



Terry's Travels

RTW1-1 American Leg

7/12/1999

I had only got to Detroit via Amsterdam en route to Florida and yes my luggage was lost! You may ask why such a strange route? Well, it's all to do with flying around the world with loadsa stopovers on schedule flights for 1250 pounds.

Joy when NW Airlines phoned and delivered the missing stuff in the middle of the night to Cocoa Beach Florida.

Even more joy when the family arrived, especially my grandsons who had flown for the first time at Daniel at 18 months and James at 3 years. I was in my twenties before I first flew - how times have changed. They had all flown on non stop Virgin and the boys were well pleased with their knapsack and freebies. The family had 2 weeks of great weather and fun. Granddads highlights were through the eyes of the boys seeing Mickey Mouse, Shamu, lots of talking and singing animals etc. James had his first motorbike ride and was quite adventurous with the waves. Of course we had sand from my bit of Florida beach everywhere. All handled the hot sun, Harley rides and picnics in the motorhome very well. Di arrived a couple of weeks later and then it was all change as Di's brother and nephew came then my pal Skip from Iowa with his new lady. Wow what a time.

Then we left for Hawaii and have just loved Ohahu (Waikiki/Honolulu) and the other islands of Maui and Big Island. Active and non active volcanoes, mountain and rain forest plus different culture has made it all a joy. Pineapples Macadamia nuts and local coffee had to be sampled - especially in ice cream. Our present hotel is just where the Iron men and women start their Triathlon every Oct.

I should too after all the ice-cream, but its the Cook Islands later tonight.....

Best wishes to all - have fun

Terry in Hawaii



Terry's Travels

RTW1-2 The Cook Islands

22/12/1999

Kia Orana

We left Honolulu exactly 58 years to the day following the attack on Pearl Harbour. Our destination the Cook Islands just south of the equator so we are in the south seas. It seemed appropriate to have already visited Captain Cooks memorial in Hawaii where he was killed after some disagreements. Anyway I like the taste of Cook beer here in his islands.

This is a truly friendly and fascinating place and full of exotic food and plants. The reef surrounding the island makes swimming safe and warm too. We had our 3rd trauma (the second was lost luggage again) Di had to have a tooth out. Fantastic fast service and she said he was dishy. affordable too at 20 quid.

Later....

We have now spent an idyllic week in Raratonga the largest of the Cook Islands. A T shirt saying "Enjoy heaven on Earth" has it about right. This is a tiny island, takes about 50 mins to ride around on the rented Yamaha scooter.

What have been the highlights?. Certainly the people are just very natural and friendly. The growing conditions are bountiful and the vegetation really exotic. Fruit falling from the trees and plentiful fish, molluscs and crabs. Great cooking and world class baking. Home made musical instruments, the ukulele had its origins here. Lots of music and dancing with the culture being maintained. We heard some wonderful church singing and stuffed ourselves at an Umu (local feast cooked in the ground). Yes did the dancing with the grass skirted locals PHWOAR.

Lost big money (80p) gambling on a crab race, the commentator was a hoot. Beach walked, kayaked, swam in crystal water, and made friends with both locals and fellow visitors. Already this feels more of a way of life than a trip.

Again a T shirt sums up the local humour "Send more tourists - the last ones tasted great" Now its Thurs so Fiji and two more time zones tomorrow....

M minus 15 days and counting

Terry - the internet office Avarua Cook Islands



Terry's Travels

RTW1-3 Fiji Islands

22/12/1999

BULA (Hello) Everyone

A night flight and crossing date line brought us to Fiji on Sat am - it felt very strange to have lost Fri. Now we are 11 hours ahead of GMT. Time in fact for our 4th major trauma. We were met at the airport by our transit agent, given our normal welcome necklace, taken to the office to get our paperwork. We then walked 100 yds with our driver in the dawn twilight for the mini bus. Di suddenly realised she hadn't got her travel wallet. Yes! passports everything missing. She ran the 100 yds in 6.3 secs. Me and the driver searched the minivan then the pavement. Di convinced herself that she had been robbed!!

