



Wednesday 27th September 2023 – Town Ride

It's Whacky Wednesday! What a fun day this is! Fancy dress is required for our town ride, with prizes on offer for the best dressed. Don't worry, the town ride is only 8km long and a half-day ride, so you don't have to remain frocked up for too long plus you get a bit of a rest in the afternoon....if you choose to do so. The theme this year is famous horse and rider combinations and if the past is anything to go by, there'll be some cracking outfits.



There have been some fantastic outfits for Whacky Wednesday in the past. Whacky Wednesday was instigated by long-term musterers, Team Paint Girls, funds raised every year for a local cause. This year, fund raising efforts will go towards the Grenfell Pony Club, which is a small club fostering the next generation of Weddin Mountain Muster Committee riders!

The town ride takes us – you guessed it – through the town of Grenfell. We have a wonderful, historic and friendly town which has added some fantastic modern amenities in recent years.

From the showground we head east and then turn south until we get to historic [George Street](#), which used to be the main street of Grenfell. We pass the Band Hall, Bank of NSW, Tattersall's Turf Hotel, Oddfellows Hall and fine examples of Miner's cottages before turning off onto Nash Street.

Did you know?

Grenfell was originally known as the Emu Creek or Weddin Mountains goldfield. The government later changed the name of the town that formed to Grenfell, to honour Gold Commissioner John Granville Grenfell, who was shot at Narromine by bushrangers.

George Street

George Street was the original business precinct of Grenfell established in 1866 during the gold rush. You will notice that George Street is very narrow. Too narrow in fact to turn a horse and buggy. Government surveyors arrived in Grenfell too late, and a rudimentary business precinct had already been established. Huts and tents had sprung up in two rough lines following the curve of Emu Creek. The surveyors made a street between the tents and named it George Street. Main Street was surveyed at the same time but was left undeveloped, with the understanding that Grenfell would soon need a wider and less curved main street. Grenfell has one of the few curved main streets in Australia.

A series of disastrous fires in the late 1800s destroyed many of the original George Street buildings and they were re-built on Main Street, which explains the architectural differences between them.

We then head east and, before the Grenfell Primary School, take a detour to ride through the grounds of the Grenfell Hospital, past the Grenfell Multi-purpose Health Service. Be sure to wave to the folk who live here – they do enjoy seeing all the horses. From here we head around and then up to cross the Mid-Western Highway. Please always follow the instructions of our Committee Riders and Horse Marshalls during our rides. Give way to traffic and ride on the left-hand side of the road.

Across the highway, we ride over [O'Brien's Hill](#), the site where Cornelius O'Brien discovered gold in 1866. We ride around the historic mine site, pass through private property then continue down Warraderry Street.

The Grenfell gold rush

Cornelius O'Brien, a shepherd on John Wood's 'Brundah' run, discovered gold in a rocky outcrop on a hill close to Emu Creek (now known as O'Brien's Hill). He took samples to Young, registered a claim and returned to set up a mining syndicate. News of the strike quickly spread and in a matter of days a rush had started. It has been estimated that within a few weeks, 7,000 people had arrived on the goldfield. A makeshift town soon grew, with the town proclaimed on 1st January 1867.

The first gold escort left by Cobb & Co coach for Cowra in February 1867, with coach services to Cowra, Forbes and Young soon running almost daily. In 1868, Grenfell was the largest reefing district in the colony. By the mid-1870s the scale of mining had been greatly reduced and the goldfields began to make way for agriculture.

Warraderry Street takes us down to The Henry Lawson High School and we head west past the school then south again to Lawson Oval. A new grandstand and amenities block has recently been built at Lawson Oval, which is one of Grenfell's main sporting fields for soccer, league and cricket. We will do a short loop around the grounds to the Obelisk, which marks [Henry Lawson's birthplace](#). Here we will have morning tea....scones, yum!

Henry Lawson

Among those who rushed to the Emu Creek gold diggings in 1866 was an educated Norwegian by the name of Peter Larson and his wife. Henry was born in a tent on the gold fields on 17 June 1867 and the child was registered with the name Henry Lawson. In 1868, the family moved back to Pipeclay diggings near Mudgee, where Henry spent his boyhood. In 1883, he went to Sydney where he became a house and coach painter. Whilst he was there, his first poem was published in an edition of the Bulletin in 1887. His first volume of verse was published in 1894. He travelled extensively throughout New South Wales, Western Australia, New Zealand and lived for a while in England. His love of the land and its people is clearly depicted in his works. The delight he experienced sitting around a campfire, listening to stories of the miners, drovers and shearers culminated in his work. Both his verse and short stories are highly acclaimed in Australian literacy. Each June long weekend (since 1958), Grenfell hosts the [Henry Lawson Festival of Arts](#), which is a celebration of Henry, our heritage and the arts.

After tipping our hat to Henry, we head along the old railway line through Vaughn's Dam Reserve and then up West Street until we get to the [Grenfell Commodities Silos](#).

As we are unable to do our usual parade up and down Main Street this year, we will be parading along West Street between the Silo Art and the historic Railway Station. Give the spectators a wave as you ride by, the Grenfell community often comes out to line the street to see the horses pass.

Once past the historic [Railway Station](#) and the [Big Gold Pick and Pan](#), we turn west near the landmark Lachlan Fertiliser shed and cross Emu Creek before heading north.

[Grenfell Commodities Silo Art](#)

In 2018, Grenfell Commodities engaged the services of the talented artist, Heesco, to transform their silo into a brilliant artwork. They wanted to create a legacy for Grenfell, in acknowledgment for the years of loyal service received from the local community. The artwork depicts the agricultural and natural landscape of the Weddin Shire and is based on photographs taken by local photographer, Denise Yates and bird enthusiast, Jenn Graham.

It took Melbourne based artist Heesco Khosnaran 5 weeks to complete the large mural, using around 800 cans of spray-paint and about 180L of acrylic paint. Now officially part of the national silo art trail, the artwork is a wonderful addition to our beautiful town.



On Wednesday, we will stop for a photo shoot near the Grenfell Commodities Silo Art before parading along West Street.

We then make our way back to the showground, arriving back by lunch time. Lunch will be held at the 'red shed' and pavilion. After lunch, the Grenfell Pony Club will be hosting a sporting afternoon, where registered riders can participate in a range of fun activities and challenges with their horse. This will be held in the main show ring.

Enjoy the afternoon. This evening, [The Conron Store](#) will be opening specially for Muster participants and will have drinks and nibbles for us. Please support our local businesses while you are in town and come along and browse at Conron's.

Perhaps a couple of beverages will help spark your imagination for your entry in the Poetry competition on Friday night?

*Please note: the information provided in this document is correct at the time of writing. The Weddin Mountain Muster Committee reserve the right to change the format of the rides if necessary.