



## *Festival of the Falling Leaf* *Tumut* *25-27 April, 2008*

### *The History*

This was the fourth time that clubMINI had been invited to participate in the Festival of the Falling Leaf at Tumut.

It is interesting to note the history of our involvement in this great event. In 2004 some MINI owner's including yours truly responded to a call for assistance from a fellow in Tumut who wanted to have 5 new MINI's as his bridal cars for his forthcoming wedding. This was achieved and the MINI's made a huge impact in Tumut and we also enjoyed the drive to this beautiful town nestled in the foothills of the Snowy Mountains.

During a photographic session of the bridal MINI's in front of the church, a local journalist for the Tumut Times mentioned to me that we should come down for the Tumut Festival of the Falling Leaf. The next event was 11 months away. But I remembered this invitation and in 2005 made some inquiries of the Festival organisers as to how we might get into the Parade to show off our beloved MINI's.

These inquiries led me to contact Doug Martin a local builder who also has a string of restored old MINI's, in fact, Doug was the Father on the young groom who the previous year sort our services at his wedding.

So, clubMINI's involvement in the parade was sealed, Doug was keen to have us along and join his throng of old MINI's and a few other old MINI's from the Wagga Wagga

MINI club. At that first parade in 2005 we had 8 MINI's attend, in 2006 we had just 5 MINI's but combined with the old MINI's we won the people's choice as "Best in Parade". In 2007 another 5 MINI's attended the parade in torrential rain which ceased only for the 30 minutes of the parade. In 2008 we were invited back again by Doug and this year we had 10 MINI's.



Ged has left the MINI marque and gone for something a little more subdued!

### *ANZAC Day drive to Tumut*

The weekend coincided with ANZAC Day and after gathering at Pheasants Nest on Friday morning at 10 am we endured the long weekend traffic heading south on the Hume Hwy. Double demerit points and a high Police presence ensured that the cruise control was set at the exact speed limit.

We left the busy Hume at Goulburn and escaped to quieter roads on our way to Bungendore via Taralga. We settled into the local Bakery for lunch and as we enjoyed meat pies and lamingtons we noted the town's ANZAC march was underway. The returned service men and women, the

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marching band and the bagpipers made a stirring sight as they marched down the main street towards us. But you can imagine our surprise when just metres away from our seated position they turned hard right and marched straight into the local PUB!!! We roared with laughter and thought, only in Australia!

We were back on the road and skirted around Canberra and down the Monaro Hwy to Cooma for another pit stop in the park to stretch the legs and let the kids (Jasmine, Alex and John G) play on the slippery dip in the playground. From here we took that glorious MINI road, the Snowy Mtns Hwy over the Mountain to Kiandra.



**Kiandra had not seen so much action for nearly 30 years.**

Kiandra is now virtually abandoned but in the later 1800's it was a roaring gold town, then during the mid 1960-70's it was a major ski field during the Winter months. We learnt that Ros Merten had spent most of her childhood at Kiandra with a relative that managed the Inn (the only building left at Kiandra these days) so we stopped on top of the mountains whilst Ros reminisced about her childhood skiing days.

The long and winding road led us across the Mountains and down the other side past a very much water depleted Talbingo and Blowering Reservoir. Arriving in Tumut just on dusk, we quickly retreated to our various accommodation (Tumut is very busy during its festival weekend and we were split between 3 different locations in order to get

all of us a bed for the night). The great thing about Tumut is that it's not all that big and you can walk to just about all the points of interest, so we walked down to the Bowling club which Doug Martin had booked for us for dinner.

### *The Parade Day*

Saturday morning dawned clear and brisk and it looked like we would have a fine day for the parade. The morning was given over to washing and polishing the MINI's so they would look their best in the parade. Then there was time for some shopping in the quaint country shops before we attended Doug's beautiful home for morning tea before the parade.



#### **Size does matter!**

Being in a parade in a country town is a real buzz. You are surrounded by excited school kids dressed in various outfits, trucks done up to represent their chosen sponsors and the colour of the helium filed balloons, clowns and horse riding bushmen all add to the



MINI's of all shapes and ages atmosphere. But once the parade gets underway, the real buzz starts. We had a good mix of new and old MINI's going two

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by two down the main street which was filled with happy smiling faces at times several people deep at the barricades. Waving and horn blowing and acknowledging the crowd's appreciation for our vehicles makes for a great time.



**Park Ferme after the parade**

The parade concluded in a park where we were allocated space to put our vehicles on display. The park also housed a variety of country stalls where you could purchase anything from fairy floss to home made cakes. We enjoyed spending our money and showing off our MINI's to the country folk. The MINI clubman on loan from MINI Australia dragged in a lot of onlookers, and it was interesting to see the reaction to the extra storage capacity in the clubman, not sure how the upholstery would stand up to carting a few sheep around though?



**Local MINI man Doug Martin passed out with excitement at the sight of all the MINI's**

By later afternoon we took a short drive out to Blowering Dam where we managed to park all the MINI's on the Dam Wall for a photo session. Then it was back to our

rooms to prepare for the Fireworks display scheduled for 7pm. We walked to the oval and managed a vantage point right in front of the fireworks which prompted many Ooooh's and Arrrh's. Just as the fireworks concluded down came the traditional rain which ensured everyone scattered home.



**MINI's at Blowering**

### *Day 3 and the roll call*

Day 3 saw us break up a little as some headed straight home, and others were going on to enjoy the Great Ocean Road drive (see the separate report on this event )

As usual we all had a fabulous time and vowed to return to Tumut in 2009 for the next Festival of the Falling Leaf.

### **Reflecting on a great weekend**



### **Those attending**

Vic & Julie Widman  
 Steve Borg  
 Ged Dew  
 Ros Merten  
 Chris & Judi Bucknor  
 John & Robyn Simm  
 Merv & Heather Dunlop  
 Wayne & Belinda Desmond  
 John, MeiLing and Jasmine Gallagher  
 Bryan, Fiona & Alex Shedden  
 Tracey Bowman & Stuart McKenzie.

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