Anyway together we went with the driver to the Police office .The Policeman was fast asleep with his head on his old desk. It took fully 5 mins to wake him. Banging coughing and calling officer. To the left was a cell with a male voice quietly moaning. Di made the report with difficulty to the drowsy officer. I again searched without success. We could only decide to travel on, feeling very vulnerable and pissed off. I was thinking, new experience, British Consul, less loving towards Di. I still sat in the front with the driver for the 2 hour drive in the brightening dawn to do the tourist bit. Di was in the back putting herself through the mangle. The driver was Hindu (with a Jehovah witness wife), a really nice guy. He had progressed from local bus driver (gravel roads no aircon) at 19 pounds per week. He was now getting a princely 35 + tips per week. He was allowed to take the Merc Mini bus home but no private use.

I was surprised by the number of Asians (Hindu/Muslim) on the island. He said the Fijians owned the land but were lazy.....

The road had humps to slow traffic thru the villages. The new local traditional houses being wood frame with woven leaves for walls with thatched roofs. The modern ones looking more like mobile homes with corrugated tin roofs. We went thru a small bustling town with market and a mix of the fuzzy haired Fijians and Asians and some Chinese. There was a bank and ATM so I thought I will get some currency. It ate my card with no warning. Oh Terrific ! this is NOT a good day. Bank shut Sat & Sun so I need to go back Monday - another new experience.

Back in the van and Ashok told me about his friend who had a store and coffee shop and "VERY GOOD PRICES" so I said sure we can stop, we had money for the coffees and we would go back later to look at the goodies. Di was feeling around for perhaps the 50th time - and found the wallet! Imagine the relief, but I had to explain to Ashok that she was crying with joy.....suddenly Fiji looked so much better.

Terry



Terry's Travels

RTW1-4 Fiji to Auckland

04/1/2000

The Hotel Warwick in Fiji was spectacular. 4 restaurants one on an island with a flame lit walkway and sand floor. 2 big pools about 6 bars, terrific food, service and value. We rented a car and drove into Suva the capital in great heat and humidity. Found lunch in the bus station and shared a curry then "The Hot Bread Shop" next door for a cobbread stick. A great lunch for 3 quid for 2. Then came the first serious rain of the trip. It was really tropically heavy and filled the pot holes which were then difficult to spot. It quickly cleared and felt fresher and cooler. Next morning the bank was open and I got my card back. They had a pile about 1.5" thick! I shall try to go in bank hours in future just in case it gets eaten again. We called back at Ashok 's friends store and bought and shipped to UK. It felt a little rushed in Fiji with loosing that day but a short 2.5 hour flight brought us to N Zealand.

Auckland is a terrific airport, free coffee lots of info , ATM'S that don't eat cards - and the Maui motorhome desk. Guess what? - no record of our booking which was 1st made a year or so ago. They phoned their main office and we went there. They found the "cancelled" booking. It was for a smaller model than we had booked. They couldn't contact our UK travel agents. Since it was raining and felt cold we booked into a nearby hotel. We had an excellent meal and wine and a comfortable night, we even watched some TV.

Our first impression was very favourable. Early the next morning we accepted the smaller M/home (no choice) but we are only the second users of it and our NZ leg was underway.

Terry at Cyber cafe Americas Cup Village Auckland NZ
HAPPY XMAS TO ALL OUR READERS



Terry's Travels

RTW1-5 Americas Cup and Santa

04/1/2000

This whole trip came about with me being in Spain alone in "Thydi" our UK motorhome. It was on a site in S Spain when I met a Kiwi in an old VW, a sixties model (but without the flower power). A couple of nights drinking with the guy, learning about the dateline and why Gisborne in N Island was the place to "See the light first" the seeds of our Millennium trip were sown. What you are reading about built from this. Being on the net helped me gather info. One friend has just Emailed today. He has seen a T shirt on a shapely body "You certainly won't be the first but you may be the next....." another told me something of the Americas Cup, having spent the whole day in and around the village in Auckland harbour I must now write to Santa! The co-founder of Microsoft, Rupert Murdoch, the owner of Amway (pyramid selling) are among the people with Super Yachts - apparently 30 million + is the entry point. The largest group of 34 ever together are here. A new one called "Georgia" is just being commissioned, the planets largest sloop, at around 70 million and considered good value. The Americas Cup attracted 11 contenders. I shall be cheering for "America One" since I am a sponsor. Yes I bought a cap.....

Later...

