

The Adelaide trip in brief.

We left early February 2002 after a short time planning, a day after the planned date but that's the usual starting time anyway. Keys were handed over to friends, neighbours and offspring to ensure the home remained lived in. Our neighbour parks his car in the drive the whole time we are away.

The trip to Canberra was fairly uneventful, as we have covered this territory before. We did stop again at Dubbo and again went to the Western Plains Zoo to see some old friends and make some new ones.

We had decided to stop over in Canberra to see the exhibition of Treasures from the world libraries at the National Library, as it was soon to leave our shores for other international viewing. Needless to say the showing was great, well worth the three hours wait in Canberra cold from 6am to 9am. The show was free and only 1700 tickets were available each day and we only just made it for that day. Seeing one of the dead sea scrolls and Einstein's actual pages recording his explanation of the theory of relativity was quite a thrill, I still can't understand it, then again, and I couldn't understand his writing either.



Next stop was Hay to see the new "SHEAR OUTBACK". We stayed at the Big 4 park, very nice and very well maintained. The exhibition is similar to the Longreach Hall of fame only quite a bit smaller at this time, as it had only been opened a short while ago. The shearing demonstration was well presented and I take my hat off to those blokes who do the job, no wonder they get paid well. Very good showing of the various handpieces used over the years.

Seems everyone had their own idea on how to make cutters go back and forward. Excellent job of explaining the shearers strike etc and how it came about. Good history lesson for all there.

Our next plan was to travel south to Swan Hill to see the old village and learn about our past living conditions. We booked in for two days and then found the dammed thing was closed, so we spent our dollars on other things, a trip up the Murray with dinner included was very restful and we enjoyed the peace and quiet of the river for the afternoon.

We stopped over in Goulburn on the way to Adelaide, it seemed like nothing special, until, surprise surprise, a happy hour supplied by the park with free drinks and snacks. Quite a change from most of the parks we visited. The stop over was to ensure we didn't arrive in Adelaide in peak hour traffic.

The traffic going into Adelaide was fairly heavy anyway, the main road in is a bit of a worry, the speed limit changes every couple of Kms and one wonders why. The road seemed quite capable of carrying two lanes at fairly high speed anyway. Maybe it's just a revenue earner for the local constabulary. We found the Adelaide Shores park without too much trouble and settled in for a few days of R & R.

We soon realised we needed several days to see at least some of Adelaide and of course the Adelaide hills. We travelled into Adelaide from Glenelg on one of the very old trams. Top speed about 15Kph, fairly cheap at about \$1.60 per person. Once in Adelaide city there are free air conditioned busses taking people around the city and stopping most places in the city centre. These buses run quite often and just keep going all day. Quite a change from our local bus service both in price and quality. The trips into the Adelaide hills were really enjoyable, Melbas chocolate factory, the cheese factory, that marvellous toy factory in Gumeracha where the big rocking horse stands



many metres high. Grandma and Grandpa spent up big there and young Jack's presents are catered for over the next few years. (if we can stop giving them to him early).

The motor museum in Birdwood should not be missed, what a collection, I just drooled over the many sports cars. The Lamborghini once owned by Twiggy is there with its original tyres, I didn't like the lime green colour. But if it was offered!!!

One quite novel vehicle had a moveable steering wheel that could be moved to the outside of the

car should the road become too rough to ride in the seat. The first very 1948 Holden produced is there alongside the latest Monaro.

There are literally hundreds of display vehicles from the first single cylinders to large trucks. The exhibition of motorcycles is hard to imagine, there are simply hundreds from the very very old models with no suspension to the latest racing machines still painted in racing colours.

We had friends to visit in the Barossa Valley and stayed quite some time at their very well appointed home in Angaston. Not a real bad place the valley, a close-knit group of locals keep it that way.

Hahndorf is a pleasant place situated in the Adelaide hills, probably the most southern of the smaller hamlets. We had lunch at one of the many German restaurants in the town. I might add here the new freeway to the southern parts of the Adelaide hills sure makes the trip much faster. It is some highway, must have cost a mint but it seems well worth it in lieu of the old slow twisting highway it replaced.

We ended up spending several days in Adelaide and a few more would have been easy to take. We revisited the chocolate factory under the pretence of getting some more of that really good cheese from the cheese factory however we found it closed so went and purchased more chocolate from next door anyway.

I had organised to see one of my ex Townsville workmates in Adelaide and the evening proved quite enjoyable in the caravan even though the temperature was close to freezing.



My friend and her husband moved to Adelaide some time ago after she left Telstra for better things. Four people in our 16foot pop top was a bit of a squeeze but cosy anyway. They stayed until quite late so apparently the conditions were not a problem. A couple of bottles of wine helped. We talked of times gone by and people that have left the firm over the last few years. That's quite a few for starters.

We left Adelaide after about 7 days and headed for the Great Ocean Road via the new freeway. The Disco knew it once again had the van in tow as the trip up that very big hill out of Adelaide slowed the old girl a bit. Surprisingly after that rather large climb the going was fairly flat and easy. The landscape turned to grassy plains type of country for



most of the remaining hours of the day. Our next park was somewhat unexpected I was feeling a bit tired and rather than continuing we stopped at Meningie beside Lake Albert and had a lovely relaxing evening with quite a few other weary travellers. Nice little park, we reckon it was better than some of the so-called four-star parks we stayed at.

Morning saw us travelling alongside the Coorong National Park. The movie Storm Boy was filmed in

the park.

