



SCOTTSDALE TOURS

TOURING TASMANIA TOUR

2012

Our trip to the 'not so little island' at the bottom of Australia began with a night in Auckland and an early start the next morning for our flights to Melbourne and on to Launceston, Tasmania where we spent our first two nights at the very pretty and peaceful Swiss Village resort at Grindlewald.

The first day of our Tasmanian adventure saw us in and around Launceston. In the morning we drove around the city to get our bearings and then up to Cataract Gorge where most of us took the chairlift across to the other side and walked back across the bridge to where Ross had morning tea ready. A lovely spot with a great pool and wonderful scenery.

Our next stop was at City Park where we wandered around the gardens, stopped to chat to the Macaque monkeys and admired the stunning floral display in the conservatory. We had some time in town for lunch and then it was down to the marina for a river cruise with Sam. Lovely new apartments and boats up the Esk river and then up the Tamar river to Kings bridge and into the Cataract gorge again – interesting cliffs here and kids jumping off rocks and the bridge. Back on the bus Ross took us for a tiki tour through suburbia – gorgeous old houses and trees. We were back at our pretty village by mid-afternoon with time to explore or have a swim before dinner. At 8pm we were off again up the west bank of the Tamar through Exeter and over the Batman bridge out to Low Head at the mouth of the river. We were met by Shirley who has looked after the Little Blue Penguin colony here for 16 years. Down a path to a viewing platform where we saw the birds come out of the water and then head up into the dunes to feed their babies(2 each). We were very close to them, it was a perfect still evening and a lovely experience.

Next morning – another perfect blue-dome day- saw us heading north again with our first stop at Brady's lookout and then at Batman's bridge for photos. On through Bell Bay with its power station and factories, then morning tea near Georgetown. Off road a bit to visit the old semaphore station then on through the Pipers River area to the lovely north coast town of Bridport, a little seaside paradise. Lots of campers, holiday homes and flowering gum trees. On through farming country, pine forest, fields of veges and opium poppies to Scottsdale for lunch, where Michelle from Te Aroha had the welcome board out in front of her bakery. After lunch here we went to see the truly amazing tree sculptures at Legerwood and on to Derby where we visited The Tin Centre



Grindlewald



Batman Bridge



Low Head Penguins



Ledgerwood Statues

and museum. (Great ice-creams too on a very hot day!) We stopped in the forest near Weldborough for a walk in the bush to visit a huge old Grandma Myrtle tree, then out at the coast at St Helens and on to our overnight stop at Scamander, right on the beach and just lovely. A cuppa on the balcony and a very nice dinner.

On yet another beautiful morning we headed down the coast to the Wildlife Park near Bicheno, where we boarded a wee train and saw kangaroos and wallabies, snakes and wombats and the truly unlovable Tassie Devil. We had morning tea here and then had a quick look at the coastal town of Bicheno where lots of locals were out and about on Australia Day. Down to Cranbrook and then inland past Lake Leake towards Campbell Town and south to Ross for lunch. This is a very historic village with a famous intersection –an old building on each corner – The pub (temptation), the church (salvation), the town hall (recreation) and the jail (damnation) ! Lovely old buildings here and we had time for a look around before we left over the beautifully carved old bridge. South again through Oatlands with its Georgian buildings and on down the old stage-coach road to Richmond, where we visited the old jail museum and had a look at the town (it got much colder here), then down the highway for our three night stay in central Hobart.