We ate in a real Chinese restaurant (a lot here) and slept the night in a central car park. Next morning heading N we saw a couple on a reclining seat bicycle with trailer touring from California. Bought superb fruit (4 avocados for 30p) and provisioned the m/home, now named "Minnie Yinnie" - the number plate is YN and Billy Conolly (the Big Yin) has enthused us with his trip of OZ by Harley. Having meandered through great scenery, we found a thermal aquatic park and campsite. A great swim in the sun in really warm water, opposite was "Black Pete's Bar & Grill" so that was our evenings entertainment, talking to friendly locals and eating the BEST chowder. The campsites seem to have fridge/freezers/hob and oven/toasters as well as the usual facilities. The next days travel took us through the most amazing forest at about 1,000' with giant ferns and Kauri trees. It seemed like a film set. We stopped to see one of the biggest Kauris, which are considered "Gods of the Forest" - having seen a 26' diameter specimen when double this size are documented it's easy to understand why. Around 2,000 years old and 150' high with straight trunks and branches only at the very top, they looked like giant grey candles and the sap looked like milky candle wax running down.

The Kauri museum showed all the "harvesting" of this crop just 100 years ago, maybe a million trees!

We bought our first diesel today at 20p per litre, saw a few motorcyclists enjoying the twisty good surfaced roads. We have seen deer, ostrich, llamas and the road kill looks very different to Olde England.....

Hope you had a great Xmas

Terry & Di

PS "Georgia" was such a boring name for a schooner "Philanderer" is so much more stylish.



Terry's Travels

RTW1-6 'Big T' meets 'Goodlady'

04/1/2000

Our Xmas day was to phone home and speak to the grandsons, Dan has such a deep voice for a 20 month old, plus the family. Then it was NZ champers "Lindauer" to go with asparagus, steak pie and new potatoes. The first cooked meal in "Minnie Yinnie" - very nice after eating out most of the time. There are lots of houses and land for sale and they are around a third of the prices in Yorkshire. Bay front in Auckland is a different story though. Boats are everywhere filling the many bays and harbours, and we seem to be drawn to such places and their pavement cafes. Di was excited to find some 3" thick seafood quiche for lunch - delicious. I listened to the Test Match whilst on the beach at Waipu Cove - this is the life. One of the best things about the internet is Email and I have made several pen pals. Now we are headed back to Auckland to meet "GoodLady". I know she is Chinese and an enthusiastic traveller and Emailed. When we arrived at her home she introduced "Big T" - that's me to her Chinese and Japanese friends.

They cooked a communal feast and we had a terrific evening. I hope we can meet again sometime, maybe in her home town which is Beijing, or when she gets her NZ passport in England. A hot day on a West coast beach with a creek joining a sandy beach, ideal for the young future surfers. The craggy coastline had a blow hole spouting in the distance "MY" was the ideal vehicle for such a day out. Yet another invite to visit friends we met on the Cook Islands at their home in Waieke Island. Jacky (originally from Vanuatu - French speaking) collected us at the small ferry terminal. It was just 35mins from Auckland on a high speed ferry. She took us to their home, which was idyllic on a beautiful bay. Ken is an enthusiastic fisherman and has a deep water mooring in the bay. We were taken on a tour of the island and a lunch with well chosen (by Ken) white wine.

Then we were back on the ferry about sunset. It truly is a great privilege to have such a wonderful opportunity to see someone else's life on the other side of the world. Now we were headed for a thermal area and saw touristy Rotorua. Further south was Lake Taupo and we had dinner at sunset overlooking the lake. Fab food and service including the candles lit at sundown. An impressive red from the local Hawkes Bay and slept by the lake. Only a day to the Millennium.....

Terry - Picton South Island NZ



Terry's Travels

RTW1-7 Gravel towards the Dawn

04/1/2000

Happy New Millennium Everyone,

An early start got us looking at waterfalls, jetboats, prawn farm, Geosteam & power plant, steaming "Craters of the Moon". Then we again had the sheer luxury of a thermal swimming pool - no chemicals, just changed everyday. Then I made a big mistake, this road looked good on the map through 2 state parks towards the E coast and Gisborne. The first 20 miles were OK then a roadwork sign and "gravel". The road works after 5 miles but the gravel was for 100. 3 hours driving and we arrived at a massive secluded lake and relief - a campsite since dusk was falling. We are not supposed to take the rented m/home on gravel (no insurance) but once we were on site it felt a great adventure though Maori country.