That evening we stopped overnight at Mount Gambier, the city with the blue and brown lakes. The blue lake changes colour from blue to brown about March each year and slowly changes back to blue over the next 11 months. A side trip to Port McDonald to see the cabin that once belonged to Adam Lindsay Gordon and some other sights filled the



day. The cabin is tucked away in the back blocks a bit and we finally found it along a dirt road some distance from the main port. Warrnambool was our next overnighter and our first in Victoria. May I say the Great Ocean Road was so good we almost went round again. We stopped at all the lookouts, some only a few hundred metres apart. We didn't want to miss anything. My navigator had slipped over in Mount Gambier getting out of the van. Damaged both her bottom end and her ankle. The result was a much slower

navigator, somewhat limited at running to the various venues. I elected to go forth first to check on the terrain and length before she ventured out of the comfort of the Disco and hobbled into the unknown. The Twelve Apostles was one view both of us just had to see. Probably much different to when others who visited in the distant past as there is now a major tourist centre set up complete with air field and large parking areas for busses and caravans. Quite a walk to the cliff edge but well worth the ankle pain. I would like a



dollar for every photo taken in an average day at that lookout.

Part of the ocean road is inland over the Otway ranges through Lavers Hill. The scenery is spectacular and the road extremely twisty and very steep in places. Believe it or not the speed limit on this part of the road is 100Kph. There are parts of the road where the visibility is very limited however the line markings are dotted, i.e. no double lines anywhere. We just hoped there were no ratbags on the road that day.

Appollo Bay is probably one of the better beach resort spots on the Victorian coast. We stopped at a van park that overlooked the bay. The picture with the sheep was taken from the hill behind the park. Quite a walk but well worth it. The park left a bit to be desired with the ablution block quite a distance from our site. The navigator really appreciated our on board ablutions that night.

We had planned on seeing a friend from Townsville in Anglesea however further information proved we were in the wrong spot so we continued to Geelong and planned to visit that evening and the next day. When visiting Barwon Heads we saw the "Seachange" area and Laura's house etc, whilst talking over a walk along the beach. (Actually there are now three Laura's homes close together).

The weather remained fairly kind over the southern trip area, a bit cold when the wind blew otherwise great. We heard Townsville had suffered temperatures of around 39 degrees, coupled with very high humidity and rain, quite different to what we were experiencing.



Ballarat is the home of the Eureka Stockade and considered the birthplace of the real Australian spirit. Naturally much is made of the history and we spent a great day and evening at Sovereign Hill theme park looking at lots of Aussie history and stories of the gold rush days. The evening show including meal is well worth the dollars, the light and sound show is great, very exciting and vivid. The original eureka flag is hung in the Ballarat Art Gallery and still bears the bullet holes from the skirmish. Quite a bit of

the flag is still missing as it has had its share of souvenir hunters cutting bits off, even on the day it was flown some parts were reportedly removed by soldiers. It is very large and sort of takes your breath away a bit.

Amazingly the actual hill where it all took place is near the centre of town and now has a very large McDonalds sign right in the middle. Quite disgusting really but it's a bit late to change now I suppose. There is also a large Eureka Stockade Centre providing the story and a model layout of the stockade as remembered by those who were around at the time.



After that much history we travelled to Wodonga for an overnight stay before heading back to Canberra, We did divert a little to Tumut to see our son's sister in law and had lunch at their choice of venue, nice pub, nice atmosphere. We arrived in Canberra at my daughters home by 6pm.

We stayed for quite a few days fixing up a few minor items including putting in a neon lamp system to show the fridge had actually been switched to 240V. With no light inside we had one night where the switch looked good

however no power was going to the element. A pool of water the next morning showed the result of a somewhat doubtful switch. The modification took all of about 20 minutes to install. Another mod was the installation of a large vent behind the microwave. The thing overheated and stopped one night and we thought it had turned up its toes. The next morning it worked again so I decided on the mod as soon as possible. Whilst in Canberra we visited the new National Museum situated on the site of the old hospital. It sure is different both in architecture and overall design. Lots of Aboriginal history is displayed, as is general Australian history.

Navigator was a bit put out seeing a Mixmaster displayed that is the same as the one she uses on a regular basis at home. We may be getting on a bit but as yet I don't consider myself as a museum piece.

We refilled the van tanks with good Canberra water and headed home via our usual roads through Dubbo and Moree and on to Emerald before turning to the coast to Mackay for our last evening in the van for a while. We had spent almost eight weeks away



and it seemed long and yet short. The Disco covered just over 10,000 Kms and averaged 22mpg or about 7.5Km to the litre. We had no mechanical problems, only expensive fuel, incidentally fuel price, fuel economy, and towing ability seem to be the main topics at most van parks. We were often questioned about our Disco and how it performed, I am biased a bit but have to admit she is a bit slow up those big hills.

We saw heaps of history on the trip and it really is quite impossible to include everything we did in this epistle. The smaller towns along the great ocean road should not be missed, they are often slightly off the main road and most people probably bypass them. We were impressed by the cleanliness and overall look of the towns. They look like great places to live if only they were about 1000Kms further north.

The southern ocean seemed calm and clean however stories of enormous seas and many shipwrecks put paid to any ideas of the ocean remaining calm for long periods of time.

The display in the Lady Nelson Centre at Mount Gambier gives lots of information about the many shipwrecks that have occurred along the Great Australian Bight. We visited most of the “Theme Parks” and were impressed with virtually every one of them. The displays are excellent, using the latest sound and video systems and gave us a wealth of knowledge about our heritage and history.

I just can't wait to start another trip, maybe to Kakadont for a few weeks. Maybe Carnarvon Gorge for a few days, who knows. Till next time, if you see us on the road give us a call on UHF 18