

Visits to Australia and New Zealand



Michael Pierre de Villiers

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Title page: Wellington steep hillside houses, Wai-O-Tapu thermal spring, Murray River houseboat, Port Adelaide 1948 Yalta cruise steam tugboat, Adelaide Henley Beach, Kangaroo Island Admiral's Arch, Mooloolaba Beach, Helicopter tour Sydney Harbour Bridge.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Pierre de Villiers was born in Durban, South Africa. He was trained to World Meteorological Organization class one meteorologist and multi-discipline weather forecaster in the South African Weather Service where he reached the rank of Director. He served on a weather ship in the South Atlantic. He served on World Meteorological Organization expert teams and was World Meteorological Organization rapporteur for the Africa region. He was also a commercial pilot and flying instructor. More recently he was a weather forecaster in the United Arab Emirates, then in England. Now retired.

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2026-10-08

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INTRODUCTION

This is a travelogue of four trips to Australia in 2017, 2018, 2022 and 2026. Included were two trips to New Zealand in 2017 and 2026. An aviation version of the 2026 trip is available on the website. My wife and I love Australia and could easily relocate if we won the Lottery. New Zealand is also popular. In many ways similar to the United Kingdom.

Places visited in Australia are confined to Adelaide, Kangaroo Island, Sunshine coast city and Sydney while New Zealand is restricted to North Island.

Time zones across the world can be confusing. Local time is used in the respective countries. Numerous countries also use summer daylight saving time when clocks are moved forward one hour. Universal Time Coordinated (UTC) is the global standard. UTC has succeeded GMT Greenwich Mean Time. In the UK local time is the same as UTC, UTC+1 hour during daylight saving. New Zealand time is UTC+12 hours., during daylight saving it is UTC+12-1 hour. Most of Australia does not use summer daylight saving. More specifically Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia. It does have numerous different time zones across the country. At Sunshine Coast City and Brisbane, it is UTC+10 hours. Adelaide and Kangaroo Island it is UTC+9:30 hours, +10:30 during daylight saving. Sydney and Melbourne UTC+10 hours, 11 hours during daylight savings.

The photographs are definitely not professional standard. A few of the photographs are of rather poor quality. This can be attributed to poor atmospheric conditions, or taken in great haste, use it or lose it.

OCTOBER 2017. Australia, Adelaide and New Zealand, North Island

My first visit to Australia and New Zealand. Departed Birmingham International (actually in Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council) Saturday 30th September to Adelaide. My wife was already in Adelaide visiting close relatives. Returned home together on the 16th October. Flew



The Emirates Boeing 777-300ER to Dubai.

Emirates two legs each way via Dubai. All Emirates flights were in the in Boeing 777-300ERs.

It is approximately 6½ hours to Dubai. Although one leaves Birmingham airport in the early afternoon (14:20 local time), due to time differences one arrives close to midnight local time. The route was over Germany to Romania, eastern Turkey and over Iran.

Then, departing Dubai in the dark at 02:20, it is a 12 hours flight, crossing over Oman, the Arabian Sea west of India, then the Indian

Ocean, arriving over the north-west coast Australia in daylight, landing at Adelaide in the dark at 21:00 local time Sunday. Total travelling time about 21 hours. The first two days of one's leave is spent travelling.

The following afternoon we were taken to Mount Lofty Summit inland of Adelaide in the Cleland Conservation Park with an excellent view of Adelaide below. Also saw my first Koala Bear asleep in the fork of a tree at the entrance. Apparently, with a baby, although we could not see it. It was still there, asleep, when we left. Koala Bears are nocturnal creatures. They are also not bears; they are marsupials.



First sighting of a Koala, mostly its bum. The view to the west of the city centre to Adelaide harbour.



View of Adelaide from Mount Lofty. Notice the greenbelt surrounding the city centre and the airport to the left (or east) near the coast.



We then went to the beach at Glenelg, saw my first Adelaide tram, then a drive northward and short walk along the beach, before returning home. Good first impressions and useful to get one's bearings.

Next morning, Tuesday 3rd, daughter-in-law took us to see the centre of Adelaide. We bussed it from Fulham Gardens. Then caught a tram to South Terrace and Walyu Yarta Park.

Central Adelaide is in the form of a large rectangle with streets running east/west and north/south forming smaller rectangular blocks. It is surrounded in the east, south and west by a green belt consisting of parks. The north side is bounded by the River Torrens green belt. The Walyu Yarta (park number 21 on a map) is one of the parks to the south. The parks in the south are square blocks bounded by roads. We walked a small part this park. It is really a garden with large flower beds, rockeries, a small stream, trees of course and my first sight of some of the birds peculiar to Australia. Difficult to get good photographs with my digital camera. Birds never stationary long enough.

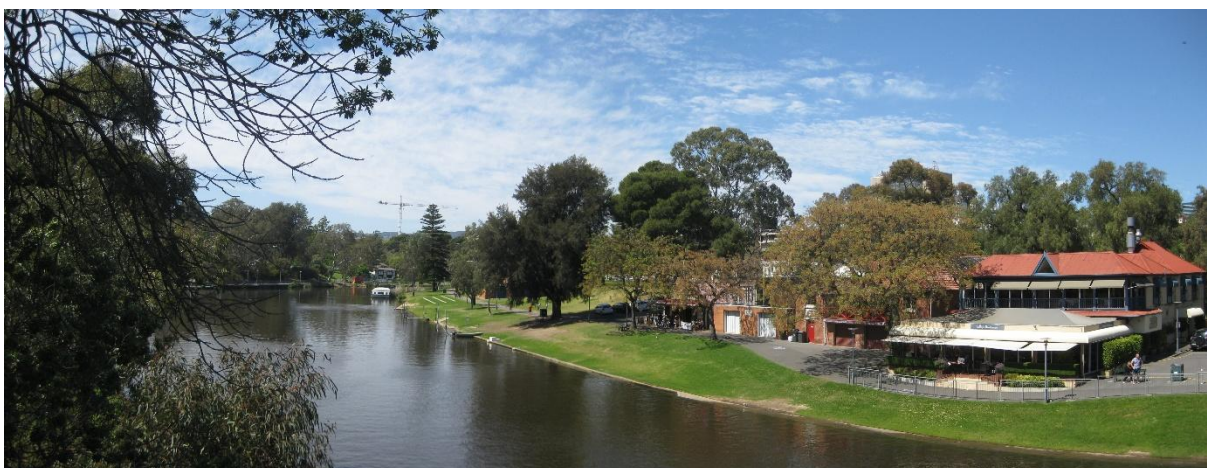


Brown ducks and a crested pigeon (with crest flattened back on its head) in Walyu Yarta Park and a better photograph of a different type of tram.



We then caught a tram back to the city centre to view shops in an interesting arcade, the Rundle Mall. It has a group of four life-sized bronze pigs in various postures, one on hind legs inspecting a litter bin. The art collection is known as A Day Out. It was created by Marguerite Derricourt.

From there we went to Adelaide University where daughter-in-law works. Established in 1874 it has numerous attractive historic and heritage listed buildings. We passed between them on our way to the wide and gently



flowing River Torrens with grass and tree parkland on either side, seen on the previous page looking eastward toward the university. Walking westward we passed under the King William Street bridge near to the site of the first bridge built across the river in 1839, which was destroyed by floods in September 1844. Then passing the Adelaide Oval sports ground. The venue predominantly for cricket and Australian rules football. Then to the Festival Centre and back to the city centre for a late lunch before returning home. A most enjoyable outing and good exercise.

The following day, the 4th October early, my wife drove me to the airport for my flights to Wellington, New Zealand, via Melbourne to see my brother and his wife, whom I had not seen since they left South Africa in 1996. Still not seen one nephew. Seen my other two nieces and nephew when visiting England. Flew Qantas Boeing 737s. Departed 06:45 local time, Arrived at Wellington 15:55 local time.

Bit of a scare upon arrival at Adelaide airport for the first flight. Saw a long queue and thought I am never going to get through check in and security in time. Fortunately, found a Qantas staff member. He was most helpful. As I had pre-checked he showed me where to go and helped with the automated checking in of baggage. Made it through with time to spare. Then there he was again at boarding. Then here he was again on the flight as cabin crew. Never seen that before. Flight time just over an hour to Melbourne.

Got really confused moving from arrivals to departure for the flight to Melbourne. Fortunately, a nearly 2 hours stopover. Time to see many different airlines and airliners arrive and depart, including airlines never seen before such as Vietnam Airlines, Shanghai Airlines and Xiamen, as well as familiars such as Royal Brunei and Emirates. In my element. Why do people find waiting at airports boring? Watched my aircraft arrive at the gate.



Over Cloudy Bay leaving South Island descending to Wellington. Snow on distant Kaikoura Mountains.

Approximately 3 hours from Melbourne to Wellington, slightly less outbound due to prevailing westerly winds at flight level, slightly longer on the return trip.

Flew over the north-west part of New Zealand South Island on the great circle route to Wellington. Saw snow covered mountains from my starboard window seat.

Then passed out to sea over the Cook Strait north of the Wairau River delta, a lagoon and the northernmost Wairau Diversion before the direct approach to runway 05 at Wellington, landing after a Singapore Airlines B777 around 4pm local time.

An easy process through arrivals to see my brother waiting for me at arrivals, after many years of not seeing each other. He then took me directly home to Aoter, Porirua, on the coast about 20 kilometres north of Wellington. Porirua is administered by Porirua City Council, which is part of the Greater Wellington Regional Council. Aoter is a higher altitude inland suburb. From their house there is a good all-round view to the coast and inland with an even better view from the nearby hill to the north.

The next day he took me on a guided tour of the area near to home before we headed to Wellington. First to the Museum of New Zealand, or Te Papa Tongarewa (container of treasures). One could call it the museum of everything, six floors of everything and an outdoor area with artificial caves, native bushes and wetlands. The museum has been the centre of controversy for a wide range of reasons, including placing valuable artifacts at the water's edge on reclaimed land next to a highly active earthquake fault line.

While driving to the museum, not far from it along the waterfront, he pointed out still evident damage, such as an unoccupied building, due to a 7.8 magnitude earthquake at 2 minutes past midnight on the 14th November 2016 near Kaikoura on South Island with a following 7 metres tsunami. Although Wellington was about 60 kilometres away from the source it did experience substantial damage with slight tide gauge rise. Buildings were damaged, some beyond repair, the harbour was briefly closed while CentrePort container shipping ceased operation for over ten months due to buckling and liquefaction. Earthquake liquefaction occurs when energy released by the quake shakes wet soil, so that water rises to the surface and turns the soil into liquid mud resulting in damage to the foundations of structures, possibly causing them to sink or collapse. Anyway, to get back to the museum. Amazing and well worth the visit. I was impressed by his knowledge of Māori culture. Most impressed by the Māori exhibits, including an exceptionally long painted and carved waka (canoe) and a decorative Māori meeting place building.



Wellington harbour seen from the museum.



While driving in Wellington I was pleased to see a few of their trolley buses before their imminent withdrawal from service in less than a month's time on the 31st October. I have fond memories of riding in double decker trolley buses in Durban as a child. Wellington's trolley buses are single deck and much more modern and sophisticated, obviously. They were able to operate for short distances off-wire using batteries. These recharge when linked to the overhead wires. I even witnessed a driver lowering the poles then drive away battery powered.

We visited the parliament buildings. Saw the new beehive building, so called for an obvious reason, opened in 1977 and next-door Parliament House built in 1922. Also, the 1899

Parliament Library building and the old government building a short distance away. Constructed in 1876, it is the second largest wooden building in the world and consists of 9300 square metres of wood. Although built of wood, it was built to resemble a stone palace in classically-derived Italian Renaissance revival style. It is now home to the Victoria Recreation Pipitea campus. After this, we toured Wellington's extensive waterfront, where we stopped and ate lunch, before heading home. A thoroughly enjoyable and educational day.



The beehive and library building.

Friday 6th we headed north on Highway 1 heading to volcanic Taupo. After leaving the built-up part in the south all roads changed to single lane each way with dual uphill lanes in places where the slope of the road was steepest and/or longer slope compared with elsewhere. These being almost the only place to overtake slower traffic, unless there was no oncoming traffic and it was safe to overtake. He drew my attention to minor road damage caused by tremors, such squiggly road markings and wrinkled tarmac.



de Molen and a lot of bull.

