

NORM AND GLENDA'S BIG TRIP NEWSLETTER #10

Cheers to everyone!

Esperance – beautiful. The day after we arrived here a cruise ship entered the Bay. The 'World' is pretty impressive but it is so big it had to 'park' quite a way out – the passengers were ferried in by launch:



The **World** is the only private residential community-at-sea. It has 165 residences. There is plenty of information about it on the internet.

Things we did in Esperance:

Great Ocean Drive – this is a circular loop 38 km drive and includes some of the region's best known attractions. Rotary Lookout is where I took the pictures of the World. Fabulous beaches, Observatory Point, Wind Farms and the Pink Lake. My favourite was Observatory Point with spectacular scenery and the lookout itself is pretty special:



The beaches are crystal clear and there is no such thing as a crowd. It was mostly overcast the day we did the drive so Pink Lake was not very pink at all – maybe it is the wrong time of year. Tanker Jetty and Sammy the seal – the jetty is located on the town foreshore and is the home to some New Zealand fur seals and Australian sea

lions. Sammy was putting on a show for us – he is a real ham in front of the camera – especially if someone is cleaning fish and he thinks he might catch the discarded bits.



We visited the museum which is recognised as one of the best in regional Western Australia. It did make me feel quite old though because, as a young woman, I used similar versions of some of the things on display!





Esperance Island Cruise and Woody Island Experience. This was a four hour cruise that took in the foreshore and the closer beaches of Esperance before heading out to various islands in the Recherche Archipelago. Our guide gave an excellent commentary and we saw NZ fur seals, Australian sea lions, dolphins and white-breasted Sea Eagles.



The cruise includes a stop on Woody Island where morning tea was served – fresh pikelets with jam and cream and tea, coffee or juice. We stayed on the island for about an hour which allowed us to wander around or walk some of the trails or go snorkelling. We chose to go for a walk which turned into a climb to one of the

lookouts:



We drove out to Cape Le Grande National Park which is approximately 56 kms from Esperance with more beautiful beaches along the way such as Lucky Bay, Hellfire Bay and Thistle Cove. It would have been nice to do the walk up to Frenchman's Peak for an island panorama but we had to concede that it was beyond our capabilities!



Kalgoorlie/Boulder – what a fantastic place – I loved it – I could not live here though. Norm was feeling left out again though because everyone has high viz gear and orange lights and flags on their cars! There is a lot to see and do here but everything revolves around mining. The Super Pit is gob-smacking – it is huge. We did a short free tour of the mine and then later went on a paid tour which was much longer and went right into the mine – it would have been great to go to the bottom of the pit but they said I had to take a job to do that – NO! One of my wishes is to test drive one of those big dumpers (793F) but again I was told I would have to take a job with the mine. I wonder if I went to a dealer and said I was interested in buying one – maybe they will let me test drive it!



The pit is 3.2kms by 1.5 kms and it is nearly 500 metres deep.

The Mining Hall of Fame was my last resort to get on one of the big trucks because they have one (793C) on display and you get a hard hat and you are allowed to climb on it – foiled again! The Hall of Fame is closed because of damage from the earthquake that occurred here in 2010. So I had to content myself with a picture:



The tour guide/driver said they have a number of females driving these trucks – he said they make better drivers because they have more patience and they keep the trucks cleaner than the men (right out of the horse’s mouth!). This just confirms what I have been saying for years – women are superior beings!

A number of buildings are still under repair/refurbishment since the earthquake and some areas are still off-limits. One comment made by a couple of locals is that it is hard to get tradesmen to do the work on the buildings because the mines offer so much more money. I hope they do fix them all because some of them are just magnificent. The two below have either been fixed or were not damaged – the one on the right is up for Auction on 21 March if anyone is interested?



In Esperance we experienced our first case of vandalism. Someone tried to cut through the heavy duty wire lock that held the Waeco and the generator. They were not successful, however, when we looked at how far they had managed to cut through the lock, we realised that with a little more perseverance they would have

been successful! We did not hear a thing and the Waeco and the generator are kept right under the open window next to Norm's side of the bed. We have now purchased two new locks and I would like to see them try to cut through these – from Bunnings – heavy duty steal covered in thick plastic:



The Nullarbor – been there, done that and I don't want to do it again! If this comes up again on an itinerary, I am taking the fly option! The excuses for caravan parks across the Nullarbor are a disgrace and a total rip off. Given the amount of traffic that uses this highway and the amount of money spent by travellers, regardless of whether they are holiday makers, truck drivers, back-packers etc, the roadhouses and caravan parks are eyesores and embarrassing. I think a certain amount of poetic licence has been used, in the descriptions of a number of stop-over points in the advertising for the Nullarbor. Some are described as being an 'oasis'. The dictionary meaning of oasis is ... 'A fertile or green spot in a desert or wasteland, made so by the presence of water'.... In the two places we stopped there was no water hook up, no grass and poor facilities. Water came out of about 6 holes in the shower head and they wanted people to only have 3 minute showers – it took 3 minutes to get wet, let alone wash. In the first stopover (Balladonia) the garbage bin had not been emptied for a few days and thousands of ants had taken up residence – given that ants are supposed to be able to carry 100 times their weight, I am surprised the bin did not get up and walk! In the second stopover (Madura Pass Oasis) the ladies amenities had 5 lights of which only one was working and the outside light was also not working but, you had to get up to it first in the dark. The first stop cost us \$28 and the second \$30 which is the average price of a site in a 4 star park on the east coast. We were going to take our time and do the crossing in about 4 days but, we were so fed up by the second stop-over, we decided to leave at 4am in the morning and drive through to Ceduna. We stopped for coffee at The Nullarbor Hotel/Motel for a quick cuppa – it cost \$11.40 for a black tea (I made it) and a cappuccino!