One advantage to arriving in NZ on summer solstice day was light from 6am to 8:30pm - and we take advantage of it. More gravel the following day, but we are used to it now. The new "Minnie Yinnie" looking very used and dusty - inside too! Once back on the surfaced road we had a sweep and a dust, and straight to the info office at Gisborne, our nadir of our Millennium Tour. The concert was free, the car park 1 pound 50p. A little sleeping and we were ready. The car park was filling, the Maori based pageant (floats etc) started arriving and a superb sound system carried primeval noises and bird calls with 4 Maori female vocalists - very effective. Then the symphony orchestra played but when Dame Kiri Te Kanawa came on stage the reception was amazing. This wonderful lady bridges both classical western culture and her native Maori. The Maori choir then joined her on stage. What a remarkable start to 2000. However it was just the beginning - we then walked to the beach for the sunrise. Maori canoes, two tall ships and many other vessels plus swimmers all greeting the dawn of the new millennium.....

Terry - Picton S Island NZ



Terry's Travels

RTW1-8 After the Millenium

09/1/2000

Welcome to Terry's 21st Century'

Not feeling my brightest, only due to lack of sleep not booze! I'm back behind the wheel of "MY" heading S towards Wellington. We picked up a hiker, very talkative unemployed 47yr old male. He was good company and well travelled. We took him as far as Napier where we visited this remarkable town. Napier had an earthquake and fire that wiped it out in 1931. It was rebuilt quickly in 1932/3 to become an unusual "frozen time" as a compact art deco area (the world's largest). Refurbishment has gone on continually since 1989 and is a spiffingly vibrant place with old cars and fashions, music events etc. Speaking of fashion in NZ, the young ladies are wearing their jeans low slung showing their underpants names.

Also in vogue are private plates, how about PILS4U on a chemists van, HARDON on a "private" car. I swear that later the same day I also saw VD!!! Even some of the businesses are creative thinkers - a bakers "Knead your dough"

Just a little further S we caught up with laundry etc in Hastings. There even was a children's bath at waist level in the laundry. Driving through this are was the best yet for farm produce (caulis at 11p) and healthy looking vineyards. We called at the local and caught the exciting end to the 1st 1 day International cricket match on TV. The pub was in Oriental Bay in Wellington and we wild camped in a central car park ready to be onboard the Capt Cook's famous "Endeavour" replica.....

Terry



Terry's Travels

RTW1-9 Endeavour and South Island

11/1/2000

It was drizzly but didn't spoil our final morning visiting "Endeavour". This is a super working replica of James Cook's famous ship, the original was built in Whitby around 1760. What a man he was, to say nothing of the sailors who lived in 14" bunk space and 4'6" headroom. Then a very short visit to "Te Papa" the new museum, the ferry was a fast 2 hour one with good looking waiter service! - how far removed from Channel Ferry 'services'. We arrived at Picton S.I. - a delightful place and still trimmed with Xmas lights, not many places have been Xmassy. We ate at the Old Barn which was a very well run family restaurant, 60's music and decor. The owner had put the speakers in 1950's radios. We met a guy with a shop who was from Scotland and has been here for 5 years, he said we would like S.I. even better and suggested keeping to the N coast to visit Golden Bay. We drove the narrow windy coast road with spectacular Fjord like views. Mussel farms here mean you can get green lipped ones for 2 quid per kilo. You can have them in pies, breaded, mussel soup - or just a bloody big dishful! There are more motorhomes to be seen on S.I. and also many more motorcycles. Lots of cruisers (a big %age being Harleys, Buells and Triumphs. For the first time I was missing my bike. Horse were being ridden in the Marlboro Sound and enjoying it in the crystal seas. A farm shop tempted us with cherries and boysenberries. The ice cream was blended there and then with real fruit - yummy. Having camped on a quiet car park I awoke to a metallic sound, I thought a car was being broken into but couldn't see anything - then an alarm and flashing light on a shop was activated. I woke Di and we saw the getaway van immediately drive off. I recognised a sound of a V8 engine and the shape of the van, Di noted the colour, it was 5am. We slept some more then called in the shop giving the police what we knew. The owner had seen the same van as he was called to the shop and got part of the number. So we may just have helped in the battle against villains - they stole nothing. A visit to the most popular national park Abel Tasman further emphasised the untouched natural beauty, access to the beaches was by water taxi on this scorching day. The Southern Alps are impressive and we were lucky to find a local concert in the farm like sports stadium with a home built stage. We saw the Bootleg Neil Diamond, Abba and top of the bill BeeGees with a crowd of about 250 (at 10 pounds per family) giving a terrific reception and dancing too. It was part of the local friendly family scene. It has been so easy to talk to everyone in the shops and bars, easy to park, drive - in fact everything.