On the way we paused at a number of places. First stop was to look at the attractive de Molen, Dutch for the mill at Foxton. The windmill is maintained by volunteers and a charitable trust. Then on to Bulls for a pitstop at a public toilet. It is a small town at the junction of Highways 1 and 3, as well as a market town for the fertile farming area and cattle farming. A most amusing place. Of course, they cannot resist the use of puns, with signs such as heard of Bulls, a town like no udder, New Zealand's milk comes from Bulls and litter bins shaped like urns with RESPONSE-A-BULL written on them.

Next stop was a late light breakfast at the roadside Sugar Plum Café, then through Taihape with a well-preserved silver, blue and white Douglas DC3 aircraft on trusses advertising the

Mangawaka Adventure Company. Taihape is a small town with a railway station serving a large rural community. One cannot be mistaken that one is passing Taihape. Next to a sign saying Taihape at its northern entrance, there is a very big multicoloured corrugated iron gumboot statue looking like it has just been thrown. In order to attract passing trade, in 1985 gumboot day was instituted on Easter Tuesday with activities such as gumboot throwing, gumboot races, decorated gumboots and shop window displays. The aim being fun for people in the area and selling the town to New Zealand, leading to the large gumboot at the northern entrance to the town.



DC3 or C47 (military version) and gumboot. The child gives an indication of the size of the boot.

We then passed Tongariro National Park with its snow-capped mountains, frequently shrouded in cloud and the park's ski fields. I caught glimpses of the three mountains. Mount Ruapehu (biggest in extent and height, 2796m (6457ft) and permanently snow-capped), Mount Ngauruhoe (2290m, 7513ft) and Mount Tongariro (1968m, 6457ft)). In 1996 Ruapehu spewed dust and ash causing the closure of the Whakapapa and Turoa ski fields. In 2012 Tongariro erupted spewing tons of ash. Nearby is the military town of Waiouru, home to the National Army Museum, situated in a modern looking building next to the highway.



Passing Lake Taupo and through Taupo we went to its immediate north to the awesome Hula falls and rapids. Hula being Māori for foam. One can go on a smallish cruise boat to the lower edge of the last fall. About 200 000 litres of water plunges nine metres over the falls per second. The flow is so strong that trout and native fish, such as eels, cannot get upstream to Lake Taupo.

Not far to the west is the Craters of the Moon. Managed by a charitable trust, it is an area of thermal pools that has grown in extent. When a large pool of magma (melted rock) intensifies,

like a pressure cooker, it heats underground water to very high temperatures. The superheated water is forced to rise through cracks and fissures to the surface where one sees steam vents, hot springs, mud pools and geysers. An information board states that before the 1950s the only obvious sign of thermal activity in this area was the Karapiti fumarole (which stopped discharging in 1987 when its vent collapsed) and a few small mud pools. The real action started when the Geothermal Power Station opened in 1958 and began taking underground water from the Wairaki Field. This reduced the water pressure and extinguished many of the nearby springs and geysers at Geyser (now Thermal) Valley. However, the remaining water boiled more vigorously and produced more steam. This steam was able to escape at the Craters of the Moon and the level of thermal activity increased dramatically. To one who has not visited such a natural phenomenon before, it was fascinating. Following the long drive, it was also a welcome opportunity to go for a 40-60 minutes' walk along the safe track and boardwalks. After viewing the thermal pools, he took me to see the nearby power station.



We then went for a drive and walk through the extensive Waipahihi Botanical Reserve. Situated on higher ground there is an excellent view of the lake and Taupo. Being there in the early part of spring it was the ideal time to see the flowers coming into bloom with already considerable colour. The rhododendrons were in bloom while an unidentified solitary bush in an open glade showed evidence of wind damage. Most of its blooms lay scattered around its base. There are over 2000 rhododendrons, camellias and azaleas scattered among forest trees and other plant features.



It was then time to check in to our self-catering accommodation for the first of our two nights and visit a local eatery. My brother and family have over the years visited the area fairly regularly, so it was no problem finding a suitable place to eat.

The next morning, we headed north on Highway 1 until the intersection near Wairakei Village where we turned on to Highway 5 heading to Rotorua until about 30 kilometres south of Rotorua where we stopped at the Wai-O-Tapu (Sacred Waters) Thermal Wonderland with lots of information notice boards. This tourist's delight.

Truly amazing. It covers about 18 square kilometres. It is an area of collapsed craters, cold and boiling pools of mud, water and steaming fumaroles associated with volcanic activity dating back about 16 000 years. On its northern boundary is the volcanic dome of Maungakakamea (Rainbow Mountain). It is part of the drainage system to the Waikato River then to the Tasman Sea.



The springs and volcanic gasses mean there is no fish life in the water, in addition water temperatures are up to 300°C. Little yellow signs warn one of the water temperatures at different places. Meanwhile, the surrounding manuka scrub vegetation is extremely flammable as are some of the minerals, so no smoking. There is the distinct rotten egg smell of hydrogen sulphide (H_2S). Apart from where there are areas of trees and shrub vegetation, the various craters and edges of streams give the place an ash grey colour with the misty/smoky colour of rising gases and steam, except where there are patches of natural minerals either on the ground or in the water. These range from green (colloidal sulphur/ferrous salts), to orange (antimony), purple (manganese oxide), white (silica), yellow-primrose (sulphur), red-brown (iron oxide) and black (sulphur and carbon).



The entire walk through the area via tracks and boardwalk is about 3 kilometres. On average it takes about 75 minutes, depending on how long one takes to enjoy, absorb and/or contemplate the fascinating scenery. While the various 5 to 50 metres deep craters with contrasting shapes, some with vivid colours and noisy are interesting, as are shades of emerald green pools, most

appealing was walking on the long boardwalk over the extensive sinter Primrose Terrace. 74°C water from the upstream 65 metre diameter, 62 metres deep Champagne Pool contains dissolved silica, which, while the water evaporates, is deposited as siliceous sinter. Mostly a whitish/grey colour it contains traces of iron and magnesium, giving it patches tinged with reddish brown and purple.



Most impressive and fascinating was the eerie almost dead looking grey black trees and scrub bushes tinged with reddish brown or bright orange, some trees and bushes almost entirely coloured. This is due to Trentepohlia. Although classified as green algae, it has a strong orange colour caused by carotenoid pigments which hides the green chlorophyll pigments of plants. I also saw an area of moss that was dotted with bright orange.

It was surprising to see the area was also home to birds such as the Fantail and Swallow who catch insects in flight and the Pied Stilt that is unconcerned about wading in the acidic water.



The Tudor Towers ex-bathhouse and the ex-bus station.

Then on to Rotorua. First stop was the beautiful Tudor Towers bathhouse. This linearly sprawling mock Tudor building was originally constructed between 1916 and 1918 as a bathhouse in an effort to market Rotorua as a spa resort. A nearby building, similar in appearance, is the best-looking old bus station I have ever seen. Now the Rotorua Visitor centre.

With the passage of time spa interest waned and the bathhouse building deteriorated to a derelict state. It was reinvented as The Tudor Towers where stage and musical performances were held for about 30 years. Once again interest was lost. The building was converted to its present state as the Rotorua Museum of Art and History. When we were there, it was closed due to earthquake damage pending repair. The building faces a large croquet lawn used by the public, bordered by an impressive tulip garden and a pollard tree with many suspended tulip baskets. Adjacent is the low walled Whancapipiro Rachel Pool or hot spring. A reminder that Rotorua is an area of thermal activity.



The tulip tree and hot spring.

There was further evidence when driving through the town. Driving past a house in residential Rotorua there was a vent in the pavement next to a wooden garden fence. It had been there long enough to blacken the wooden fence. It will have to be plugged somehow, or if it gets bigger the house will have to be abandoned.



We had lunch at the Lake Rotorua waterfront near to the large Lakeland Queen Cruises paddle steamer and two moored Volcanic Air seaplanes, one of which was a de Havilland Otter DHC-3, the other a Cessna 206G Stationair. Volcanic Air offers scenic flights and air tours.

10 minutes later back along Highway 5 we were at the Agrodome, situated within 142 hectares working farm, to see their hour-long Farm Show featuring 19 breeds of sheep and other furry and feathery animals. They bill it as non-stop laughter and entertainment. I billed it amusing.

Then back to Taupo for a walk along the lake to see two more moored Cessna 206G Stationair seaplanes belonging to Taupos Floatplane Limited and the Ernest Kemp setting out on a cruise. The Ernest Kemp is a replica steam boat 14.5 metres long at 20 tonnes with a 1 metre draught

that enables it to operate in shallow water. It is powered by two four-cylinder ford diesel engines (54kw, 73hp) at an average speed of 9 knots.



The Ernest Kemp and sensible sheep grazing technique.

The next day, Sunday, it was a leisurely drive back to Porirua. On the way I was able to get photographs of hills terraced by years of sheep grazing. Sheep tend to graze horizontally along hill sides. Makes sense. Why waste energy going up and down. Over the years very distinct terraces are formed.



Monday morning, we headed south to the virtually deserted south-western end of Wellington, from the height of which I could see across the Cook Strait to South Island.

We were also among the wind turbines of West Wind farm. The height above sea level and funnelling effect of Cook Strait makes it an ideal site. The 62 turbines generate enough electricity for approximately 62 000 average homes per year. A 128 metres wharf was constructed at the remote Oteranga Bay and 33 kilometres of road made to transport the turbine components to turbine foundations and temporary storage areas.

Nearby are the remains of Fort Opau and barracks. Built during World War II it was manned by 73rd Heavy Battery of the 10th Coast Regiment from July 1941 to February 1943. Armament was two six-inch (152 millimetres) guns in two concrete bunkers open to the sea and Radar guns, which were proofed by February 1942 and a calibration shoot on the 7th July 1942. The guns were removed in June 1944. According to a metallic plaque affixed to a bunker wall. These days the sole occupants of the site are grazing sheep.

After a detour down to the Makara Foreshore Reserve, we headed closer to civilisation and the remains of the Wrights Hill Fortress, more specifically the remains of Gun Emplacement Number One. Built between 1942 and 1944, the three 17 metre diameter and 5 metres deep gun

emplacements were for the defence of Wellington. Two 23.3-centimetre guns were installed. They could fire 172 kilogramme shells up to 29 kilometres, just short of the South Island coast. The guns were scrapped in 1960. Of more interest was the panoramic view of the large natural Wellington harbour covering approximately 72 square kilometres with Wellington and reclaimed land port area tucked in its south-western corner.



Wellington seen from Wrights Hill Fortress.



We then headed downhill for lunch at the Backbencher pub opposite Parliament buildings, or as they describe it, the historic gastropub. The main attraction according to their website is a “quirky mix of MPs, policy wonks and discerning voters regularly dine beneath the curious display of puppets and caricatures adorning this timeless bar restaurant.” The about metre tall puppets, placed on stands high on the walls, depict well known people from various walks of life. The only ones I recognised were rugby players, namely, Jonah Lomu, Tana Umaga

and Colin Meads. A most enjoyable lunch.

I wanted to visit the nearby Wellington main railway station a short walk away beyond the bus terminus. Specially constructed to withstand earthquakes, one enters the railway station from the south through an impressive colonnade of eight 13 metres high Doric columns to a large decorated booking hall with a high vaulted ceiling. In the station at the time of our visit were four 2 car sets of 149 seats FP/FT Matangi class electric multiple units (EMU). FP means power car and FT is a trailer car.



Wellington railway station façade. The train is bound for Upper Hutt at 2:45.



For the last day in New Zealand, he took me to the south-eastern part of North Island to the Wairarapa winelands. We headed out on Highway 2 over the mountains via the Remutaka Pass 555 metres above sea level, pausing to admire the view. We then passed through numerous small towns before arriving at Masterton. First stop, the cleanest and most modern public toilet on the edge of the Queen Elizabeth Park. The first time I visited a talking public toilet and a toilet that also played music while pleasure bent. Across the road is the wooden building housing the Wool Shed Museum. Masterton is the headquarters of the annual Golden Shears sheep-shearing competition. Next door, on the other side of Cricket Street is the most attractive wooden church with a classic steeple. Masterton is the largest town in the Wairarapa region, primarily providing services for surrounding farmers with three industrial centres being established.

