

The Hamer Newsletter



31 March 2008

Hello to One and All,

Our last letter ended with us in Stanley on Tasmania's north west coast with cool and windy conditions. Since then we have had real extremes with some very wet, cold and windy days, some very hot, windy and dusty days and lots of perfect days in between. We have really been very lucky that when on a cruise or tour to a scenic spot, we have had lovely clear blue skies and warm days.

Tasmania is a wonderful place for sightseeing. It is small enough to make travelling easy, yet has so many beautiful areas to go to, one could never get bored here. It is also small in population and apart from Hobart has no high rise. Even Hobart is like a big country town compared to mainland cities and has so many beautiful bays, inlets and waterways it is a boaters and fishers paradise. So, here is the latest travelogue.

Monday 11 February, 2008 – Still at Stanley and doing day trips to local areas. We went on the South Arthur Forest Drive, which is a forestry road through areas being managed by the Tasmanian Forestry Service. We did some short walks through amazing old forest which looked just like “Middle Earth” on Lord of the Rings. Lots of strangely shaped trees, moss covered tree ferns and babbling brooks lined with moss covered rocks. Also Dip Falls, which has interesting rock formations and The Big Tree, a 400 year old 62 metre high eucalypt (find Bev in the photo).



Bev did the walk to the top of “The Nut” which dominates Stanley. It is a



very steep walk up with a walk around the summit and fantastic views from the top. Amazingly, in the old days they actually grew potato crops up there.



Wednesday 13 February - Back to Burnie for a few days.

Friday 15 February – To Tullah, near the Cradle Mountain national park. We found a great free camp close to the village – about 5 acres of paddock with old concrete pads which used to have donga style housing for the hydro construction workers.

It was the perfect base to go exploring the region and we toured around visiting Zeehan (historic mining town), Trial Harbour, Strahan, Queenstown, Cradle Mountain and King



Solomons Cave.



We went to Montezuma Falls near Rosebery and did a 3 hour walk through regrowth forest along an old mine railway track to the falls. The rail was built in the 1800's and used to carry the mined ore down to Zeehan for processing.

One day we went to Strahan for a half day cruise which went out through Macquarie Heads through the Devils Gate into the Southern Ocean for a quick look before heading back into Macquarie Harbour and up into the Gordon River. It stopped at Sarah Island for a walking tour around the old convict penal settlement, and pulled up at the Tassal fish farm to watch them harvesting Tasmanian Salmon – what a beautiful catch! Lunch on board was good and there was lots of smoked salmon to sample.



While in Strahan, we took the opportunity to drop in to “our” very well known hotel.

The Gordon River is every bit as beautiful as we had been told and it is great to see it looking so pristine. The weather was perfect and Strahan was so idyllic we thought we might like to live here – but someone reminded us about how miserable it is in the winter so we shelved that idea.



we thought we might like to live here – but someone reminded us about how miserable it is in the winter so we shelved that idea.



Our visit to Cradle Mountain was also on a perfect day and the 2 hour walk around Dove Lake saw us pretty hot and tired at the end.

King Solomons Cave was an interesting experience although rather chilly at 9 C underground.



During our 9 day stay at Tullah we feasted on blackberries growing around the area and even some wild apples. The last couple of days was very wet and windy and growing colder, so it was time to move on and find better weather, especially when we discovered the little electric fan heater was 2,500 watts and the generator was only 2KVA – oops.



Sunday 24 February – Over to the middle again south of Devonport to Westbury, a small town with a 24 hour bakery cum café and a big

free camp out the back.



We are constantly surprised by the amount of very good free camping available in Tassie. From here we were able to do more day trips, including to Marakoopa Cave; an interesting salmon farm which produces hot smoked salmon and dips (very yummy), and ginseng; the Alum Cliffs where Aboriginal people used to dig for their ochre; Beaconsfield (site of famous gold mine) and various other places. Again, the scenery was amazing and we had lovely weather for our trips.

Wednesday 27 February – Back to Devonport so Frans could fly to Brisbane again.

Monday 3 March – To Evandale, a quaint 1800's village with lots of very well preserved sandstone buildings and scene of the annual Penny Farthing race – unfortunately the week before we arrived there. It is also the home of the annual John Glover Landscape Art prize. They have a very pleasant area for overnight camping, and we enjoyed a walk around the village looking at the old churches (the one in the photo was built in 1835) and other buildings.



Tuesday 4 March – To Campbell Town and another great free camp in the Lions Park next to the Elizabeth River. This is also an historic town with a long history and the oldest bridge still in continual use in Australia. It is only a



footbridge now but when first built it was on the main road and was used by horse drawn carriages. Later on they built a stone bridge with convict labour, then diverted the river to flow under the bridge. Campbell Town also has the "Convict Trail", with bricks set into the footpath, each one inscribed with the name, age, ship, crime and sentence and eventual achievements of the convicts brought to Tasmania. It was interesting to see how many made a good life for themselves and became police, politicians, wealthy farmers and businessmen.



Campbell Town was a good base to explore the region, and we went to Ross and Oatlands, also very lovely old villages dripping with history. Ross had a "Female Factory" for female convicts and Ross is also famous for the oldest (1834) convict bridge still used on a main road and the



unflattering faces of officials carved in the stones by the convict stonemason responsible for the construction of the bridge.



Oatlands has an old flour mill which is being restored to its working state. All of these places have retained their lovely sandstone and blue stone buildings and are beautiful to walk around.

Friday 7 March – to Buckland to join a CMCA rally. This is the first rally we have been to since January 2007 when we first started out in Stopalot. It was interesting to meet up with other

CMCA members and take advantage of the locals' knowledge for the rest of our travels here.



Monday 10 March – to Nubeena near Port Arthur. We parked in the car park of the local RSL club, overlooking the water. This was a good base to explore Port Arthur and the Coal Mines convict camp and quarry. Again we had great



weather for our days out and really enjoyed the day at Port Arthur looking at the ruins and learning the history of the settlement.

Thursday 13 March – Primrose Sands and another RSL club. The second day here the weather turned very hot (37°) and windy and the dust was swirling and making it all very uncomfortable. We were able to hook up to power and put on the aircon with the windows closed and stay indoors all day. The next day the weather was cooler again and we were able to go for a drive around the countryside. Some of the farm houses had spectacular views over the ocean.

Sunday 16 March – To Cambridge on the edge of Hobart, and Frans flew to Brisbane. When he returned we spent several days roaming around Hobart and region. The Salamanca Markets were as good as we had been told and a stroll around the CBD to see the old buildings very enjoyable. The original Henry Jones IXL Jam Factory buildings on the wharf were interesting – we had not realised he started out in Hobart.

The drive up to the top of Mt Wellington was good, again on a clear sunny day. We had been warned to take warm clothing up there but it was surprisingly warm and most people were in T-shirts – 2 weeks before it was snowing! The view from the top is spectacular and well worth the trip.



More day trips to more historic towns and villages and looking at more fantastic scenery. We even climbed to the top of a shot-tower (some 200+ steps).



The town of Richmond near Hobart boasts the oldest stone bridge still in use in Australia, and the town is full of stone buildings.

Wednesday 26 March – to Bruny Island on the ferry in pouring rain, then to Adventure Bay Eco Park where it is cold, wet and windy. This is the home of the only breeding colony of



Bennett's White Wallaby in Australia and they are the most cute and cuddly looking creatures

Thursday was drier so we went off for a tour of the island. The scenery is spectacular and the island produces some very special products including cheeses and the best oysters to be found anywhere.

Until next time,

Cheers from Bev & Frans