

## Friends Tour to Gundagai

Saturday 4 April dawned a beautiful autumn Canberra day, bright, crisp and fresh, as were the Friends who gathered at the crack of dawn to travel together on the Two Rivers tour to Gundagai. Having been told the bus would leave at 7.30, I arrived at 7.15, only to find the bus already packed with people. My guest from Sydney had to sit with a (very nice) stranger, as we settled into the last seats available.

We travelled through the early morning sunshine to Jugiong, where we had morning tea and enjoyed spectacular views of the Murrumbidgee River from Shephards Hill, as did explorer Charles Sturt many years before. We heard tales of the Osborne family, who owned most of the land between Harden and Coolac, before visiting one of their properties, Gunning-Jugrawah, for a splendid morning tea. There we also heard of the work involved in running a racing stud, with the famous stallion 'Tie the Knot' brought out, prancing and with eyes flashing, to view us all. His silk blankets looked splendid arrayed along the garden rails as his siblings grazed peacefully nearby.



*'Tie the Knot'*

Driving along beside the Murrumbidgee we learnt of the triumphs and tragedies of early settlers and witnessed some magnificent scenery before arriving at Gundagai, where we had a look at the early Gabriel photographs of the area, many of which are now held in the National Library's Pictorial Collection.

A delicious lunch followed at the Nargoon winery, where we enjoyed wonderful food and local wines in a very convivial atmosphere. It was so pleasant there in the sun that we were almost reluctant to get back on the bus! Duty prevailed, however, and we proceeded to drive round the old town and to visit the forbidding Gundagai Gaol before commencing our return journey.



*Lunch at the Nargoon Winery*

By the time we reached Jugiong for a tea break, many of us were relaxed and almost asleep! It had been a long and fascinating day and there was so much to remember, including the fine wines of Gundagai! We were left with wonderful memories of an impressive day spent with Australia's past and a deep sense of gratitude to Friends committee member Bill Geering and his friends Peter Luders and Patrick Sullivan for the enormous amount of work they put in to give us such a memorable experience.