We then headed south-west passing vineyard after vineyard until we came to Martinborough, 35 kilometres from Masterton, where every residential property seemed to have a small vineyard as a front garden. Martinborough was mainly a service town for nearby farms until the expansion of viticulture. The old part of Martinborough is pretty with colonial architecture, for example Martinborough Hotel, built in 1882 and an even prettier talking and music public toilet built in mock colonial style. The previous one, perfectly plain by comparison. Fascinating.



Front garden vineyard and the best talking and singing colonial style public toilet.

We then started our journey home back over the Remutaka Pass. However, we first had to wait at a level crossing for a long Kiwi Rail diesel powered, number 7010, train loaded with logs to pass. Lo and behold, when we were down the other side on low level ground approaching Wellington, I was amazed to see we were overtaking the same train, same engine number. Photographic proof on the next page.

Unbeknown to me, but known to my brother, there is a tunnel through the mountain range that enabled the train to overtake us. 7010 is a DF Co-Co class diesel-electric locomotive built by General Motors Diesel of Canada between 1979 and 1981. It and others of Kiwi Rail, were rebuilt as the turbocharged DFT class. Co-Co indicates the wheel arrangement for diesel or electric locomotives, consisting of two six-wheeled bogies with all axles powered by its own

traction motor. The Remutaka tunnel was built to reduce the distance between Featherston to Upper Hutt from 40 kilometres to 25 kilometres. At 9 kilometres long, with a ventilation shaft almost midway, is the longest tunnel in New Zealand. It was also the first fully diesel line in New Zealand, the tunnel being too long for steam locomotives.



At the level crossing east of the mountains and alongside west of the mountains.

The next day was a quiet time spent talking to my brother before heading to the airport and return to Adelaide via Melbourne courtesy of Qantas. Departed Wellington late due to late arrival of incoming flight arriving at Melbourne 58 minutes late. I was concerned about making it through customs, collecting my luggage and getting to the gate for my flight to Adelaide. I was assured by an official that I would make it in time. Perhaps they knew something I did not know, because my flight to Adelaide departed 43 minutes late due to the aircraft arriving at Melbourne late (again). Made up some time because I arrived at Adelaide 32 minutes late.

Thursday 12th was another quiet day relaxing at home in the Australian sunshine. Friday 13th, Son and family took us to Port Harbor and Granite Island, about 80 kilometres south of Adelaide.



On the tram on the pier. Approaching the island. A tram is waiting to cross the pier.

The island is classified as a recreation park connected to the mainland by a pier wide enough for pedestrians and a horse drawn tramway. The pier is often called a causeway. However, a causeway is a track, road or railway built on an embankment constructed of earth, masonry, wood, or concrete, while a pier is a structure built on posts protruding above the water. This is definitely a pier. Trees were felled in the nearby hills for the piles and planking of the 543

metres long wooden structure, completed in 1864. There are no permanent residents on the island, although there is a café building and public toilets.

The island is home to small penguins known simply as Little or Fairy Penguins. Apparently, it is the smallest penguin species in the world at about 33 centimetres tall and weighing 1 kilogram. It is also said they sleep for about four minutes at a time, either standing or lying.



A tailless lizard on Granite Island.

We went to the island by horse drawn tram, had a good walk around the island and walked back along the pier. While on the island we saw the penguins (too far to get a photograph) and a large (about 30 cm) Stump Tail Lizard. Once back on the mainland we had a fish and chips lunch, seated at a wooden bench while plagued by gulls.

We then headed back north via the winelands south of Port Noarlanga, including Oxenberry Farm and Paxton. Naturally, we had to wine taste their wines and purchase, as well as delicious ice cream at Oxenberry

Farm. Finally, home. Chalk up another excellent day out.

Saturday, we headed inland and upward to Hahndorf. It is a small town in the Adelaide Hills. The town was initially settled by German Lutheran migrants. It is Australia's oldest surviving German settlement. German influence can be seen in the traditional timber framing, post and beam construction in original surviving buildings.

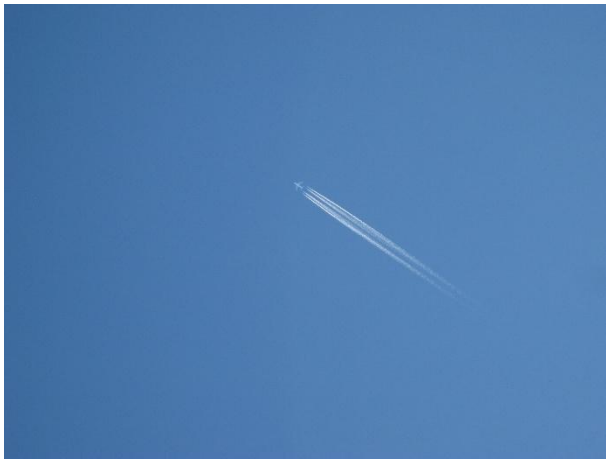
However, the humour is definitely irreverent Australian, as seen at the Leathersmith & Bush Gallery. Only leather from vegetarian cows. A T-shirt; Mary had a little lamb, her father shot it dead and now it goes to school with her between two bits of bread! Also, a leaflet on The Jack Schitt Story. After reading the leaflet, you not only know Jack Schitt, but you know the entire family as well.



Another place had excellent ice cream at a specialist ice cream parlour. Also, good fudge, which granddaughter and I enjoyed eating seated on a bench while the others were inspecting yet another shop.



On the beach end of the pier at Henley Beach looking south and north.



Our last day in Australia, Sunday, everyone went for a walk along Henley Beach and to the end of the pier before enjoying a large brunch. Then a relaxing afternoon at home in the sun during which I took a photograph of an Emirates A380 trailing 4 short contrails heading to Melbourne in a deep blue and cloudless sky.

The bit I saw of Australia was very interesting, lovely sunny and warm. In the way of wildlife all I saw was a Koala Bear with a baby, a large black lizard with no tail

and a dead roadside Kangaroo. However, saw lots of strange new birds in Australia and New Zealand. In the evening we were taken to the airport by my wife's son.

Our Emirates B777-300 departure from Adelaide at 22:35 on Sunday 15th October was on time, arriving at Dubai 30 minutes early with a 2 and a half hour wait for our flight to Birmingham arriving 15 minutes early shortly after midday Monday the 16th.

Back at home, less than two months later, we were blanketed in unusually early winter snow. There was light snow on the 8th December. This changed to heavy snow on the night of the 9th and the morning of the 10th. We had 18 cm depth of snow (I measured it). 30 cm was recorded at Sennybridge in Wales near Brecon. Road, rail and air travel was disrupted with power cuts in places. Naturally, we had to go out walking in the snow along local country lanes and footpaths.

SEPTEMBER 2018. Australia, Old Adelaide, Kangaroo Island and Muray River

Did a few hours of aircraft spotting on the southern approach to Birmingham airport on the 7th July. Not the first time. This time the objective was to photograph the Emirates Airbus A380 and again in August (I was not entirely happy with the previous photographs), because soon my wife and I were going to Australia again. This would be my first flight in the A380.

We both love Australia and could easily relocate if we won the Lottery. My wife went to

Adelaide for 10 weeks, late July to September, to her youngest son and his family to welcome a new granddaughter. She was nanny to 3½ year old granddaughter, taxi driver, chief cook, bottle washer (packing the dishwasher) as well as nurse to the new granddaughter. I went there for the last 2 weeks of her stay (first 2 weeks in September) when my wife was released from her care duty and we did the tourist thing.



My A380-842 A6-EUY to Dubai arriving at Birmingham.

All flights Emirates. A380-842, Birmingham to Dubai return, B777-300ER Dubai to Adelaide return. One flight departed late, others on time with two arriving about 20 minutes early. Departed Birmingham 14:20 Thursday 30 August, arrived Adelaide 20:50 Friday 31st August. Departed Adelaide 21:50 Thursday 13 September, arrived Birmingham 12:20 Friday 14 September. All times local

I deliberately booked an aisle seat as near the front as possible on the A380 flight to Dubai. Knowing how long it takes to offload passengers from the A380, I did not want to miss my connecting flight in the event the flight was delayed. As it was, the flight departed 30 minutes late from Birmingham. What with the time taken disembarking, going through the arrival security check, then bussed to the far end of the terminal and going through another pre-boarding security check, I arrived at the gate after boarding had already started.

After the late arrival on Friday and nearly 22 hours travelling, Saturday 1st, was a day of relaxation and a walk to and along the nearby Torrens River where we saw black swans, ducks, a coot and parakeets.

This time I saw much more of Adelaide. My wife had the use of the second car, a Ford Fiesta, for the odd day trip from Adelaide. However, Sunday we went by bus to central Adelaide and walkabout, seeing buildings such as the colonnaded city hall, the Federal Hall and market seen below left and right, respectively.



At the suburban railway station where we rode on an Adelaide Metro 3000 class diesel multiple unit (DMU) with three railcars about 42 kilometres northward to Gawler via Dry Creek for no other reason to see more of the countryside. What we saw when we got off the train did not impress us, so we got back on again and went back to Adelaide.



Our train at Gawler and back to Adelaide.

En route we passed the civilian Parafield Airport and a very military looking and extensive area with satellite dishes. I later found out that this was the location of the Defence Science and Technology Group, BAE Systems Australia, along with the 1st Armoured Regiment and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Edinburgh base. The RAAF base is home to numerous RAAF units, but primarily the Air Warfare Centre and No 92 Wing's P-8A Poseidon surveillance aircraft that replaced four engine turboprop AP-3C Orions. The P-8 is a militarized version of the Boeing 737-800ERX. No spying. All freely available information.

Monday 3rd, we used the car for an interesting day trip to the historical old Adelaide port where we had lunch at the Port Admiral Hotel dating from 1849. Most of the numerous older buildings date from 1850 to 1882. Some examples; Railway Hotel 1856, Bond and Free Stores 1857, Courts Customs and Police Station 1860. Next to the Telegraph Office 1868, is the imposing Customs House 1879 and adjoining Institute Building 1876, Town Hall 1866, Lighthouse 1869 and another Court House building 1882. Some of the buildings are shown below. From a primitive landing place in 1836, a more substantial port developed from the 1850s.



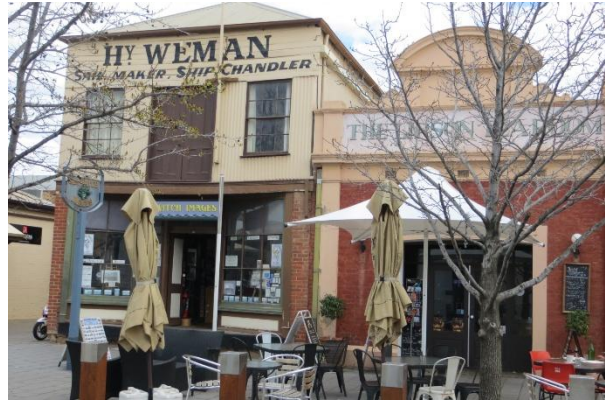
1849 Port Admiral Hotel & 1865 warehouse. Old buildings.



1860 Courts, Customs & police station. Photograph right; seen from the old lighthouse the 1869 Customs House with 1868 Telegraph Office on the right. In the background left the 1882 Court House is just visible.



1892 Court House.



1864 Sailmakers Building.



The 1869 Old Lighthouse.

Although the lighthouse was originally offshore at the entrance to the port river, it was moved to Neptune Island in 1901. In 1985, it was replaced by an automated electric light, brick and mortar structure. The original structure was restored and placed at its present site on the wharf at the heritage site. We paid to climb the narrow winding steps to the top, which gave an excellent view of the surrounding area with the new port in the distance. Nearby is a memorial to the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. The plaque states that “Adjacent to this wharf, the first

contingent of the South Australian Infantry (SA1), boarded the PS Yatala for transfer and embarkation on the troopship Medic. The contingent sailed for the war in South Africa on the 31st October 1899.”



