

Olga Dunn (Tabaczynski) YHS 1958 - wrote:

Did I ever dream we'd leave the Latrobe Valley? NEVER ! Barry had just retired for the 3rd time! We had done ballroom dancing, 10 years of tenpin bowling, clubs & pubs, fishing etc. Being home "together" every day all of a sudden was too much to bear for both of us, kids were doing their own things. (Greg was in Churchill & Julia in Cairns.) Time for a change - but what ? Our friends, Rod & Jan Farmer, had moved 3 years prior from Willow Grove to Clermont in Queensland & always said "come on up & visit us in the Outback" So we did. We booked into the Clermont Caravan Park with Gordon & Marion Murray for a month & ended up staying for 7 months! A fantastic time!!!

Travelling on the Gregory Highway to Clermont, we were surrounded by hundreds of fields of sunny faced sunflowers, a welcoming sight for me as Dad used to grow sunflowers in Yallourn North - I took this as an omen.

Clermont reminds me a lot of Yallourn North & the smaller towns in the Valley about 30 years ago. People here are very friendly & helpful, they will sidle up to you if you're sitting in the main street or down at the beautiful lagoon full of birdlife with a 2km walkway for the fitness conscious, and say "Giddy Mate".

On our 3rd trip up, we went further north but had a phone call from the Clermont Caravan Park at the end of June to say that the Gold Detectors Shop trading in the Park was up for sale & were we still interested, as we had shown interest in it the previous year. Did we want a business? So we drove to Clermont - 12 hours away & decided along the way to "have a go" - the true Aussie spirit....and 3 years later, we are still enjoying it. It's the best thing we could have done.

Barry is rapt as he leaves me in the shop to tend to the happy campers & holiday makers, while he takes people & families out detecting into Clermont's 8 goldfields, No 9 coming up shortly. He also enjoys the friendly chats & drinks with the men folk (which he missed when he left work). We have nightly tales of nuggets found or lost at our own Tree of Knowledge with a little sprinkling of bullshit which goes a long way. HA! HA! Just like fishing. EH! The boys love getting together & teaming up to go detecting or fishing at Teresa Creek Dam or golfing as a change now and again. Also, the girls known as the Gold or Detector widows as we call them, come along & join in too. Clermont caters for artists, writers, quilters, crafts & silversmithing workshops with cuppas & laughter for all, some coming back for 10 years or more. We have a lot of visitors from the Latrobe Valley, as well as family & friends that call in, it's usually an overnight stay but then they hear about the free 4 hour Blair Athol Mine Tour every Tues & Friday that takes you to the Museum - Copperfield Store, the pool & all over Clermont as well, so they stay another week and so it goes! So come on up to carefree Clermont, book into the Caravan Park, get Barry to take you out into the goldfields & enjoy the detecting experience. We live here because we love it!

