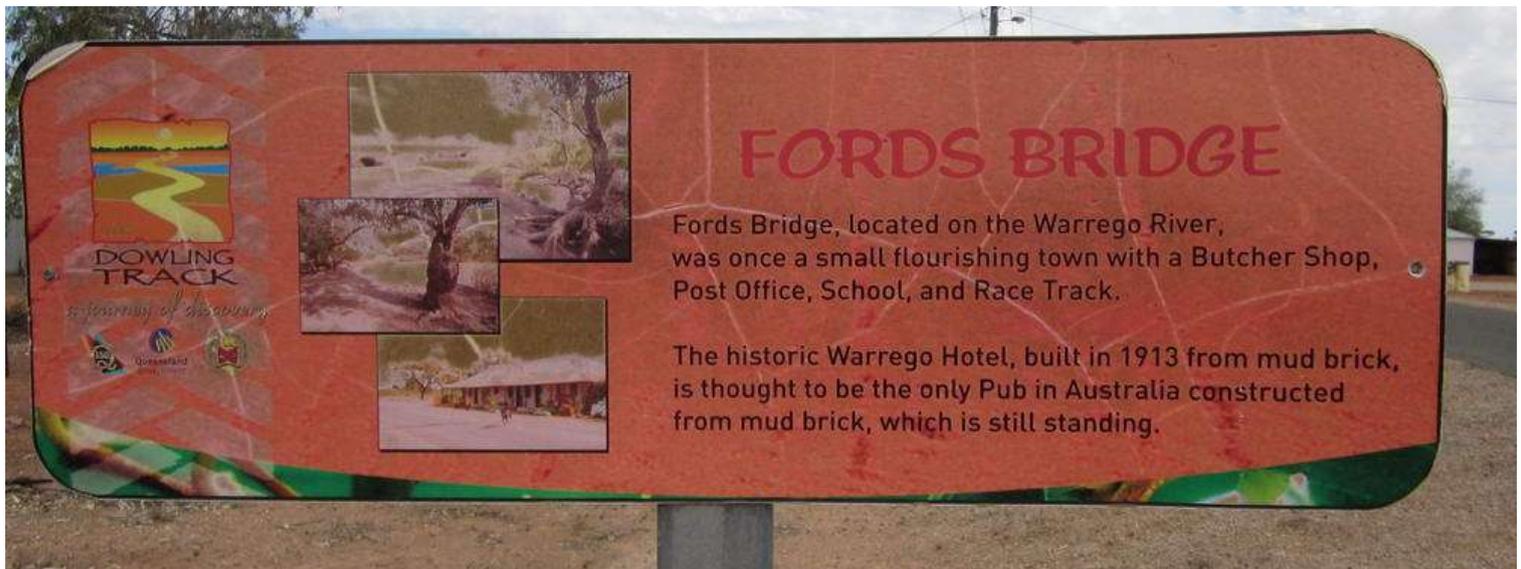


## Hebel to Yamba

We had a good fire last night and it still had coals that relit again in the morning before leaving. We headed SW down a 160km dirt road through Goodooga and then to Brewarrina. Kept on to Bourke where we stopped long enough for fuel and a quick visit to the Info Centre, then it was off on the worst road we have been on yet. This was 220km of dirt road to Hungerford and then another 120km of dirt road to Eulo, a bit of a test for this little French car. It certainly wasn't designed for this type of road and is the lowest car I think I've ever driven. Even the Pulsar was higher off the ground than this. Quite a bit of the road was reasonably smooth sandy sections, part was reasonably smooth black dirt sections, and part was sharp rocky sections. On these there was a ridge of gravel between the wheel ruts that scraped the underside of the car. I quite often had to drive with a wheel on top of this ridge and was quite pleased to get to Eulo the next day without doing a tyre. A lot of the time there was a smooth track along the side of the road and I used that a lot. There were many many cattle grids and I slowed to a crawl over these, you could easily do a tyre on them (as a friend has since pointed out he did).

The first major town along this road was Ford's Bridge – a hotel with a population of 3. We stopped here and I had a Somersby cider and bought a bar mat for \$45 as a souvenir. Gina bought a xxxx beer to have later on. The hard of hearing proprietor has been here 9 years. Nice friendly guy.





Then it was on to Hungerford where we went through the Dog Fence. The proprietor here seemed a lot less friendly and only stocked Strongbow cider so we didn't stay long. We passed through a NP which we had thought to camp in but on arrival found that you have to book and pay online and there is no phone service here of course. We camped off the road further on towards Eulo, down a side road that looked like it hadn't had traffic on it for over a week.





A ESP warning light had been on on the dashboard for a while and in the morning I noticed oil had leaked onto the ground, about just behind the passengers seat. So it wasn't the engine, and the brakes were still fine. The drivers manual said this was part of some fancy function that stopped the wheels spinning unevenly in sand or snow and said to contact your Peugeot dealer. It didn't seem to be very urgent so I ignored it. But the plastic stone guard was dragging on the ground so next morning we were in Cunnamulla early, having passed through Eulo quite early.

A friendly mechanic ripped part of it off and drilled a hole to fasten the rest of it with a cable tie and we were back on the road before 9am, \$30 poorer.

Gina now told me she had been scared yesterday on the corrugated road and had genuinely thought the car would shake to pieces, and didn't really want to visit any more towns with a population of 3.