A short walk along the wharf is Dock 1 where rests the docked remaining hull of the clipper City of Adelaide. Built in 1864, it is billed as the oldest surviving composite clipper ship (wooden hull on iron frames). The length and height of the hulk out of water (on a large barge named Bradley) is most impressive. It was built to carry passengers and cargo to and from the city. A brochure states that on 23 return voyages between London and Adelaide, almost quarter of a million Australians’ heritage can be traced to passengers and crew on the City of Adelaide from England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany and Scandinavia. After 6 years as a cargo ship for the North American timber trade, 30 years as an isolation hospital near Southampton, then as the HMS Carrick drill ship, finally as Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Club rooms on the River Clyde where it sank, it was moved to a slip at Irvine. Here it remained until Australia \$6 million

was raised to fund its return to Adelaide on a towed barge in 2014.

A Government of Australia, Department for Environment and Water, fact sheet for the Port Adelaide State Heritage Area has the following interesting information regarding the street and allotment levels between the 1840s and 1870s: “Because of flooding produced during high tides, the streets of Port Adelaide were built up with material dredged from the river. The building sites however were not generally raised to the same levels, as a consequence, many early buildings were elevated to street height on heavy timber structures, with the rear of these properties at the original ground level. Alternately, some earlier buildings had street levels raised after they were constructed, resulting in ground floor levels 'disappearing' below footpaths. A stroll along Lipson Street, for example, will highlight a number of such buildings, including the Railway Hotel, which has stables in its basement, with the former entrance doorways partially exposed at street level.”



1856 Railway Hotel.



Building art.

An interesting feature is the large murals on the entire side of some of the newer buildings, some as high as about 8 storeys, some particularly pleasing on the eye, some of rather obscure meaning.

My wife's son paid for and booked a ferry trip to Kangaroo Island and self-catering accommodation for 2 nights from the 5th as a thank you to his mother for her family care. We really enjoyed Kangaroo Island. The island, being quite far south is a popular cooler summer retreat. While we were there the weather was rather settled, although at first, we caught the passing of a really windy and wet spell.

With your island ferry invoice, you receive an information leaflet that informs one that the island's remoteness and isolation has created a place that is free of diseases and pests found on the mainland and they intend to keep it that way. That means no bees, bee equipment and honey products may be brought to the island, because it is home to the last pure Ligurian bee population in the world, protected since 1885. No potatoes for consumption or planting. They may carry disease, which could devastate the island's seed potato industry. The wine industry is also protected. So, no vines or vine cuttings. No foxes, ferrets, deer, rabbits and no declared weeds. They would create an environmental disaster. The police on the island conduct spot checks on the road after disembarking (Kangaroo Island visitor Guide, 2018). We were therefore very careful what food we bought for the trip.

We left early on Wednesday to make sure we were at Cape Jervis for the Sealink ferry to Penneshaw at 09:00 and check in 30 minutes prior to departure. In fact, we were there before they opened the office and before the ferry arrived. So, we drove around looking at what little

there was to see of the settlement. While waiting at a view site above the manmade harbour we watched a container ship pass between the mainland and the island. Our ship, not a boat, duly arrived. It was the twin-engine steel hulled catamaran Sealion 2000. Launched in 1998 at Fremantle, it can carry 378 passengers and 50 cars, or 4 coaches and 30 cars, at 16 knots. I was impressed by the manoeuvrability of the ferry in the very basic and confined harbour and later at Penneshaw, both of which consist simply of breakwaters wherein the ferry has to turn and reverse to the slipway and alongside the none too robust looking catwalk type wharf built on pylons.



Cape Jervis Ferry harbour and the arrival of the Sealion from Kangaroo Island.

After offloading passengers and vehicles from Kangaroo Island, it was our turn to go on board. My wife drove the car safely on board and we found front row seats inside for the 18 kilometres crossing that takes about 45 minutes. The weather was rather windy and chilly. However, we did spend a fair amount of time on the deck, particularly when nearing Penneshaw.



With the car safely off the ferry, we headed west along the B23 to Kingscote, the main town and where our accommodation was booked. Nearing Kingscote, it was now about 10:30. Too early to book in. So, nearing the airport, on a whim, we turned southward onto Birchmore Road, then the South Coast Road where we stopped for an enjoyable lunch in a rustic setting at the Seal Bay Cottages and Café. A bit of a misnomer, because it is about 12 kilometres inland from Seal Bay. A sign on a

Eucalyptus tree next to the car park said can you find Kyle the Koala? Well, we did not. Although, I did get a close-up photograph of an unconcerned beautiful blue and black Fairy Wren. Unfortunately, too close and blurred. Afterward we went to a deserted Seal Bay. Picturesque, saw no seals then returned to Kingscote. On the B23 nearing Kingscote is Island Beehive, a Ligurian bee organic honey producer. We stopped to browse and had to photograph their tour bus.



After checking in at our accommodation, we headed north to the edge of Kingscote and Reeves Point. Reeves Point is the site of the first European settlement in South Australia in 1836 by the South Australian Company. Lots of information on two large board on site. The company

was established by an Act of Parliament in Britain in 1834 with a charter to establish a colony somewhere along the coast between the Great Australian Bight and Port Bay, Victoria. At its peak there were about 300 people with 42 dwellings and workshops. The aim was to develop agriculture and livestock to supply passing ships with salt meat and fresh vegetables. Orchards of almond, mulberry and carob trees flourished, as well as date palms. The venture did not succeed. After four years, the shortage of water, poor soil and building timber led to its abandonment. Although some hardy individuals did remain. In 1886 four or five big almond



Lightly protected surviving mulberry tree.

trees and two mulberry trees were all that survived. Today a single mulberry tree survives and a small cemetery. The site was originally named Kingscote. More recently it was renamed Reeves Point after a local landowner. By the way, the first European explorers found Kangaroo Island uninhabited with no evidence of campfires and generally tame wildlife. It is only since the 1930s that Aboriginal campsites have been discovered. Why they abandoned the island around 2000 years ago is a mystery.

We headed northward to the Bay of Shoals, seeing our first pelican and an undeterred, but watchful large gull. The first pelican I had seen in a natural habitat since many years ago in the 1970s in Durban at the Blue Lagoon at the mouth of the Umgeni River. Further west to Emu Bay along the road appropriately named Wallaby Run, we saw a few wallabies that quickly disappeared into the bush. Emu Bay has a wide sandy shoreline and small settlement, mainly consisting of holiday homes and cottages. Then back to our holiday home, a braai (barbeque) with wine and cider. A successful and interesting day with lots done and seen.



An amazing bird is a pelican its beak can hold more than its belly can. And Emu Bay.



The next day, after our light self-prepared breakfast and an early start, we again headed south along Birchmore Road to South Coast Road to the south-west of the island, turning off onto the perfectly straight what they call an unsealed road (a graded and compacted sand road) to Hanson Bay. We call it a dirt road. Main roads on the island are endlessly straight. Along the way I got a photograph of a Crimson Rosella. Again, rather blurred.

The bay is worth visiting; pretty and deserted in a sunny and almost calm day with faint noise

from where the South-West River meets the sea.



We then retraced our way to South Coast Road and westward to the Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary where we paid our \$10 each entrance fee to Kelly at 10:30:47 AM, according to the very accurate time on the receipt. We were then free to walk. In one area with extensive Eucalyptus trees, we saw a lot of Koala bears. Or, more accurately as my wife said, a lot of Koala bums. During the day they spend their time huddled sleeping in tree forks and most of the time all you see are bums. Apparently, they are an introduced species and the island is becoming overpopulated by them. We were told that no two Koalas sleep in the same tree, although we definitely did see a tree with two Koalas.



A face on sleeping koala and wallabies with a rather large suckling joey.

In the same area we were warned of the magpies. The Australian version of the magpie is not as pretty as the British species. In fact, if I had not been told they are magpies, I would have thought they were a different species. In fact, they are not closely related. The British magpie is part of the crow, or corvid species, the Australian is not closely related. They were going into their nesting season and would surprise dive bomb us from behind. Always from behind. Nothing personal, they do it to everyone. They make a click sound as they pass. They have been known to deliver a severe peck and draw blood. Some people wear hats with eyes painted on the back to confuse them and prevent being attacked.

Further on in a more open field, we saw a large group of wallabies. The island's Tammar wallabies are smaller with finer features than the typical Australian wallaby. We managed to get quite close to them. Obviously used to people walking by, but one is asked not to approach closer than 15 metres, as it can cause them to become anxious. We obviously did not venture too close, because they paid no attention to us apart from the occasional look in our direction and a mother continued to suckle its joey.

On the road again, it was again westward to the Flinders Chase National Park where we paid \$22 for 2 and vehicle registration S431BCN entrance permit fee to Jo at counter 1 at the visitor centre at 12:18 pm, according to the less accurate time on our receipt and we were free to drive and walk. While driving to the visitor centre we passed numerous Cape Barren geese and Galahs (small pink and grey cockatoos) feeding in the open short grass alongside the road.



A Cape Barren goose and Galahs.



Lighthouse and kerosene keep.

From the visitor centre we headed south to the south-western tip of the island to the Cape de Couedic Lighthouse. The lighthouse, constructed between 1906 and 1909, was originally fuelled by kerosene kept in a small stone building away from the lighthouse building. It was automated and de-staffed in 1957 when converted to acetylene gas and electrified in 1974. In the beginning the lighthouse was so isolated that the keepers and families received fresh supplies of food and fuel once every three months, or longer, by sea at Weirs Cove about a kilometre away

to the east.



The raised walkway with safety barriers. The viewing area at the arch. Seals below left.



We then drove further down the ridge to the car park below and walked to the admiral's Arch. It was very windy. The wind and waves at Admiral's Arch were awe inspiring with waves surging and crashing against the rocks and rock arches. The force of the wind was such that one had to hold tightly to hats, cameras and the railing at times. The New Zealand fur seals basking on the rocks were not concerned. It is forbidden to deviate from

the wooden raised walkways and bridges in the area, partly because it is too bloody dangerous and partly because it is a breeding area for the seals. It was much quieter and comfortable back in the car observing while eating our packed lunch.

We drove to Weirs Cove after visiting Admiral's Arch. At first, during the building of the lighthouse, building materials and supplies were brought by steamship, transferred to small boats, then landed at the base of the cliffs, before being carried 90 metres up a steep cliff. In 1907 a jetty and flying fox winching system were constructed to winch goods up the cliff. At the top of the cliffs a stone building with three compartments for each family kept food cool. This was the only means of supply for about 24 years. An overland service began in 1930. The first truck arrived along a rough track in the mid-1940s.



Weirs Cove. The remains of the carved cutting and remains of the stone jetty far below.



The remains of the storeroom (left) and (right) the three partitioned rooms for the keepers and their families. Notice the three doors.

Originally a pair of horses (Mac and Dolly) winched the trolley up the cliff, but later an engine was installed.”

The remains of the carved cutting into the cliff can still be seen, as can the remains of the stone jetty below, which, by the way, can be seen on satellite images. A notice board, courtesy of the National Parks and Wildlife, Government of South Australia, explains. “At the top of the cutting, you can see the remains of the tower legs. Inland from the tower are the mounting blocks for the engine surrounded by the foundations of the winch house, which protected it from the salt air. The heavy forged chain, which supported the tower can be found in the bushes to the south of the car park. Two cables, supporting a trolley, were suspended from the cliff top.

Looking east from Weirs Cove, one can see in the distance on another promontory, the Remarkable Rocks. Our next destination. According to an information board, the rocks owe their remarkable shapes to about 5 hundred million years of erosion by wind, rain and salt, plus, to a much lesser extent with tongue in cheek, the footsteps of one hundred thousand of visitors per year. Different orange, green and grey colours on the rocks are caused by lichen. Grey and green colours are in less exposed sites. Photographs on the next page. The rocks reminded me of the sobriety test. Say quickly “Round the rugged rocks the ragged rabbit ran.”



We then drove back to Kingscote, about two and a half hours drive, via the West End Highway and the northern Playford Highway with incredibly long straight stretches of road through the Parndana and Districts region, passing Parndana on the way, the island's third biggest town. The primary agriculture region of the island, pastoral (sheep, cattle) and a wide range of crops, including viticulture.

However, before going to Kingscote, in the vicinity of the airport, we made about 15 kilometres detour south on the Elsegood mostly dirt road to buy excellent pure Ligurian honey at the Clifford's Honey Farm. The Clifford family were sheep farmers with a couple of hives. They expanded the business when wool prices fell in the 1980s. The range of products include honey, cosmetics, candles, mead and ice cream.