Our first day trip was out to the Penal Colony at Port Arthur. To get there we crossed the Tasman bridge to Sorrell and then through pretty rolling country to Dunalley, across the ‘lifting bridge’ and then the canal crossing at Eaglehawk Neck (where the ‘dogline’ was) and on to the Port Arthur settlement at the bottom of the peninsula. The guide at Port Arthur gave us some info and then we explored this very sobering place with its old buildings and sad history before a boat trip around the harbour and a visit to the Isle of the Dead where hundreds of convicts are buried. On our way back to Hobart we stopped to see Remarkable cave, Perpendicular Point, Admirals Arch, Devil’s Kitchen and some tessellated rock formations. We also got the first hint of a name for our ‘mystery plant’. One of the locals called it ‘recovery plant’ and told us it is the first to grow after forest fires. Back over the lifting bridge to a very welcome afternoon- tea stop at the Colonial Museum. Back in Hobart we discovered our mystery dinner location was at the Casino. Ross heard that the road to the Tree Walk was going to be closed for the Targa Rally so was busy making new plans for our next day.

Next morning we were off to the Hobart waterfront to the famous Salamanca Market to get a taste of local culture and retail therapy (or just to look at the boats across the road at the marina!).

Fabulous cherries at the markets. Then off up Mt Wellington which dominates the Hobart skyline at 1237m. A stunning clear, still morning with amazing views. We had morning tea in the lookout building and our group photo taken on the viewing deck. Ross offered to take us on a tiki tour adventure in the afternoon (optional) in place of the treetop walk so after two hours for lunch or shopping most of us headed off in the bus. South to Kingston then through the fruit growing area of the Huon valley and right



Bakery Welcome sign



Tassie Devil at Bicheno



Port Arthur



Tasselated paving



Hobart from Mt Wellington

around the peninsula that lies between the Huon river and D'Entrcasteaux Channel. Such pretty coastline with water everywhere and quaint wee towns with quainter names like Cygnet, Garden Creek, Verona Sands, Gordon, Middleton, Flowerpot, Kettering, Oystercove (ice-creams at the marina), Snug and Electrona, Margate (with its old converted railway carriages), Howden, Tinderbox, Blackmans Bay and Tarooma. Somewhere near here we stopped to take photos of a very tall tower where lead shot was made. Then back to civilisation at Kingston and just in time for dinner at our hotel in Hobart. A great afternoon.

After a look around the wharf area and lovely homes we headed west the next morning (with a quick stop to take photos of the impressive Tasman Bridge) up the western side of the Derwent River to New Norfolk with its pulp mill and Norfolk Island history, through hop-growing country to Bushy Park – as far as boats can go up the river. Very old houses here and nice views of the river. On through Gretna and Hamilton to our morning-tea stop at the wee town of Ouse. On up into high, and very dry, country with a few sheep and not much else until we came to the former hydroelectric village of Tarraleah. Now privately owned and very tidy. We got out to look down at the huge penstocks and canals. Lots of 'recovery plant' here. Then on past Bronte lagoon to Derwent Bridge where we turned off into the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park. Had lunch in the café here and a walk to the lake (snake warnings!). Ali talked to one of the Park Centre staff and found the real name for the mystery plant – Tree Everlasting Bush (asteraceae) ☺. Back out to the main road again and over Mt Arrowsmith. Lots of Leatherwood trees with their pretty white flowers, good for honey making, so lots of hives too. As we crossed the Franklin River we talked about the Franklin dispute and headed up over Victoria Pass to Nelson Falls walkway. It was a very hot day and while we walked in the shade to the falls, Ross cleaned the aircon filter. What a difference it made! We were all much cooler as we crossed the bridge over Lake Burbury, a very large lake which is raised for hydro purposes. As we came down we started to see hills eroded by copper mining and then as we passed through the little town of Linda lots of new regrowth. At Gormanston we drove up a steep hill to a lookout to have a close look at the copper mine - terrible destruction of the landscape. We came down over the hill into the mining town of Queenstown and then past the processing plant as we headed for Strahan on a windey road through the hills. What a pretty little harbour town. Our motel was on the hill with fabulous views of the town and harbour. Great buffet dinner, and sunset-watching from the deck.

