Bathurst 2014

It was 6:15 in the morning, the teachers had invaded our motel rooms and we had to get dressed and go down to the dining hall. We were like a gaggle of dragons, our breaths coming up a cloudy white. After a hurried breakfast, we got onto the bus to the Sheep and Cattle Drome. Frost covered the grass and anything else that happened to be caught its evil grasp. The bus’s warmth was comforting compared to the icy cold of outside. We arrived, and the first thing I noticed was the putrid smell of sheep and cows. Holding my breath, we followed our guide inside the drome.

Rows of wooden benches took up about half of the drome, and stuffed sheep lined the walls. I looked around and then studied the sheep again. One of them had blinked. Slightly baffled, I walked over to them. They were alive, but stood still as a statue as crowds of kids came over to pat them. After a while, we took our seats to watch the show. We watched, transfixed as donkeys, cows, dogs and sheep came out of the door to our left. Then the dairy cow came out. Quiet voices were trying to be inconspicuous as we chattered about whether some people would get to milk a cow. Our suspicions were correct, and four people were chosen to milk a cow. Unfortunately I wasn’t one of them but still watched with interest. As the first people started to milk, our guide asked if anyone wanted to try milk straight from the cow. I raised my hand and waited.

Mrs Mackenzie mumbled something into the man’s ear and he called out “Lucy.” I flushed red and felt my face grow warm. I stumbled over people’s legs and made my way to the front. He offered to let me milk the cow as well, and I nodded. I chatted with Lani and Ellie who were before me, and watched as other people started to milk the cow. I grew more and more restless as I neared the front of the line. Finally, I came to the front of the line and one of the assistants showed me how to milk. A jet of white milk zinged onto the ground. Then I was told to crouch down. He was joking right? Slightly confused, I crouched down and held onto the pole above me. Half expecting him to tell me to stand back up again, I shut my eyes.

I opened them to see a thin jet of warm, white milk squirting into my face. I squealed and started laughing, choking on the small percentage of milk that actually ended up in my mouth. “It’s warm!!” I exclaimed. The teachers laughed and I stopped to have my photo taken. I sat back down in my chair and wiped the remaining milk off my face. Bree was sitting next to me and cracked up laughing.

After the chatter died down, the man brought out a lamb. Various different awwws rang out as he picked the lamb up. Then he brought out the axe. He explained to us that lambs needed to get their tails docked at a specific age. He wouldn’t… He couldn’t… Every one gasped as he brought down the axe. Bang! He missed the tail. I heaved a sigh of relief.

Finally, he ushered us out the door. We visited the gift shop and had morning tea, then filed onto the bus. It was an interesting experience and one of my highlights in Bathurst.