After a brief rest, we then went for a walk along the Esplanade to Breare Point and jetties. Saw Pied Cormorants, gulls, pelicans. Also totally unconcerned and motionless basking fur seals within touching distance. Then back to the our lodging and left-over barbeque from yesterday.

Friday our final day, was an early breakfast and start to visit the easternmost and two smallest regions, American River and the Penneshaw and Dudley Peninsula. Sheltered from the prevailing southerly winds the American River area is a popular anchorage area for visiting yachts, regattas and fishing. Pelicans are numerous being often fed fish scraps. We watched an amusing incident involving a pelican while walking in the wharf area. Nearby was a high T shaped light pole with large lamps on each extremity of the T shaped arms. A pelican was perched on one lamp, a gull on the other. Another pelican flew straight toward the lamp occupied by the gull and flared for landing. There was obviously no doubt in the pelican's mind that this was where it was going to land. Almost at the last moment the gull prudently decided that it better depart.

Back on the B23, we headed east then and turned off onto dirt road south-eastward on the main road to Dudley Peninsula. The region consists almost exclusively of good dirt roads and it is largely undeveloped. We were headed for the most eastern part of the island to the Cape Willoughby Lighthouse and Conservation Park where we had been told by our B&B owner there were numerous Kangaroos. The 27 metres tall lighthouse, built in 1832, was the first to be built in South Australia. Situated on the end of a high promontory are spectacular views to

the north and south.



The road to Willoughby Lighthouse local 'roos.

While driving around the island we had rare glimpses of 'roos. The count of road kill kangaroos far outnumbered live animals. We finally saw a number of 'roos at Willoughby Lighthouse. Due to the island's isolated position over the last approximately 10 000 years after separation from the mainland due to rising sea level, the kangaroos are a sub-species of the mainland western grey kangaroo. It is smaller, more robust and has thicker fur. Examples of other local evolved differences include; the New Holland honeyeater, which has a slightly different beak and wing; The Western Whipbird has a slightly different undulating call from mainland birds; the sub-species short beaked Echidna is smaller and paler; Tiger snakes are often all black, whereas mainland Tiger snakes have a greater variety of colours. All this information provided by a notice board at the Remarkable Rocks.



Returning to Penneshaw along a different route, the Cape Willoughby Road, to just north of the Lashmar Lagoon, next to the Chapman River and a flood level warning measuring meter, the blue colour of the water, reflecting the blue sky, blended to a brown colour, indicating the presence of iron oxide, reminiscent of what I had seen before in thermals in New Zealand North Island. A captivating sight.



The Sealion approaching Penneshaw and departing.

Back at Penneshaw, we stopped at Christmas Cove to eat our packed lunch before heading down to the harbour to await the same ferry back to the mainland at 13:00. This time the car

had to be manoeuvred into the tiniest and most inaccessible place on the vehicle deck. My wife did an excellent job.



Our return trip, in sunny and almost calm weather, was spent entirely on deck. Arriving at Cape Jarvis we saw the similar looking catamaran sister ship, the Spirit of Kangaroo Island, berthed at a nearby similarly looking, but non-loading, wharf. It was launched in 2003, also built in Fremantle. It is slightly longer with a slightly wider beam than the Sealion, as well as faster at 18 knots. It is more suited to carry freight and large trucks. It carries less passengers (243) and 50 cars or

8 semi-trailers and 18 cars. After an uneventful car trip, we arrived home in Adelaide.

Saturday was a quiet day at home apart from a short trip to Adelaide Parklands Terminal station to see the famous “Ghan” train after arrival at Adelaide. Unfortunately, we were too late to see it arrive. Only saw the carriages. No locomotives. We also walked to the nearby Torrens River Park in the afternoon where the family had fun on an open-air gym and where I saw and photographed one of a number of Sulphur-Crested Cockatoos in trees, Australian Wood Ducks and honeyeater family noisy Miner birds. The cockatoos reminded me of those I saw on visits as a child to Mitchell Park in Durban and the zoo in its grounds. The park (and zoo) is still there. Sunday was another relaxing day apart from a trip to the nearby beach.



Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo. Unfortunately, the yellow crest not showing. And Wood Ducks.

Monday the 10th we were off on a pre-booked guided tour bus day trip to the Murray River. My wife’s son was going to his office in central Adelaide, so we went with him and made our way from the car park to the pleasant, clean and bright Adelaide Central Bus Station.

We were too early, so we had plenty of time to look around, including reading a large wall display of humorous, pithy or philosophical comments. Novel and interesting. I liked: Cyclist proverb. When one car window closes a door will open; The world is not going to hell in a handbasket, That’s an old folly. The world is going to hell in a rattling overloaded shopping trolley. Please return your trolley here; and a sign that said go your own way with arrows pointing in numerous directions. Eventually counter staff arrived; we checked in and waited for the bus. While waiting we had a visit from the Fire Brigade, complete with sirens, blue and red lights and fully kitted firemen. We thought we would have to evacuate, but no one in the

terminal seemed concerned. After a search, the cause was found to be faulty alarm.



Adelaide Sightseeing owned by SeaLink.

It was a lovely, air-conditioned and very comfortable tour bus; a 2017 built Scania chassis, Coach Design body seating 51. Because we were first there and first in the queue, we had the prime front seats behind the driver for the trip with an excellent forward view.

The tour included a two hours boat trip on the river and good buffet lunch on board with walkabout in the town of Mannum, plus a scenic drive through the Adelaide Hills, via Tungkillo and Mt Torrens.

We had an excellent, knowledgeable and humorous guide. After an interesting talk about Adelaide while driving through Adelaide and now in the countryside, he said, “as a tour guide, it is a no-no to talk about politics and religion. So, let’s start with politics.” Which he duly did.



The MV Proud Mary and the PS Murray Princess.

The trip on the river was on the shallow draft MV Proud Mary, similar in design to the Mississippi River and early Murray paddle steamers, except it is a motor vessel. It departs from Mannum on a Monday, from Murray Bridge further down river on other days. Berthed next to the Proud Mary was the much bigger, longer and beautiful PS (Paddle Ship) Murray Princess. Powered by two diesel engines, it is the largest paddle wheeler to operate on the Murray River and the largest in the Southern Hemisphere.



It was a most enjoyable and relaxing cruise. Certainly scenic. Interesting steep sided orange and brown rock formations, houseboats, a small side paddle boat that looked like someone’s home, isolated semi-rustic homes ashore and pelicans.

After the cruise we were taken, by bus, to a view site at the end of Crawford Crescent high above the river with an excellent view of the river.



A view of the Murray River from the view site. The Pretoria Hotel. Next to it is the Pretoria Bistro and Pokies That is, a gaming venue with bistro and bar.

We were then bussed back to Mannum for walkabout in the town. Interestingly, we came across a pleasantly looking Pretoria Hotel with a length long wrought iron railing balcony. The Pretoria Hotel opened on December 22nd 1900. Apparently, the name was a reflection of the interest at the time in British Empire and the 1899 to 1902 war with the Boers in South Africa. When the building plans were lodged Lord Roberts' troops had occupied Johannesburg and Pretoria and victory at Pretoria.

The bus was parked near to winch operated dual ferries across the Murray River. Apparently, they operate 24 hours a day free of charge, because it is the shortest way to across the river from east to west to Adelaide. The only other route is much longer further down river at Murray Bridge.



One of the two winch operated ferries.

On the way back, before we reached the Adelaide hills, we stopped at the co-located Melba's Chocolate Factory and Woodside Cheese Wrights at Woodside. I went to the first, Roz to the second and bought cheese. Although, she still had some of my double size ice cream cone.

On the way down from the hills, on the Adelaide side, the driver diverted off the highway to the old main road to show us Koala Bears in Eucalyptus trees, as usual asleep. Then back to the bus station and the car park to wait for the wife's son. A most enjoyable day out.



Glenelg monument and pier beyond.

Tuesday was a lowkey day out for the two of us. We caught a bus into the city centre, then on a tram to Glenelg on the coast in the south of Adelaide and a walk along a rather windy promenade and out to the end of the pier. On a monument is written "Erected to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the province of South Australia 1836 – 1936." On the reverse side is written "Here at Holdfast Bay the pioneer

settlers and Governor Hindmarsh announced the establishment of the government on Dec, 21st 1836.” Lunch at the Grand Bar, Stamford Grand, Adelaide. Chicken Schnitzel with a Beach(?) Chardonnay for my wife and a Squire Cider for me. All told AUS \$60. Then a tram trip back to the city. Some tourist browsing for gifts in the UK, Then bus back to the family in Fulham Gardens.

A quiet day on the 12th. Thursday 13th a walk with the family along Henley Beach and Henley Pier and the Grange Jetty further north, before brunch at the Grange Jetty Café. A relaxing afternoon with the family before the wife’s son took us to the airport for the trip back to England. A wonderful holiday.

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2022. Australia, Adelaide and Sunshine Coast

Could happily live in Australia. Holiday was great, although both caught colds in Adelaide. It was colder in Adelaide in the south than the UK at the time and did not help that houses are designed for warm/hot weather, so the house was very cold. I spent a week north of Brisbane at the Sunshine Coast with my niece and her son, plus my brother visiting from New Zealand. Much warmer. Altogether 9 flights for me, 6 for my wife who flew to Auckland to visit a friend from childhood.

Emirates flights mostly on time, or close to on time. Aircraft and duration of flights being B777-300ER flight time 7:15 to Dubai, A380-800 flight time 13:25 Dubai to Melbourne, Qantas B737-800 flight time 1:20 to Adelaide. We had to fly via Melbourne, because since COVID19, Emirates did not fly direct to Adelaide. Return times interesting (although same aircraft types) that make allowance for prevailing headwind upper westerly winds over Australia and Europe. Adelaide to Melbourne still 1:20, Melbourne to Dubai 14:00 and Dubai to Birmingham 7:45. Melbourne to Adelaide were code share Qantas flights.

Still good service and food on Emirates. Still highly recommend them. Although Emirates can improve getting self-loading cargo on board A380s at Dubai. Poor communication with passengers regarding loading procedure. Pushback from the gate 25 minutes late, in spite of beginning boarding at the indicated time. Opposite at Melbourne returning home. Efficient and A380 pushback 10 minutes early. Both A380 flights close to full.

Qantas very efficient service. Offloading and loading turnaround very efficient. Some flights a bit late, however allowed sufficient time between flights to allow for delays.

My wife travelled 3 weeks earlier. Her flight from Dubai to Melbourne left 2.5 hours late. Even allowing 3 hours stopover for the flight to Adelaide, she did not make the booked flight from Melbourne to Adelaide and had to be accommodated on a later flight.

Aussie airports good and efficient, except Melbourne. Poor signs. Passed through that airport 4 times in the last 5 years and still get confused. Birmingham airport is a different kettle of fish. During my numerous work-related travels, always believed it is an embarrassment for the 2nd biggest conurbation area in the UK. Arriving back, waited about an hour and half for luggage. Carousel broke twice. Escalators not working. People with disabilities have to use stairs. No signs to lifts for use of. No one in sight to assist. I said to my wife it is like leaving 1st world countries and arriving in 3rd world.

Arrived at Emirates check in at Birmingham airport just over 4 hours before departure time late in the afternoon Saturday 24th after travelling by bus from home. I was 1st in line to check in when the desks opened. The airport, post COVID19 still had a poor reputation for processing passengers. I wanted no Problems. We did the same when my wife checked in 3 weeks earlier. She was 6th in line. As usual we could not complete the check in the day before. Boarding passes would not print. This is because entering Australia requires a visa. The Airline needed to see the visa before providing boarding passes. We obtained these in March 2022 prior to making our bookings for our September to October 2022 holiday. We were reasonably sure restrictions would be lifted. This was the case. Only masks were necessary when we travelled.

The aircraft from Dubai arrived 20 minutes late. We departed the gate 10 minutes late with a short taxi to runway (RWY) 33 and right-hand climb toward Dubai. During descent to Dubai, we were held in a holding pattern for one loop, north-west of the airport, before approach to RWY 30L and a short taxi to gate C4 at 07:41, a 14 minutes early arrival Sunday 25th. Clearing security, it was a long walk from one end of the terminal to the southern end for the flight to Melbourne at gate B31. All told 44 minutes after arriving at gate C4. Dubai likes its passengers to be fit.

