

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CLARE TO SWAN HILL

Siggy and Heather | Travel Blog

Poles and Germs

We passed quickly through Clare on our way to the Yorke Peninsula a couple of weeks earlier so did not experience the area in much detail. On our way home down south east from Southern Flinders Ranges we decided to take a little more time to explore this area's history. We stopped in Clare to do some shopping and then ambled around the green landscape dotted with grape vines and finally ended up at the well known Sevenhill Estate. Evidently polish based immigrants, fleeing religious persecution in Europe, developed a flourishing agricultural base in this region. Evidence of their occupation can be found in local names such as Polish Hill Creek. Like much of SA we were surprised that the wine growing areas can be so lush and green yet other areas in between are covered in broad acreage farming and appear so dry. The village of Mintaro was a revelation. As one of the first places settled it is now a heritage listed town with lovely old buildings. Unfortunately, because of the heat, we only drove around the tiny town and viewed the scenery from the comfort of our air conditioned car.



Heather playing the wine connoisseur

Sevenhill Estate - Clare Valley's top winery

Evidently grape vines were introduced on the Sevenhill property soon after it was first settled by Jesuit monks in 1851. The significance of this historical fact is that because a fungus killed off many vines in Europe in the 1890's the vines now growing in the Clare Valley are some of the oldest in the world. Sevenhill's pastoral history is certainly impressive. It's cathedral is even more so - an unbelievable building in such a far flung place. Sevenhill won the 2013 wine estate of the year. Not bad given that the wine was initially produced as a sacrificial wine not for general consumption. But its fame grew - why should priests and monks have all the fun? As well as growing some of the best wine in the country this seminary produces many tons of vegetables, meat and other culinary delights that are supplied to Jesuit centres to this day.





Sevenhill's amazing cathedral

Moving On

After the Clare Valley we drove quickly on towards Mildura where we intended to take a couple of days rest. We stopped for a very pleasant overnight stay at Kapunda where we washed and cleaned our dusty van and car. The next day's drive to Mildura through Morgan gave us a surprise when the GPS announced "board ferry." Evidently its cheaper to run a ferry across the water than to build a bridge. The ferry crossing was part of the road, so - no toll. A lot of the countryside was salt bush and stubby trees. When we arrived at Mildura it was oppressively hot and not conducive to exercise of any sort. Instead we spent time lazing about, chatting with other campers in the camp swimming pool and then lolling about in air conditioned comfort in the nearby shopping centre. We even had time to get haircuts and catch up on past episodes of Game of Thrones and Outlander. And so it was then on to Swan Hill yesterday for a couple of nights. The river is right on our doorstep and the cooler day, after a rainy night, means we can get some bike riding in - and read about how hot the air is is in Brisbane with the G20 summit.



Sevenhill's amazing cathedral



One of Mintaro's oldest buildings



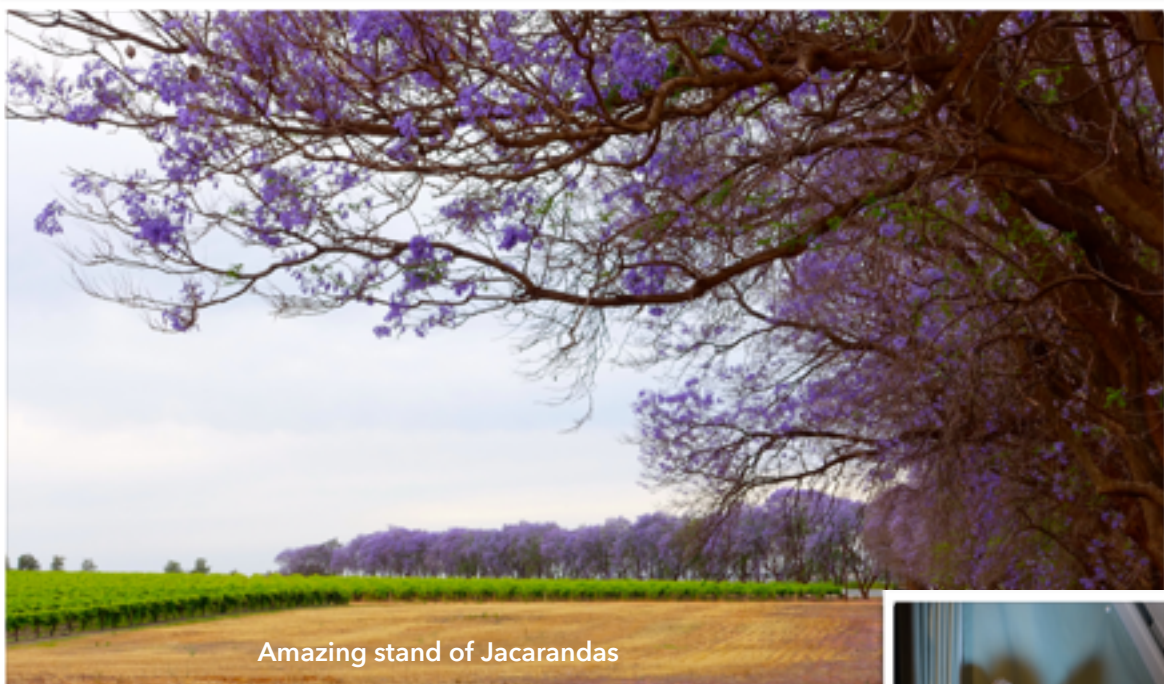
Watching the world go by from our campsite in Swan Hill



Duckling on the loose



Saltbush on the plains



Amazing stand of Jacarandas

CHICKENS on DEAKIN

