A Day at the Bindoon Museum



Just 77 kilometres north of Perth, tucked into the Chittering Valley, sits the Bindoon Museum. We've driven past it countless times on our trips through the valley, always saying, "we must go there one day." Well, today was finally the day — and it didn't disappoint.

A Valley with a Story of its Own

Before we even step inside a museum, the Chittering Valley itself has plenty of history to offer. Nestled in the northern hills of the Darling Range, the valley was first explored by the surveyor and explorer George Fletcher Moore back in 1836.

The name "Chittering" is believed to be Aboriginal in origin, thought to mean "place of the willie wagtails" — a fitting name for a valley still alive with birdlife today.

Bindoon’s own name has an equally charming origin: it’s thought to mean “place where the yams grow,” and has been in use since 1843, when early settler William Brockman named the property he’d surveyed in the area.

The district was formally established as the Chittering Brook Road District back in 1896, eventually becoming the Shire of Chittering in 1961, with Bindoon as its seat.



The town itself wasn’t officially gazetted until 1953, despite the area having been settled for over a century by then — development was slow, and for a long time the trip to Perth was anything but quick or easy.

These days the valley is known for its orchards, vineyards and spectacular spring wildflowers, forming a picturesque gateway into the Wheatbelt and sitting not far from Australia’s only monastic town, New Norcia.

Inside the Museum

The museum itself is lovingly managed and maintained by the Bindoon and Districts Historical Society, which has been operating since 1997 and opened the museum's doors in 2010. Fittingly, it's based on the old Chittering Road Board building precinct, built back in 1928–1929 — a piece of local history in its own right.

Inside, the museum has many facets. There's a room dedicated to WWI and WWII, another tracing the history of the area, another full of memorabilia, and a main hall packed with everything from old motor vehicles and tractors to a beautifully preserved vintage fire engine. Add in models of all shapes and sizes, plus farm and domestic tools from a bygone era, and you could easily lose an afternoon in there.



A huge thank you to Vera and Reg, the volunteers on duty, who were an absolute wealth of knowledge. Their stories and insights brought the place to life and added so much more colour to the visit than the exhibits alone could.

Stories of the People Who Built It

Museums like this are wonderful for learning the story of a town, and you really do glean some lovely details about the people who built it. Take, for instance, the farmer and his wife who had three children. The eldest stayed on to help his father work the farm, mainly growing crops.

It was their son who decided they should diversify into currants — a move the other local farmers looked down on at first. He persisted anyway, and as it turned out, that one crop was what carried the family through the Depression.

There's also the tale of the great train robbery in Bindoon, and the story of how the culprits were eventually caught and the stolen money recovered. Many local organisations have donated items over the years too, including St John Ambulance, the Scouts and Guides, local schools and churches, and of course several prominent families of the area.



One point worth noting; unlike so many regional museums (which tend to run on skeleton numbers of volunteers with little time for maintenance), this one is spotless! Even the individual models on display — and there are lots, are dust-free and well cared for.

After spending a good while reading and looking , I finally had to tear myself away — though I kept catching myself saying, “I remember those…!”

In A Nutshell

The Bindoon Museum is a small heritage museum in Bindoon, Western Australia (about an hour north of Perth), located at 3 Teatree Road, on the corner of Teatree Road and Great Northern Highway, within the Brockman Centre.

What’s there:

- A purpose-built shed housing a large collection of restored tractors, trucks, and other engines, plus an extensive collection of historic household memorabilia and a room dedicated to WWII history
- The display is housed in the Chittering Road Board precinct, built in 1928–1929
- A nearby arts & craft centre selling quilts, pottery, and local handmade gifts

Who runs it:

It was established in 2010 by the Bindoon Historical Society, which had been operating since 1997 — today known as the Bindoon and Districts Historical Society. Current office holders are Reg Scantlebury as Honorary President, Chris Waldie as Honorary Secretary, and Joan Bathgate as Honorary Treasurer .

Visiting:

Open Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday, 10am–3pm . You can reach them at bindoonhistorical@gmail.com or via bindoonmuseum.com.