The A380 remains a mission to board self-loading cargo (passengers). In spite of beginning boarding on time, push back was 25 minutes late, add to this the often long taxi time, in this instance to RWY30R and we took off 45 minutes after leaving the gate. Landing at Melbourne on RWY34 and a fairly short taxi to gate 16, arriving at 05:56, 26 minutes late, on Monday 26th.

Getting through immigration with the passport face recognition technology was effortless. I became concerned at the long wait for luggage at the carousel, because I could see two long queues waiting to pass through nearby customs section. Ours was not the only early morning international arrival. However, having completed the landing card during the flight saved time. The customs official quickly looked at my card, asked a few questions, then waved me through with no inspection. Then confusion. Although my wife had already briefed me from when she passed through, I was still at a loss as to the direction to the Qantas domestic terminal, even though I had a plan of the terminals. The lady at the information desk was most helpful with directions. Thereafter check in and deposit of my luggage was swift, as was clearing security. The Qantas flight to Adelaide was loaded on time, nearly full, departed and arrived on time.

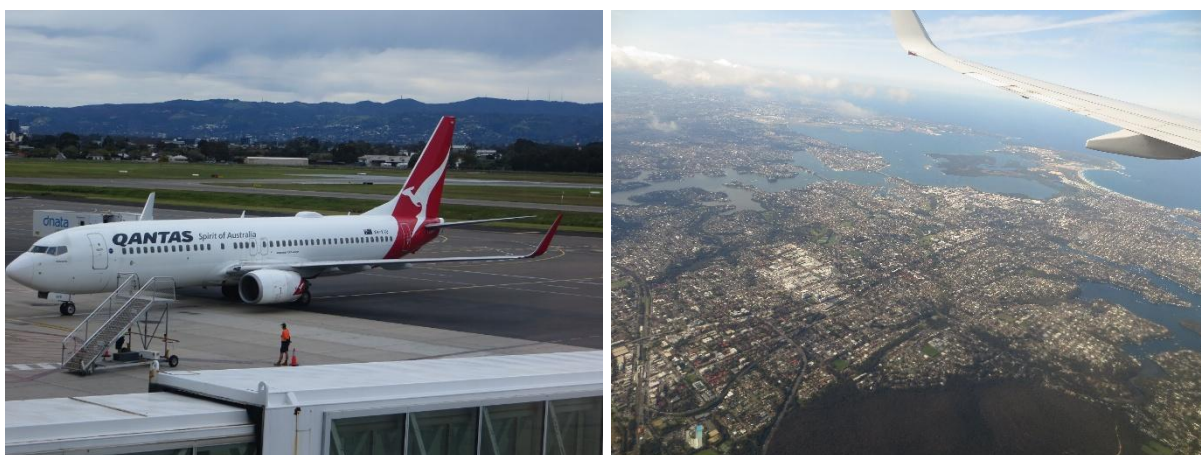
While in Adelaide, we had some interesting trips. Not as many trips as before. We were happy to tootle around, walking, bussing and occasionally using the second car. Interesting walkabout trip to Hallett Cove south of Adelaide on the 1st October. Fortunately, lots of information boards. Upward forcing of the land two to one million years ago, resulted in erosion which produced the Amphitheatre landscape with three distinctive periods of deposition which started about 270 million years ago. Top is Calcrete limestone layer, then an alluvial clay layer deposited on a river flood plain about 2 million years ago (Quaternary period). Next downward, a sand clay and boulder layer about 280 million years ago (Permian era). An ice sheet covered the area eroding the rocks leaving a layer of sand clay and boulders. Between this layer and the Calcrete is a very shallow layer of sandstone with fossils when, about 4 million years ago (Pliocene era), a warm shallow sea flooded the area. Finally, lowest, there is darker siltstone and sandstone deposited on a tidal flat area, later converted to rock and folded about 600 million Precambrian years ago. Got rather sunburnt.

Photographs on the following page. Did not notice the shaded effect setting on corners.



I visited niece, her son and my brother from the 3rd to the 8th October My flights from Adelaide to Sunshine Coast (Maroochydore Airport) via Sydney on the 3rd were Qantas B737-800 aircraft. Flight times 1:50 and 1:35 and direct return Sunshine Coast to Adelaide Jetstar A320-232 flight time 2:45.

The approach to Sydney from the west was out to sea and a left-hand turn to long final to RWY 34L that extends southward of the coast on reclaimed land in Botany Bay. Took a number of good photographs that showed our track to the airport, extension of flaps and landing. The photograph shows our approach south of Sydney with a turn to the left to land at the airport next to the bay in the top left of the photograph left.



Arrival of B737-838 VH-VXU for flight to Sydney. Sydney airport top left in photograph.

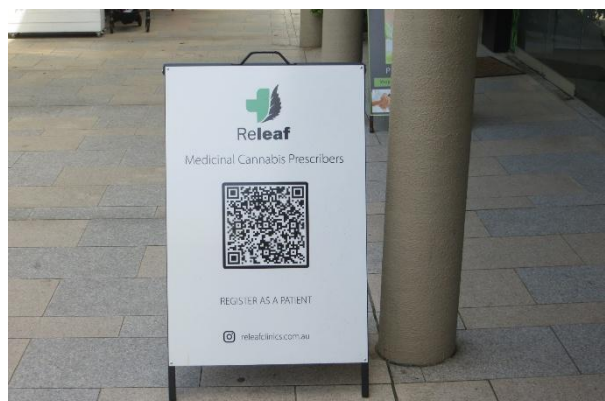
After departure to the south and climbing left-hand from Sydney, from my window seat 28A, I saw the Sydney Opera House and steel arch Sydney Harbour Bridge that carries the Bradfield Highway. However, I could not get my camera out of its pouch in time due to an overweight male passenger cramping me. My mistake I suppose. The camera should have been to hand prior to take off.

Went on numerous walks with my brother while there, some first by bus then walking. Had long talks. People in public (Malls, beaches, out and about, etc.) are friendly and polite, much more so than in the UK. Even bus drivers are chatty. I was out with my brother bussing it to Mooloolaba Beach. When we got on one bus my brother had a question for the driver. I did not hear it. The driver answered and Keith apologised for asking the question and that he was from New Zealand. The driver said not your problem mate, it's your parents' fault. (He did not know he was born in South Africa). I said to him I was not from New Zealand. The driver said "Good man." All clean and tidy suburbs. Generally efficient. Obviously, there are some hiccups, as mentioned by relatives. However, overall good feel. Traffic is very ordered, polite, no speeding that I saw. Max speed limit in Australia on all roads 100 kph. Roads good. City/suburban bus/tram/train services excellent. Got rather sunburnt. Bought an Aussie hat.

While on the Sunshine Coast we visited and walked along Mooloolaba beach and conservation area as well as Noosa Heads beach and conservation area. My niece drove us to Noosa Heads. At Noosa Heads we passed a shop for medicinal cannabis prescribers.



Mooloolaba Beach looking south toward the harbour entrance and Mooloolaba Wharf.



Noosa Heads Beach and Cannabis shop(?).

And Australian humour at Noosa Heard. Photograph on the next page. The board reads: "Come in and try the worst pizza one woman on tripadvisor had in her life!!!" Love it!

Saw a curious bird at nearby Mooloolaba Beach. Brush/bush/scrub turkeys. One of 3 Australian



All publicity is good publicity.



Male Brush-turkey at Noosa Heads.

species of mound-building birds. About 60–70cm long, wing span about 85cm. Males and females are a similar size. Coloured blue-black. The male Brush-turkey has a large, bright yellow flap of skin that hangs from its neck, while the female has a smaller and paler wattle. Most the time they are on the ground, but roost in trees at night. Can become rather tame and used to the presence of human. They are protected year round and breed any time of the year, but mostly September to December.

The male builds a mound of plant litter and soil, adding or removing material to keep it at a constant temperature of 33-38°C. A Brush-turkey has highly accurate heat sensors inside their upper bill. They will take a large mouthful of the mound to check whether it's at the right temperature. Adding cover to it to keep it warm, removing to make it cooler. A mound is about 2 to 4m across and 1m high. The male spends many hours each day building and maintaining his mound. He will defend his mound and will only allow a

female onto it when he thinks it's the right temperature. The number of females that lay eggs in the mound and the number of times they visit depends on his skill in keeping the mound at the right temperature. If the mound is the right temperature, females will return many times to mate and lay eggs. Up to 24 eggs are put into holes about half a metre deep in the mound and then covered. The male brush turkey keeps watch while the eggs incubate, making sure the temperature is just right and keeping any predators at bay. After approximately 50 days the chicks hatch and are immediately independent. Information obtained from the Australian Museum (<https://australian.museum/learn/animals/birds/australian-brush-turkey/>) and Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_brushturkey).

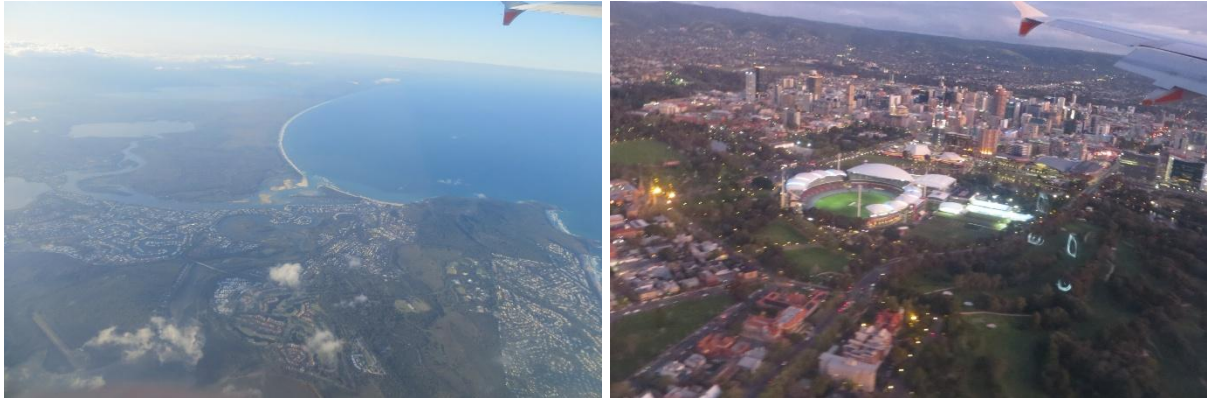
On the 8th October, I was at Maroochydore Airport for my return to Adelaide. I was not



Jetstar A320-232 VH-VGV to Adelaide.

impressed with Jetstar. Paid for flexi plus flights, which included seat selection, extra weight luggage and changeable flight times. When I checked in the afternoon before the flight, I saw that my booked 23A seat had changed with no notification to what I regard as the worst seat, in the middle of the aircraft over the wing and middle of central row 15E. My niece called them and I got the last window seat near the back at 29A. Not impressed with the way they did cabin service either. Very haphazard. Although, flight on time.

After take-off on RWY 31 Maroochydore I thought a strange climb from the airport. After the usual climb straight ahead to the north-west, I thought there would be a left-hand turn on course to Adelaide. Instead, there was a right-hand climbing turn that took us south of Noosa Head out to sea then back inland passing to the north of Moreton Island and west of Brisbane heading south-west to Adelaide. I thought a left-hand climb and quicker heading to the SW would have been better. The route taken probably due to traffic requirements associated with Brisbane. To my advantage I did get a photograph of Noosa Heads, which we visited the previous day and of the northern end of Moreton Island. I have subsequently found that this is the RWY31 Standard Instrument Departure (SID) Mooloolah one departure.



Noosa Heads and descending passing the Oval and central Adelaide.

Descent to Adelaide from the north-east to RWY23 was in fading daylight with middle and high layer cloud. The flight path passes slightly to the west of central Adelaide. For the first time I was able to get a good ground view. We first passed west of the Little Para Reservoir then the Hope Valley Reservoir, before passing north-west of the Adelaide Oval sports ground near the city centre then, on short final over the SAINSA shop at 233 Sir Donald Bradman Drive next to Wilson Street. The shop sells only South Africa groceries. My wife not impressed by g'day mate greeting, "great to be back from walkabout" and my Aussie hat bought to protect my head from sunburn.

The following day, the 9th, we were taken to Port Noarlunga about 28 kilometres south of Adelaide. It has ground formation similar to that seen at Hallett Cove. However, the main interest was a coral reef not far offshore. One can walk along a wooden jetty to a point above the reef. The reef is fully exposed at low tide. Unfortunately, we were not there at low tide.

