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Amamoor Creek - Home of the Country Music Muster

A typical rowdy Gympie Apex Club meeting had just ended, when Brian approached me. “Ah yeah, Craig, I was wondering what you are doing this weekend? I think I’ve found the new Muster site”.

Brian was the Club President when I attended my first Apex club meeting in 1982. I was new to town but three months later I was at the first Muster, helping other Apexians prepare one thousand dinners for people attending the Ball held in a circus tent on the Webb’ Brothers Widgee property.

As history should record it, Brian was the driving force behind Gympie Apex Club’s involvement in staging that first Muster and without Brian’s vision, persistence and perseverance there would be no Muster.

Brian never envisaged the Muster as a ‘one off’ fund-raising venture for Gympie Apex (40 years later, the event has raised over \$15 Million for charities and community groups!). After three financially successful Musters at the Webbs’ property, it was clear to the Apex Muster Committee that, for ongoing growth, the event needed more permanent facilities, like toilets, showers, and a stage. This required investment of publicly-raised funds and so it was decided a new site, with public access, was needed.

In typical Apex fashion, no-one did anything about finding a new site after this decision – except Brian! He approached the local Forestry Department Manager about possible sites in a state forest and got a lukewarm response suggesting the pine plantations near Toolara. This was not the quintessential Australian bush setting that Brian was looking for and so once again he pored over maps, looking for State Forest sites that met the criteria of having both creek and road boundaries. And then Brian approached me at that Thursday night Apex meeting.

So, on the following Sunday morning, my wife and I arrived at Brian’s place, ready for a short road trip to an unknown destination. along with his young son Richie and their pet foxie dog. We headed off south on the Mary Valley highway in his old Ford Falcon and when we turned off at Dagon, my first thought was this is pretty close to Gympie, so should be a good location. We kept driving past Dagon, heading to Amamoor.

Now I don’t know if it was the windy road between Dagon and Amamoor, or the rough suspension of the car, or the poor quality of the narrow road, but the dog started to get agitated, and brought up his breakfast all over Richie’s lap. Of course, we had no water in the car and by

now the closest place to stop was Amama State Forest Park. As soon as the car stopped, Richie headed for the creek to wash off, and the dog headed for the hills!

It took a little while but eventually everyone was back in the car and asking “Are we nearly there yet?” “A little bit further” was Brian’s reply.

And so, we continued to Cedar Grove State Forest camping area, and then went past the Cedar Grove, and continued on the narrow dirt road, probably only used by forestry trucks. It felt like we were way, way out in the bush and now I was getting worried about the potential of this new site!

After going about another five kilometres, Brian stopped the car in a long grassy area beside Amamoor Creek. “This is the ideal site,” he proclaimed.

“The stage will go over there, near the creek. The people will sit on the hill, like a natural amphitheatre, and the food stalls will go around the top along the road. The campers will pitch their tents amongst the gum trees. Imagine staging Australian country music in an Australian country bush setting. It’s perfect”.

Of course, I could see none of this, being more concerned about the possibility of snakes in the long grass and whatever else might be creeping around. Not to dampen Brian’s enthusiasm too much I asked, “So who owns this land?” Brian had already done his homework. “It’s owned by the Queensland Department of Forestry, and the district manager said they might be interested in leasing land to Gympie Apex, provided we build facilities that can be used all year round.”

My next question was asked with a rather bemused tone... “So, has anyone ever done this before?”

No,” said Brian with a wry smile, “but that’s never stopped Gympie Apex.”

“How are we going to do that?” was my response.

“Glad you asked, Craig, because I think this is a new project for you and me.”

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