Terry - the Darfield Library Internet Service S.I. Nz.



Terry's Travels

RTW1-10 Humour and Stuff

13/1/2000

'A New Zealand lady hadn't been feeling too well and went to see the doctor. She came back all excited and explained to her husband that what she needed was more LOVE. She explained that the doctor suggested at LEAST 7 times per week. Her New Zealand husband considered quietly for a moment - then replied " well put me down for two of them"!!

They are laid back here, many people go without shoes - by choice. Today is special. Endeavour is expected into Nelson Harbour having sailed through 'The Cut'. We joined the crowds and what a sight. In about 8knot wind she carried near full sail and then hove to whilst the sailors climbed the rigging and reefed the sails - all 11 of them. She came in slowly on her well hidden motors and fired a cannon to the delight of all of us. Our first miserable weather day was on reaching the East coast. The large colony of seals were lazing on the rocks and now we are at Kaipora. This is the place for watching the whales - except they don't want to be seen today. The sea is a little rough and the chances of whale watching low - we will try later.

A visit to Montana Winery and lunch was excellent - exotic salad with flower petals etc with salmon. Then to Christchurch for a quick drive around and through the long tunnel to the harbour. Union problems erupted here around Christmas and a lady was tragically rundown whilst picketing. It feels a strange disconnected harbour (apart from the tunnel) but a coast drive was spectacular with a sunset in Governor's Bay. A day out on the Banks Peninsular with the end of the road Akaroa, this felt very like the Lake District in England. We had bought tickets for the Jade Stadium and saw New Zealand score 300 runs beating the West Indies by 20.

The sunny game started at 2:30pm and with sunset at 9:0pm with the floodlights until 10:15pm. With music/TV screen and entertaining scoreboard it was a great experience. Still on the sporting front we are following the Americas Cup and "our" yacht America One is still looking good to qualify. Radio reception is very patchy here with all the rural expanses and mountains. Not aided by a poor antennae on "MY". We have just a week left in New Zealand with all the glaciers and high mountains to come.....

Terry - Hokitika (former goldmining town W coast)



Terry's Travels

RTW1-11 Arthur's Pass to Wildwest

18/1/2000

The drive through Arthur's Pass and the S Alps has been the most spectacular yet. Lots of hot sun shining on crystal lakes and streams. Touches of snow on the mountains, one lane bridges and a new viaduct. "MY" really chugged up some of the inclines and needed full use of '2' to get engine breaking. No wonder they don't recommend caravans to do this. Having reached the wild west coast one of the things is whitebait - either in sandwiches or patties! The pubs here have lots of gambling machines and one had a betting shop inside where we saw people winning. Having wild camped for so much of the trip we were now getting beach front sites. One was down a lane with allotments, the difference with England being they grew sheep rather than veggies. We are seeing signs to keep off the beach when the penguins are here - no sign of them though we have seen lots of seals. This is a great area for touring cyclists, many have camping equipment and very low gears. It's strange to see hiking boots on a rack on the front forks. I talked to the group leader of a BMW equipped party of motorcyclists, they were on a 3 week tour and he was happy to give me advice on which routes to take. Breakfast at a pavement cafe gave plenty of time to people watch in this quaint gold mining town of Hokitika which had one of NZ's busiest harbours in its heyday of the 1860's. There was internet service at the library but a 6 year old had a game CD loaded that was keeping him occupied. I found another again at the average NZ\$8 per hour (NZ\$ 3= 1 pound)