At St George we booked into a cabin for a bit of relaxation. Very nice river bank walk, quite a nice little town. We visited a place where an old Greek man has been carving Emu shells for years. Some of these have been exhibited overseas. When you carve into the shell there are different coloured layers.

There were dozens of them, a lot commemorating a special event or year.



The next day I was heading to camp at Lake Leslie but the commercial caravan park was fairly depressing and the council one not much better so I carried on towards Warwick and Rathdowney. We had stopped briefly in Goondiwindi to stretch our legs and look at the town.



*Lovely old hotel in Goondiwindi.*

There was a lot of water along this highway.



After Warwick (which seemed to have a lot of parks where travellers could stop to picnic) and after Killarney we saw a sign to St Mary's Falls so went to have a look. It was raining at the time but there was no water in the creek at the first couple of falls so we didn't get out. I was about to retrace back to the main road when I noticed the road continued to Boonah but not recommended for buses, trucks, caravans or trailers.

Boonah was on my original route to Rathdowney so of course we went. A very narrow road wound up over a mountain range and down the other side – delightful.

At Rathdowney I took to the Lion's Way as I always do. This road was put in by the community during the depression and winds up over the Border Mountains to Kyogle.

Going down the other side we turned left into the NP and camped in Sheepstation Creek campground, as I always do. Nearly all the camp sites were closed off due to a lot of work being done. The old dirt camp sites were now very level gravel with instant lawn put around them.



Gina didn't look too impressed as it was still drizzling and the grass and the seats were wet. There is a fire place behind the table. However there is a good shelter shed where we took our food and our firewood (borrowed from Kwiamble NP). There was some wood in the shelter so we had a very warm comfortable evening, enhanced by a small

bird a bit like a honey eater. I held out my cheese roll to it and it hovered while it pecked at it, and then later would land on the table and take crumbs from between Gina' fingers. So what might have been a dismal evening turned into a really good evening.



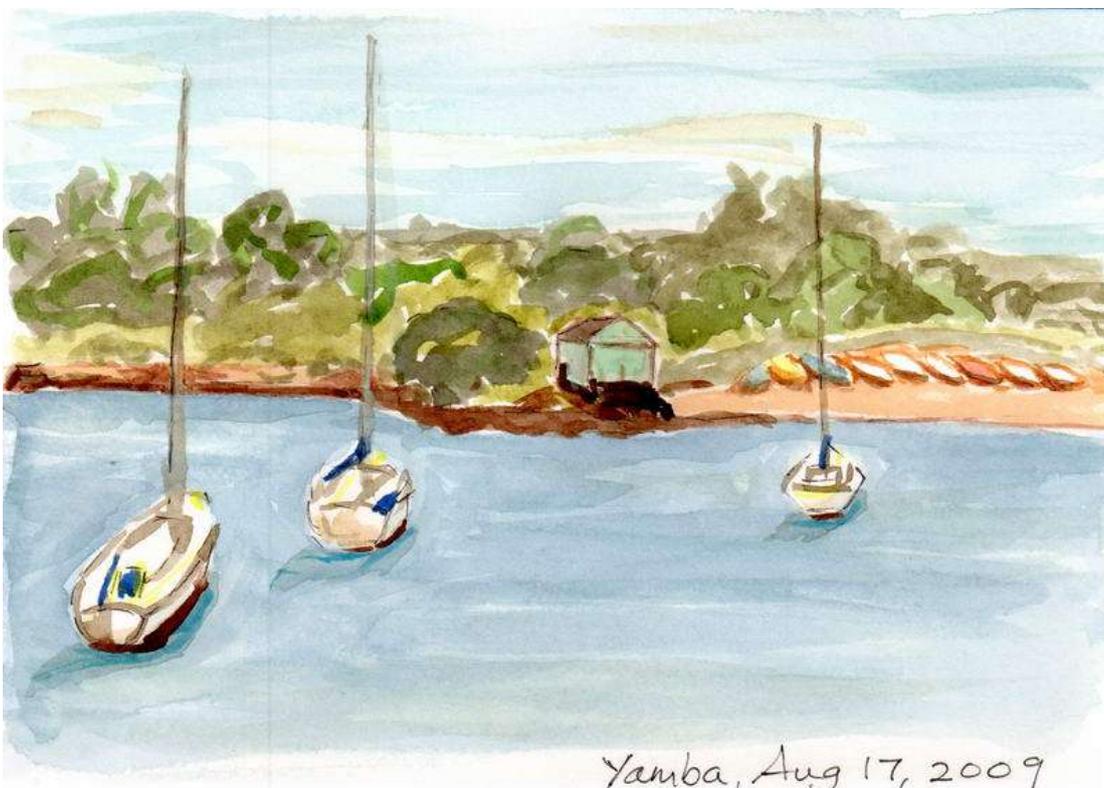




There is a very good scenic drive up here on top of the mountains but we were in thick fog the next morning till we got a lot lower down towards Murwillumbah. From there to Ballina and my friend Toby, only to find he was up in Brisbane babysitting. It was raining heavily as we kept heading south towards Grafton and then I spotted a sign to Yamba. Elli and Tenna and I stayed there in 2009 and it seemed a nice place to go for a night or two. Gina wasn't at all keen to camp in this weather. We booked into an upstairs unit for 2 nights.



*The view from our balcony.*



*Yamba, Aug 17, 2009*

*Elli's water colour.*