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Ceduna – civilization, water, clean amenities and a grocery store! Pretty little place but we mostly rested up after the Nullarbor and allowed our elevated blood pressures to get back to normal.

Streaky Bay – nice little fishing village. Norm is feeling left out again because everyone here has a boat! It is crab, whiting and parrot fish on tap here at the moment. We drove out to Point Labatt to see the Sea Lions. It was about 45 kms of dirt road and all the way there Norm whinged ... ‘there had better be some sea lions after this’ ... there was and they are so cute:



We also looked at Murphy’s Haystacks:



My maiden name is Murphy so maybe I have some relatives around her somewhere!

We also did the Cape Bauer drive and saw some terrific scenery:



And a stark reminder of the dangers – no fences here:



On the way to Port Lincoln we stopped in for a look at Venus Bay and Elliston. I convinced Norm to do the cliff top drives at Elliston – the drives are on dirt road so Norm was ‘not happy Jan’ because we had the van behind – great views – the warning sign was a bit scary though (top one) but, the sculptures were great!





Port Lincoln – lovely spot and with all the services! I can tell we are back in the land of commercial TV as Norm, without warning, will erupt into his rendition of the ‘Potty Time’ song. I am not quite sure what age group this advertisement is aimed at but it comes on in SA about 10.30pm! We liked Pt Lincoln so much we changed our original booking of 5 days to 10 days. We have a great spot in the caravan park – up in the ‘heights’ with a lovely view. The park is undergoing refurbishment and there are 21 cement pad sites - they are big drive on/drive off terraced sites and for a few dollars more they are worth it. We heard a number of people complain about the sites in the lower part of the park – they are close together and uneven and some said it was taking them an hour to level their van! One couple was so disgusted with the sites they were allocated, they decided to leave and they got their money back.



We did the tour of the Fresh Fish Processing Plant where we were shown the process from catching to shipping and, we watched the shucking of oysters and the filleting of fish, including a shark. I never realised until now how much the breeding and processing of fish involved, particularly for the export market. At the end of the tour we were treated to a tasting of smoked tuna and kingfish and marinated calamari and soused scallops. And of course, this is done in the retail shop so that you can buy more to take home – which we did!



We also went on a cruise of Boston Bay with Triple Bay Charters where our tour guide (and owner of the boat) gave us a great overview of Port Lincoln and the fishing industry. We visited the seal colony and viewed a working aquaculture farm and we had a tasting of Bluefin Tuna Sashimi – more expensive tastes developing! The Eyre Peninsula is home to the largest commercial fishing fleet in the Southern Hemisphere.

There are tours here where you can swim with and feed the tuna and, where you can swim with the sharks (in a cage). Norm and I were not interested in either so

contented ourselves with listening to others' reports on the tours like... the tuna head-butting to get the food that has become lodged in someone's hair. Also, the one about the shark that rammed the cage from below. I knew there were valid reasons why we did not want to do these tours!

We visited the Eyre Peninsula Railway Museum and were given an excellent tour of the facility by a former railway worker. We also drove out to Koppio to the museum there and it was well worth the drive. The Museum features Tom Brennard's 1903 Blacksmith's Shop and cottage, an 1890 pine log cottage and a heritage hall. There is also a grain store shed, various vintage tractors and engines and, a women's pioneer room. We really enjoyed it – it makes you realise how much 'luxury' we have now compared to what the pioneers had.



We did a day trip to Coffin Bay and the Coffin Bay National Park. Coffin Bay is really just a fishing village and the pub does a very nice lunch, although it took an hour to get our food. I was glad we had decided to base ourselves at Pt Lincoln though as the caravan park looked a bit basic. The drive through the National Park was pretty:



Port Lincoln has a statue of Makybe Diva (3 X Melbourne Cup winner) on the foreshore:



Despite the cloud cover on the day I took the photos above it was 35° and very humid!

We have done our very best to diligently follow the Eyre Peninsula's Seafood Trail and, we have developed some rather expensive tastes along the way.

Our next stop is Whyalla and from here we are looking forward to visiting some friends in Port Pirie. We met Graham and Beverly in Adelaide on our way over to the west and we promised we would stay in Port Pirie for a few days on the way back. From Port Pirie we hope to go up into the Flinders Ranges but this will depend on the weather as some of the areas there have been flooded.

We hope everyone is well and coping with the unusual weather patterns that seem to be happening all over Australia. We left Pt Lincoln today and we are staying for one night at Cowell on our way to Whyalla. It has been overcast and dark all day and shortly after we arrived we had a hail storm and a downpour – it is the first rain we have seen since we were at Bachelor (Litchfield NP)!

Cheers
Norm and Glenda