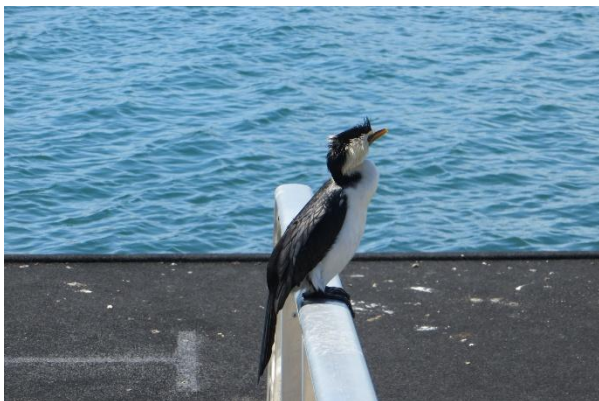


Port Noarlunga ground formation and coral reef.

Saw numerous interesting birds, such as the Singing Honeyeater, Pied Cormorants (albeit from a distance) at Hallet Cove. The Little Pied Cormorant, Crested Pigeon during a walk at West Lakes in Adelaide. The Noisy Miner, also honeyeater family, not to be confused with the starling family Common Myna (Aussie Animals <https://aussieanimals.com/guides/vertebrates/birds/honeyeaters/>). Also, White Faced Heron. Black Swans, Silver Gulls and Pelicans. Plenty of Australian Magpies.



Pied Cormorants and a Singing Honeyeater at Hallet Cove.



A Little Pied Cormorant at West Lakes and a Crested Pigeon at Noosa Heads.



A White Faced Heron fluffing feathers at Wyuna Canal, Parrearra, Sunshine Coast and a Silver Gull at Grange Beach, Adelaide.



A Noisy Miner and a Magpie at Himeji Garden, Adelaide.

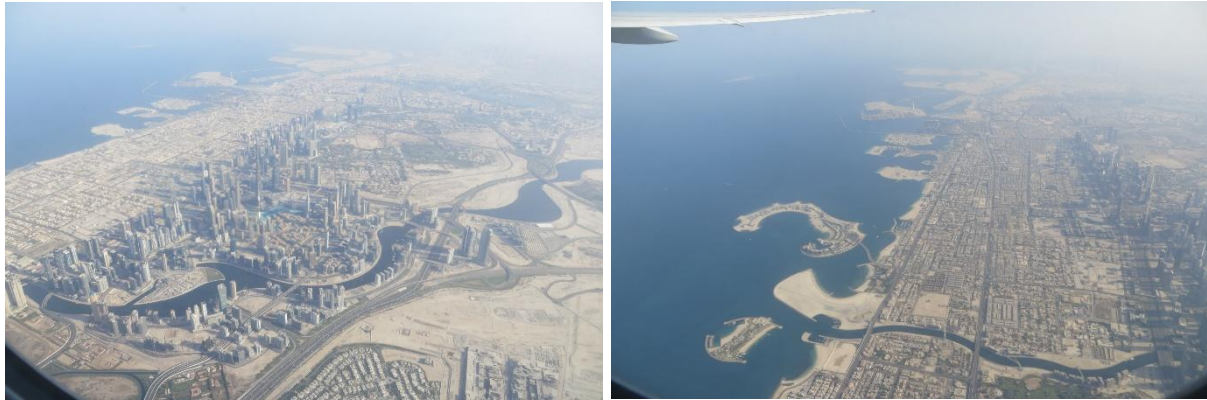
As usual, heard about the usual crime in bigger cities. Mainly Sydney according to the television news. While we were there, there was a documentary about drug gangs (with Middle East names) bumping each other off in Sydney. Occasionally wrong identity targeted. Very little crime heard in Adelaide via the Adelaide channel. Sunshine Coast, north of Brisbane, also heard little heard about crime. Generally, not a big issue. When there is an incident, tends to be great indignation that the peace is being disturbed. Did I mention good transport systems at Sunshine Coast and Adelaide?

We noticed things are more expensive than when we were there in 2017 and 2018. British £ still stronger against the Aus \$. £1 was about Aus \$1.6 before leaving for Aus. Upon return £1 = Aus \$1.8, stronger than before. Why, I do not know. UK MPs doing their best to destroy everything. The level of arrogance, self-interest, entitlement and greed is appalling. Everyone believes they can run the country. None worthy to be Prime Minister, let alone MPs. Disgraceful bunch. A ruling elite in their own bubble with no concept of the reality. Now rid of the shortest-term prime minister ever (44 days). The world is laughing at them.

Homeward bound, we were at Adelaide airport 3 hours before departure on Friday the 14th October. Two hours before departure is stipulated for regional flights, three hours for international. Although our first leg of the journey was regional, we believed it prudent to be there earlier. As it was, the process was quick and easy with our luggage booked through to Birmingham, via Melbourne and Dubai. When booking our flights in March, we did them together so that we could coordinate seating on the return trip. My wife on her laptop and me on my laptop. Somehow there was a mix up for our flight to Melbourne. I booked 25B, my wife was supposed to book 25A (window seat). When we boarded my wife went to seat 26C. One behind me and an aisle seat. I was confused. We were supposed to be together. For some reason she had either booked the wrong seat, or Qantas had allocated a seat which turned out to be close to mine. There was no problem with seating on the remaining two flights when we had seats as arranged.

Anyway, we arrived on time at Melbourne where we again found signs to the international terminal confusing, went the wrong way and had to ask for guidance. Everything went smoothly boarding the A380 to Dubai. Push back was 5 minutes early and arrived at the Dubai gate 4 minutes late. Would have been early, except we were held in a single holding pattern over Fujairah then positioned for a right hand circuit to an approach from the north-west to 12L.

This time the gate was close to our departure gate A16 to Birmingham. Push back from the gate was 10 minutes late at 07:55 on Sunday 15th and take off at 08:15 after a short taxi but behind other aircraft waiting to take off. Take off was to the south with a climbing turn to the right slightly to the west of the city centre, so we got a good view of central Dubai in the morning light and the new reclaimed offshore islands that are always being added to the coastline. Managed two photographs of the Burj Khalifa (Khalifa Tower). It is the tallest structure and building in the world. Has been since 2009. Total height of 829.8 m (2,722 ft).



Climbing west of Dubai.

An uneventful flight. By now, having colds, we just wanted to be home. We landed RWY33 at Birmingham, 12 minutes late at the gate at 12:47. Conditions in the terminal have already been described. No problem at customs. Quickly through and on a taxi home. £27 plus a 30% tip because the driver was friendly and he loaded and unloaded our heavy luggage.

MARCH & APRIL 2026. Australia, Sunshine Coast and New Zealand, North Island

This trip to Australia and New Zealand departed England on the 12th March returned the 6th April 2026. Details relating to the aviation aspect of airline flights, such as the aircraft and airports, experiences and observations on the ground and inflight can be read in the online article “An aviation perspective of a 2026 visit to Australia and New Zealand.” This focuses on other day to day aspects.

To summarise, after all arrangement for the trip had been finalised, such as obtaining Australian (eVisitor (subclass 651)) and New Zealand (NZeTA) visa, flights booked and paid, on the 28th February 2026, enter the President of the United States of America Donald Trump and war with Iran. Flights to and from England to Australia had to be rebooked with Qantas, culminating in my arrival at Brisbane on the morning of Saturday the 14th at 08:40 local time. I was met by my niece and her son and driven to their home in Sunshine Coast City, with onboard snacks and water. Travelling in style.

After a few days recovery at my niece and her son’s home that included local walks and barbeque, it was a very early start on Tuesday the 17th back to Brisbane airport for the flight to Wellington, New Zealand.

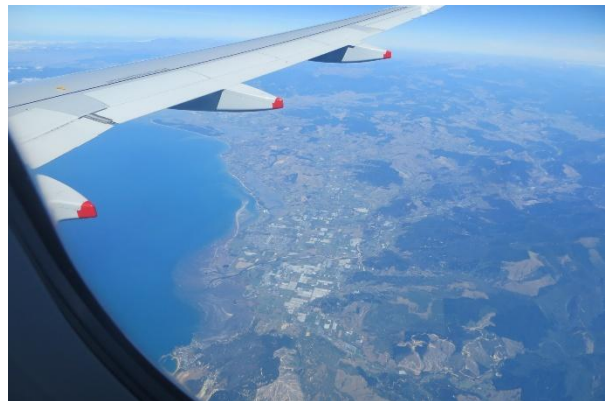
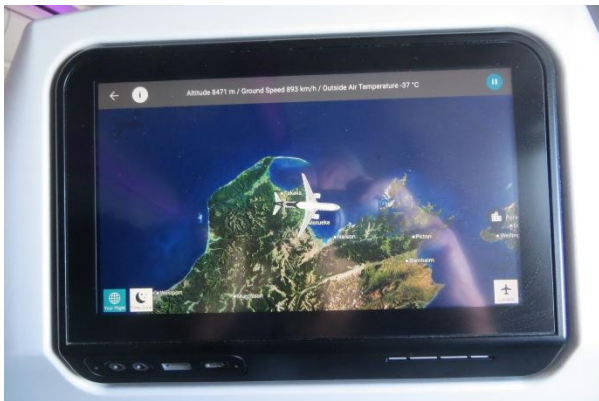
Departure from Brisbane to Wellington on an Air New Zealand Airbus A32 was 9 minutes early landing and at the gate 10 minutes early. Seated in my 22D aisle seat, I noticed a row of three empty seats nearby on the opposite side of the aisle. After take-off and the seat belt signs were off, I asked if I could move to this row and a window seat. I had a row to myself for the flight.

Luxury. A rather bumpy flight with almost continuous light turbulence which caused the captain to announce a climb from our cruise at FL350 to FL370 in an attempt to clear the turbulence, albeit not successful, then back to FL350.



The route passes not too distant south of Lord Howe Island. It is the crescent shaped remains of a volcano about 400 nautical miles south-east of Brisbane. The hillier south of the island has two volcanic mountains. 23km to the south east is the distinctive Ball's Pyramid a conical rock rising almost sheer from the sea. My niece in Sunshine Coast, Queensland, was most fortunate to photograph it on one of her trips to New Zealand. I never saw it on the trip outbound nor inbound.

Our approach to Wellington, on North Island, was over the northern tip of North Island passing close to Nelson then over Marlborough Sounds. The Marlborough Sounds consists of an intricate system of many spurs of land and islands punctuated many water inlets similar to fiords, created by combinations of land subsidence and rising sea level.



Our position passing over the northern tip of North Island complete with photographer reflection. The name of the town of Nelson is visible to right of the aircraft. The photograph on the right shows Nelson. Less than a minute between photographs.

Approach to land was from the north over the south-west tip of North Island. On long final I noticed that the houses close by to the starboard side were much higher than us with clear details of the houses visible.

Spent nearly all of my time out and about with my brother during my stay at Porirua north of Wellington, at times in the company of my sister-in-law. Later with my nephew and his family at Waikanae further north, who lent me a car to use. While at my brother and sister-in-law's house I witnessed the use of a never seen before kitchen utensil that cores and peels an apple.





During my stay my brother we drove various places of interest. Thursday, we went to lunch at the Pimmerton Boating Club at Karehana Bay. The photographs show the view along the bay that is also the route home and Mana Island about 6 kilometres offshore.

During the afternoon we went north to Paekakariki Hill along the winding Paekakariki Road to its lookout site. Then downhill to the coastal Centennial Highway along which we went home, passing The Fisherman's Table Restaurant. We were back there the next day for a generous buffet lunch. It is located out of sight at the bottom of the

photograph. Visible in the photograph from right to left, is the road winding down the hillside, the dual railway line and the dual carriageway Centennial Highway.

Another trip was to Titahi Bay and Whitireia Park in Porirua. From Titahi Bay one can again see Mana Island and to the south-west South Island. An information board tells one that it was close to Titahi Bay where “Kupe, the great Polynesian navigator, landed at Komangarautāwhiri around 925 AD” and about 15km southward along the coast to Makara “are significant traditional food-gathering sites for Ngāti Toa Rangatira.” Ngāti Toa Rangatira translation; the tribe of chivalrous and chiefly warriors. It is derived from the response of a defeated enemy chief to Tūpāhau who spared his life (TeAra.govt.nz. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/ngati-toarangatira/print>).

