all satisfied with their sales.

As in past GEMBOREES - The Dinosaur display proved very popular, especially with children. We thank, Hank, for setting up and dismantling this exhibition.

The setting out and supervision of the Outside Traders was extremely well done by the first time Coordinator: Robert Porter (Bathurst Club). With hardly any assistance Robert did a marvelous job. It was a very steep learning curve for him.

COMPETITION

An enormous task setting up and dismantling the showcases with some borrowed from various clubs to accommodate all the entries received. In all there were some 1000 entries which given the fact that many clubs were closed over the preceding year speaks well of the efforts of all those who submitted entries. The judges did a sterling job given that there was not a judging weekend to do the task. The Competition coordinator was required to send out the entries, receive them back and then do all the recording of scores. For the judging of hand delivered entries of minerals, fossils and carvings the judges worked well into the night, finishing in the early hours of the morning so the entries were able to be put in showcases for the opening day the following morning. Well done to all.

REGISTRATION

The Camping Registration was well coordinated by the Illawarra Club. Some 110 campervans, caravans, motorhomes and tents were registered onsite. All sites were prepared on a site plan beforehand with good spacing between sites. There were several late arrivals that could also be accommodated.

OUTSIDE DEALERS / TAILGATERS

The area for the Outside Traders was along a dirt road running parallel and adjacent to the Exhibition Hall. It was the first time ever at a GEMBOREE that these traders had the opportunity to camp with their caravan or camper behind their stall. The Outside Traders coordinator, Robert Porter, spaced

these stalls out at 3 metre intervals to allow plenty of access and to abide by Covid directives. All the traders were happy with their sales. At the end of the GEMBOREE all traders were given a 10% discount if they signed up for the GEMKHANA. Many did so.

EXCURSIONS

Again, Mick Lane was able to secure the use of the Blue Mountains Community bus to do two booked out bus trips. One was to Sofala, Hill End including a visit to Hill End History Hill Museum where the owner Malcolm Drinkwater gave a short history talk and Hargraves. The other to Gulgong and Windeyer. Mick Lane had organized lunch for the group at the Windeyer pub. Both were highly successful and all who attended were very happy with the excursions.

FIELD TRIPS

On Saturday 16th April a fossil fossicking trip to Knotts farm was programmed. All who were attending met at the bus stop at Dunedoo. From there 10 vehicles went in convoy to the fossil site located on private property. From all accounts it was a very successful trip. The proposed second fossil site near there was not accessible due to a road closure. This trip was coordinated by Joan and Bill Zealey. We especially thank Joan and Bill for heading up this fossicking trip.

Also, on Saturday 16th another fossicking trip lead by Phil Tansey went to Home Rule looking for quartz and topaz. Those who attended had a successful day out.

On Sunday 17th April a gold panning trip lead by Kim Cooke to Windeyer was organized. The group had lunch also at the Windeyer pub. Kim did a great job controlling the group.

VOLUNTEERS

I must thank all the volunteers who stepped up to do all the important jobs that need to be done at a GEMBOREE. From manning the gates, the information table, selling raffle tickets, recording bus trips and fossicking excursions, manning the ticket kiosk and the parking area, emptying the garbage bins., setting up and dismantling tables. The list goes on. This event would not happen except for the willing and unstinting work carried out by all the volunteers. I thank every one of them.

CATERING

Some very good food and drinks were provided by Aussie Country Catering from Gulgong, Coffee Trailer from Dubbo and The Little Coffee Kart from Coonabarrabran. All agreed the coffee and milk shakes were great. The Men's Shed provided customary complimentary Easter Sunday breakfast for all who were onsite. The Easter Bilby made an appearance and a Senior and Junior GEMBOREE princess were crowned.

SUMMARY

After three years planning the 58th GEMBOREE was a great success for the Gemboree organizing committee and the Gem & lapidary Council of NSW.

There were numerous meetings locally and in Mudgee especially with the management of A.R.E.C., with the Mid Western Council and with Mid-West Tourist Information Centre to bring about this important event.

A special thanks goes to Alan McRae the editor of the GEMBOREE eNewsletters. They were up to his usual high standard. So full of interesting historical information.

As often happens advertising could have been better. The placement of signage is always difficult because of the constraints of RMS, Council and private property holders. If a large country town is chosen again for the GEMBOREE I would suggest hiring roadside digital noticeboards especially in a town such as Mudgee where there is a lot of Easter long weekend activity. Local letterbox drops need also to take place. Engagement with the local Chamber of Commerce also needs to take place as well as more involvement with the local Tourist Information Centre. It was made more difficult because of staff turnover both at Council and at the Tourist Centre, over the three years.

One of the very successful inclusions for this GEMBOREE was the hiring of "Tap & Go" devices at the Entry kiosk. It definitely justified its hire cost.

Likewise, the two Ready Tellers (ATM 2 Go) proved to be invaluable. They also justified their hire costs.

It has to be said that although the GEMBOREE was a great success I was very disappointed with the number of people through the gate. There should have been a greater number.

The organizing of such an event is a huge undertaking. I would like to thank first of all the organizing committee and secondly all the volunteers who gave so willingly of their time. It would not have happened without them.

Finally, we wish QLACCA all the best with the CABOOLTURE 2023 GEMBOREE which will be located at Dayboro.

TONY OFFORD

2022 GEMBOREE CO-ORDINATOR