We woke up to a much cooler and rainy day, our only one. After breakfast we boarded 'The Eagle' for a cruise into Macquarie harbour, out through the very narrow entrance called 'Hell's Gate', past the fish farms and then to our stop at Sarah Island, an infamous convict settlement. Many of us braved the torrential rain for a tour with our theatrical guide Kim – excellent! Back on board we travelled up the Gordon River to Heritage Landing.



Cradle Mountain



Strahan



Eagle boat cruise - Strahan



ABT Wilderness Rail locomotive



Queenstown

Another very wet guided walk to see Huon Pines that only grow in Tasmania and were used for shipbuilding as the wood doesn't rot. On board again we had a lovely lunch and as we headed back to Strahan the weather cleared. Ross drove us around to the other side of the harbour for our train ride through to Queenstown on the ABT Wilderness Railway. We were delighted with the old train and carriages and shocked by the polluted King and Queen rivers. Ross was at the station to meet us and take us to our motel for the night – pretty chilly here!

Next morning we drove around this old, tired mining town, had a brief photo stop outside the 'Gnome' house, and then headed through the hills to Zeehan and on to Rosebery for a chilly morning tea stop. There is a big mine processing plant here.

Through more windey hills to Tullah, a small mining and hydro town on Lake Rosebery and then up quite high where there were snow markers beside the road. At the turn-off to Waratah (where the last Tasmanian Tiger was seen) we headed north through the Hellyer Gorge through plantations of pines and eucalypts and out to the north coast at sunny Wynyard where we stopped for lunch. After lunch we went north and out onto Table Cape where tulips are grown. It looked like Pukekohe with red soil, rows of drying onions and other crops - great views from the lighthouse lookout.

Down again and into the idyllic seaside town of Boat Harbour. It looked really tropical with people swimming in turquoise water. On further north-west to Stanley and 'The Nut'. Most of us went up in the chairlift to the top – a bit windy but fabulous views. Ice-creams from the shop at the bottom and on up the hill past the old farm buildings to our motel which looked out over the town and 'The Nut'.

We left Stanley on another beautiful morning and headed back down the coast through very pretty rolling farm land - lots of crop- growing and hay-making. Through the industrial city of Burnie with its wood-chip mountain and on around the shore to our last morning tea stop at Penguin ☺. On through Ulverstone with its unusual War Memorial while John told us about Ulverston in Cumbria where he and Freda are from. We turned off and headed south through Sprent and Upper Castra, down, down, down into Leven canyon and up again to a place where we could look over to Mt Roland, then on to the tiny settlement of Wilmot, home of the very first Coles store. On through bush and forest to the northern entrance to Cradle Mountain National Park where there were suddenly lots and lots of people and cars and buses! We had lunch here and then drove in to Dove Lake with Cradle Mountain (1545m) behind. Some people walked around a track to Suicide Rock while the rest of us took photos of the lovely reflections of the mountain in the lake. A quick visit up a steep drive to the old chalet at Waldheim, and then some excitement as we came back down to the park centre – echidnas (hedgehogs on steroids) ! Ross decided to take us back to Launceston a new way and with some tricky steep hills and navigation we drove up and down and around Mt Roland, found the tiny town of Liena and then Mole Creek (there are caves here) and on to Deloraine where suddenly we were in flat farm country again with an easy drive back to our hotel in Launceston for our last night in a nice motel



One of the statues at Queenstown



Drying onions



Opium Poppies



Echidna



The Nut Chairlift at Stanley

opposite City Park gardens.

A very early start on our last morning as we headed to the airport for our flight to Melbourne and on to Auckland and home. This trip earned Rauhi her gold VIP Traveller badge. Congratulations Rauhi!

I hope everyone enjoyed this comprehensive look at Tassie as much as I did. You were a great bunch of people to travel with, though if you had been hoping for a quiet holiday you may have been disappointed!! Thank you all for your company and good humour. Hope to see you again before too long. *Ali*

*Thanks Ali for another fabulous newsletter, much appreciated.
Ross & Susy*



The Nut at Stanley