Spectacular Alpine type mountains - some snow-capped were the norm from Haas Pass to the tourist town of Queenstown on the shores of a large lake. We were heading for "The Remarkables Rally" which I had seen in the Kiwi Biker. The remarkables were the mountains but could have easily applied to the wet T shirt and wet willy contest at the rally! Queenstown is very touristy but stylish with it. It's the home of the first westernised Bungee Jump in 1988 and watching it was enough for us. More young ladies than young men were jumping. One girl wetted down (up?) to her torso in the fast flowing river that was being used by kayakers too. Then our ride on the "Sotover Jet Boat" missing rock faces through a fast flowing canyon and gorge. The 360 degree turns were wonderful, the wetting was OK in the hot sun. I met a Dutch couple with a home in Florida too, so I hope that we see them again. They had to get over the 'flu on their arrival in NZ. We need our mobile to keep family contact - it makes you feel so close from the other side of the world. Our next major Drive was to Fjordland - a long way but very worth while. A spectacular drive over the S Alps and finally via the Homer Tunnel. Unlined and unlit, wet and steep made it feel quite an adventure. The voyage to the Tasman Sea was aboard "Wanderer" a 100' motor sailer. More seals and luckily a large school of dolphins plus 600' high spectacular waterfalls. Thirty feet below the surface via an observatory - memorable. A liner even larger than the QE2 was expected into the Milford Haven Fjord was expected that afternoon. We have regularly called into pubs for a beer, watched TV and talk to the locals. This visit certainly provided local colour. Eight guys in their 60's were amusing each other (and us) with their repartee. Apparently a 'Sheila' had been in earlier with her attentive boyfriend. She must have been voluptuous etc. One local said she looked to have a bit of Maori in her. His pal said no she hadn't but she would like to have!!

Terry - Internet Cafe - Dunedin S.I. NZ.



Terry's Travels

RTW1-12 Attempted Poisoning—End NZ Leg 20/1/2000

Kia Orana for the final time, Since we have greatly praised the food here it had to happen. Perhaps it was a mistake to stop at all in a place called Gore but we did and tried the Cafe 1901. Seated at a table for two in the window was an OK start, the waitress took our order for a house red wine and a beer. After ages she return and said "no red wine" - puzzled Di changed to diet Coke and this arrived with my beer. Then Di overheard someone else order Pinot Noir, his didn't come either but his wife got it by going to the bar. Then Di ordered a Caesar salad and for me the pasta. Yes! she came back after another wait and said "no pasta - you'll have to chose something else". At this stage we should have left (I also noted her grubby T shirt) but I said I would have the pork and veggie stir fry. Again a long wait and I couldn't believe my eyes. It was more like a bed of watery rice plus a LOT of sweet and sour sauce, some veggies that had been boiled/steamed and or microwaved plus some breaded pork (or chicken?) and the plate so filled it was oozing onto the table, only serviettes stopping it from getting me. Di's didn't look appetising -it was a bag of coleslaw mix covered with torn up soggy bread, with an overcooked Chicken Kiev. After looking for the Candid Camera WE LEFT.....

Having driven a couple of long days we saw the farmers haymaking until dusk (9:30pm). We pushed on to get to Dunedin which is quite a large manufacturing city and harbour. Forming the approach to the harbour was a peninsular. This is the only non-island in the world to be home to some Albatrosses. We were thrilled to see five sitting on nests. One baby had hatched just four days before. It was a wind free morning so we were denied seeing them in flight with their 3 meter wingspan. It was still an awesome sight with seals in the bay and Yellow Eyed Penguins just around the point. Now we were seriously getting to the end of our terrific NZ leg. We had an intro to meet Andy in Ashburton who has a company that imports/supplies and services farm implements right up to giant combines. We had a tour of the spacious warehouses and really enjoyed a family evening at his house. It was a lovely final night with his children. Repacking ready to leave "MY" in Christchurch and fly to OZ was our next but last thing in NZ.

Our last was to call at "The Fat Ladies Arms" - we missed the people we were to say Hi to, but met "Spratt" a fast talking NZander with Irish ancestry.

Having asked was I in the police he mimicked his mothers Irish brogue who told him "St Patrick cleared Ireland of all snakes - he sent them to join the police in England!

To sum up the RTW trip so far, we could have spent more time everywhere - but yet we have done so much, over 6,000km travelled in the motorhome. It started to feel like a sampler to come back and fill the gaps. I hope you are enjoying reading RTW -TTT,copies go to Australia-NZealand-Canada-UK-Europe-America-Mexico.