Below is the view to Mana Island and northward to Hongoeka in the distance.





Whitireia Park is further north on the end of the peninsula with a very winding and narrow road with regular layby passing areas down to a lovely beach with camping facilities.

At a high point in the park is the Whitireia transmitter. Seen in this view on the left from Paramata toward Whitireia Park.

Opened in 1937 the 137 metres radio mast transmits five radio programmes on four frequencies. Originally there were three masts, the tallest one being 220 metres (Geographic Media

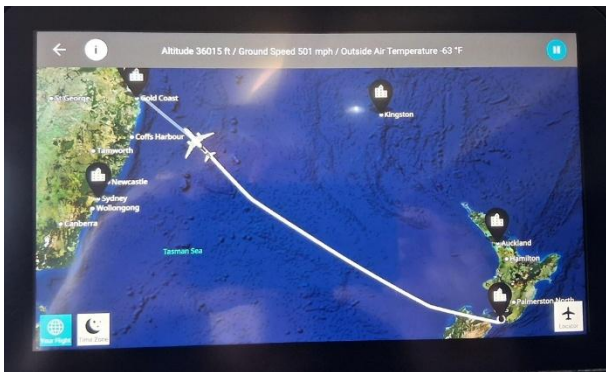
<https://geographic.media/oceania/new-zealand/new-zealand-photos/porirua-photos/titahi-bay-transmitter/>).

Twenty-five minutes driving north along State Highway 1, is Waikanae where resides my nephew and family. A small and pretty town. Visible from the beach is Kapiti Island about 5 km offshore. It is a nature reserve that has largely recovered from previous farming activity. Visiting the island is strictly controlled with day trips allowed. Cabins and glamping tents available for longer visits as well as guided tours.



Kapiti Island and Waikanae seen from the beach.

On the 23rd it was very early rise at the nephew's house for him to drive me to Wellington airport for departure at 06:00. Air New Zealand same aircraft type A320neo.



Take-off was on time to the south with a climbing turn to the right over the northern tip of South Island. A predominantly smooth flight. Had the row to myself, so moved to the A window seat after take-off. Nearing Australia there were CB (Cumulonimbus) thunderstorm clouds to the distant west. Presumably oriented over the warm East Australia current. Nearing the coast we descended through towering CU (Cumulus

Congestus) cloud. Descent was a left turn to land from the north arriving 23 minutes early.

Border check and luggage collection was quick and out into the arrivals hall with the bus/train information desk in front of me. I was booked on the Con-X-ion bus shuttle to Kawana at 08:30. I enquired the way to the bus stop. The helpful lady after looking at my booking on her computer, said I am in time for the 07:30 bus that would arrive in 10 minutes. She changed my booking and I was at the bus stop with time to spare. The bus takes one to a depot. From there one transfers to a minibus that takes one to one's address. All very convenient. Result, I was at my niece's house an hour earlier than expected.

Two days later, Wednesday the 25th, I was taken by my niece to nearby Sunshine Coast airport, locally more commonly known as Maroochydore (or Marcoola according to Virgin Australia airline), to fly to Sydney, returning on the 27th. I was invited to visit my nephew in Sydney, who very kindly paid for my 2 night's accommodation while there.

Departure was 7 minutes after scheduled at 09:30. A smooth flight in a clear blue sky. Arrival at the gate at Sydney 16 minutes after scheduled. Being a domestic flight with hand luggage it was a case of straight through and out of the arrivals building and a fair walk to the drop off/pick up parking area where I met my other nephew. No sooner in the car than he asked me if I was OK with a helicopter ride at the heliport at the south-east part of the airport. He had booked me on a flight over Sydney at his expense. Obviously yes please.

After a bird's eye view of the airport, it was off to central Sydney passing the impressive three-storey sandstone 19th century Gothic architecture main building of St Andrew's College, to the Anzac Bridge at White Bay then the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House area of Sydney. Then north-eastward to the coast at Balmoral Beach and HMAS Penguin navy base before heading south along the coast past Bondi Beach back to the airport,



Top to bottom. Left to right; Passing the airport domestic terminal, St Andrew's College, Anzac Bridge and White Bay.

The usual tourist photograph of Sydney. The Sydney Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge with skyscraper. The ferry approaching the inlet next to the Opera House is a Manly to Circular Quay ferry. Circular Quay is a large ferry terminal with 5 piers and is Sydney's main ferry hub. A thoroughly enjoyed and unexpected 20 minutes experience. Unbelievably kind and generous of my nephew.



Sydney central and Bondi Beach.

Then some sightseeing by car and walking, including, this time, seeing Bondi Beach from ground level where I was taken to the footbridge where the terrible terrorist attack occurred on the 14th December 2025 with the death of 15 people and 39 injured.

Then checked in at the hotel before going to dinner with nephew and his partner at the Holy Duck Chinese restaurant, 2 Kensington Street, a short walk from where they live. An extraordinarily memorable day.



The Ovolo Hotel that I was booked in, is part of very long twin storied sheds pitched gable roofs connected by a central pitched roof. Extensive skylights have been added to the roofs to create a light and airy interior. The structure stretches the length of the Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf that is 410m long by 64m wide. The wharf is the longest timber-piled wharf in the world built between 1910 and 1913. The building has been converted into 300 apartments, a hotel and small business offices with numerous bars and restaurants along the marina side of the

building. It also contains rare industrial equipment, including the remains of electrically-operated goods conveyors. The warehouse was a major wool export terminal and embarkation place for wartime troops and post-war migrants disembarking place. Information obtained from notice boards and Ovolo Hotels (<https://ovolohotels.com/ovolo/blog/woolloomooloo-building-history/>).

The following morning nephew and partner took me to Rose Bay ferry wharf to spend the day on the ferries. When we arrived, a seaplane suddenly passed nearby and low to land on the water. I noticed seaplanes moored at a nearby jetty which I identified as a Cessna Caravan and two de Havilland Canada DHC-2 Beavers. I asked to go closer so that I could get photographs. Rose Bay was the bay where, from the 9th August 1938, Short S23 C Class Empire flying boat

flights took place between Sydney and London, becoming Australia's first international airport for flying boats, complete with a terminal building and slipways for boats. (Sydney Seaplanes <https://www.seaplanes.com.au/history/>).

While taking photographs, nephew and partner disappeared into the Sydney Seaplanes office. When I later went inside, I was told by an excited partner that nephew had bought us a seaplane flight in the Cessna.

A charter flight was leaving soon to take two passengers inland to what I thought was a lake about 30km north of Sydney. Included was some sightseeing of Sydney (again! great). The destination was the Berowra Waters Inn on Berowra Creek. In total a 55 minutes trip.

After landing it is a short taxi to the hotel jetty. Passengers offloaded within minutes then a short taxi to take-off. For the return take-off, trip back and landing, I sat next to the pilot. It felt like the old days when I was an instructor sitting in the right seat next to a student. The urge was to have my hands and feet near to the controls in case I had to take over control. Happy days. An incredible experience from start to finish. Eternally grateful to my nephew.



Taxi to the hotel jetty at the creek and descending turn to land at Rose Bay.



Shortly after 1pm we were on a ferry from Rose Bay to the Circular Quay next to the Sydney Opera House. While on the ferry from Rose Bay we passed a small island, Pinchgut Island and Fort Denison with its Martello Tower. Originally bare rock, was fortified in the 1950s. Now a museum and tourist attraction it previously served as place of punishment for convicts with minimal rations, hence pinch ones gut and the islands name (Fulford. A.

<https://www.ucruisesydney.com.au/blog/things-to-do-in-sydney/history-heritage/fort-denison-a-tiny-island-with-a-storied-past>). The Bureau of Meteorology operates an automatic weather station on the island with half hourly observations on its website.

At Circular Quay we boarded a River class ferry and sailed under the Sydney Harbour Bridge heading upriver inland past Cockatoo Island, an ex-prison island, now a favourite camping and glampsite island costing \$150 per night. Tents for rent could be seen along the coast. We continued on upriver to Abbotsford Ferry Wharf where we had a late, about 3pm, lunch at the Sydney Rowing Club.



On the way to Circular Quay. An Emerald class ferry same as ours in distinctive yellow and green ours going the other way. On the right, Cockatoo Island.

Then on the ferry back to Circular Quay to visit the Opera House and a refreshing drink at a quayside bar before riding a ferry back to Rose Bay and an early evening late desert at a place near where nephew lived then taken back to the hotel. Another extraordinary memorable day.

The next day nephew and I had brunch at a small Chinese restaurant then he took me to the Sydney airport control tower to watch the controllers at work with a bird's eye view of aircraft movements. It was a day of strong wind. I was therefore fortunate to watch them change traffic from the two parallel runways to the single 90 degrees cross runway due to the wind velocity. The reduced airport capacity resulted in aircraft delays. I was to fly back to Sunshine Coast (Maroochydore) airport that afternoon. My flight was delayed by 40 minutes. A good flight. Arrival at the airport gate 6 was 46 minutes late.

Then followed enjoyable days relaxing with my niece and her son at beaches such as at Mooloolaba, Maroochydore and local walks. When they were at work or at school travel by bus to Kawana and Mooloolaba beaches and further afield to Kings beach at Caloundra. Also a trip inland to Montville to visit the clock shop. Most enjoyable.



Kings Beach, Caloundra and an Australian White Ibis at Kings Beach.



Torresian Crows and a Blue Faced Honeyeater at Kings Beach.



The clock shop at Montville.



A trawler about to enter Mooloolaba and lunch at Mooloolaba Wharf.



Brush-turkey window shopping in Mooloolaba and evening drinks at Double Bay, Mooloolaba River.



Sunday the 6th April it was time to travel home. Neice drove me to Brisbane airport to get there nearly 3 hours before departure. Checked in online the day before. Bag drop security and border check smooth and easy. Received printed boarding passes for the two flights when doing the bag drop (plus luggage receipt) so there was not going to be a problem when boarding the aircraft.

She had kindly packed a lunch for me so I sat at the deserted far end of the terminal and ate lunch while watching aircraft take-off and where the aircraft for my flight aircraft Qantas A330-200 was being prepared (at 12:44) and watched it towed to the departure gate.

Push back was on time, only 8 minutes past schedule. However, time was lost during taxi. This was from the far south-eastern international terminal next to the end of runway 01R all the way to the far north-western part of the airport to runway 19R. Departure 16 minutes late.

A good flight. Landing 24 minutes early at Singapore. Then the long walk back to the gate where I arrived from Heathrow. Two 2 hours wait for boarding the Qantas A380-800. All seated and aircraft secured the captain announced delay due to traffic congestion passing over Afghanistan and timing of our passage. Pushback was 25 minutes late. A good flight.

Approach to land at Heathrow never appears to be straight in. We had to hold at FL200 to the north-east of London for a single circuit then an S shape descent to a long approach from over London to land 4 minutes early. Then had walk for ages with travelators to quickly clear border control. Luggage collection surprisingly quick. Then passing through customs. Farcical. About 6 customs officials standing around showing little interest while passengers streamed by some with two trollies laden high with luggage all heading for the green nothing to declare exit.

A longish walkway sloped underground to a station foyer collect my pre-paid ticket and where there were two attendants to assist with collecting/buying tickets from machines and advising which train to catch and when. The moment I looked a bit bewildered one volunteered to assist me. After a short wait I was on the Heathrow Express non-stop to Paddington then a short walk via turnstiles to an adjacent platform and aboard a Great Western Railway train to Reading that departed within 10 minutes.

So far well ahead of schedule. It changed at Reading where I had to wait for the CrossCountry train as per original schedule before leaving England. With the addition of passengers at Reading the train was packed. I had a large and heavy case with nowhere to put it until the conductor told me there was a luggage area in carriage D. No easy feat getting it there from one carriage to the next. Safely stowed there was nowhere to sit. I had to stand until we arrived at Oxford where one was able to grab an unreserved seat when passengers disembarked and others boarded.

It was fun trying to get my luggage off (and others) at Birmingham International So named because it is the station for the airport, although both in Solihull, not Birmingham. Passengers were jammed in the carriage entrance/exit. They had to disembark to allow myself and others heading for the airport to get our luggage off. Home from the railway station was a doddle. My wife drove me home.