Terry - Christchurch Airport NZ

PS. Please excuse any mistakes but I compose in real time at busy places where people jammed either side sometimes read aloud their Email. Imagine the distraction that I had when someone describes her girlfriends 'accident' - dropping her mobile down the loo!!



Terry's Travels

RTW1-13 Worlds Largest Island – OZ

02/2/2000

An easy 3 hour flight feeling sorry to have left "MY" in NZ but excited to see Sydney. It is hot (32C) sunny and busy The pre-booked Hotel Mercure proved to be a good location and having bought 3 day transport passes we were ready to see Sydney. The harbour is vast with the Opera House and Harbour Bridge the well recognised features. In fact these are just a small part of the total harbour which has 240km of coast line. Taking the Explorer bus tour was the ideal way to get our city centre bearings. It turned out so well since we were the only passengers, it was like having a limo with my own friendly driver. he GOT THE PUB RECOMMENDATION RIGHT and we were amazed by the seafood and fruit. Close by was the "Pies on Wheels" caravan where the famous occasionally drop by when slumming it - I do it all the time! The Olympic Village is almost ready (just 7 months to go) and was accessible by Catamaran Ferry, a scenic trip with about 8 water bus stops on the way and a short coach ride. When we watch the Olympics on TV it will mean so much more, we even saw a diving competition in progress at the Aqua Centre. The thing that impressed me the most was that the total site was an abattoir and brick works previously. The new lasting facility is therefore a re-generation of a huge neglected area. About 500,000 spectators per day are expected. The competitors beds will be made 392,00 times during the Games. We had a week or so in mind for Sydney but since the container with my bike is "misplaced" it will certainly be more..... It's not too much of a problem since there is so much happening. Kings Cross area is similar to Soho (need I say more) but Di didn't like it. The internet cafes were amazing with around 50 well used terminals jammed in a hot airless old shop with an Asian proprietor collecting the \$3 a time for maybe 24 hours a day.....

Terry Katoomba Blue Mts OZ



Terry's Travels

RTW1-14 Sydney on Australia Day

09/2/2000

Since our stay in Sydney was extended we could see some of the Festival events. Mainly music and outdoors it added to an already impressive pub and pavement cafe culture. The temperature varies more than England and the sun is POWERFUL. Since I had bought Di an extremely expensive pair of travel pants she was able to just zip off the legs as required (I know I spoil her rotten). We also had a chance to meet Sheila & Greg. I had corresponded with her on Email and she "met" Greg on Email - married him and re-located from Canada to Sydney - WOW. It was really good to catch a double deck train out of Sydney for 45mins and met and taken to their house for an Aussie beer and barbie. Di and I were able to wish them future happiness. The power of Email is truly awesome.

Another day around Sydney gave me the chance to try the central monorail, another ferry ride and a trip to Bondi beach. Sydney has got to be one of the best cities in the world for quality of life. The extra stay (no - the bike is still not here) now took in Australia Day.

Sheila suggested the four of us meet up at the Opera House steps. The Aussie Army Band was playing to an audience already in the hundreds and then a busker arrived. We watched his excellent performance using balloons and really funny children from the audience. He admitted that we were the biggest audience of his career so he had a good pay day. This was a great location to watch the start of the Tall Ships Race (HMS Bounty won) and Ferry races plus a flag competition on all the yachts that filled the giant harbour. It made a sight in the sunshine that never will be forgotten.....

Terry - Lake Entrance, Victoria, Australia



Terry's Travels

RTW1-15 Countryside and Country Music

09/2/2000

Since the container (and my bike) were still misplaced we rented a car for a week to get away from Sydney to see some more of this vast continent. As usual we had talked to everyone and had the idea of the Blue Mountains, Hunter Wine Region. The guy at the car rental said do it the other way round since its a rainy day. I drove over the Harbour Bridge and N, it took about 30mins for the heavy traffic to thin out. It was raining as I took the motorway for a while. One unusual feature is leaving natural rock as the median between N & S lanes. Steep inclines and spectacular lakes - this felt exciting. We saw our 1st Kangaroo (dead) and other strange looking road kill. Soon we turned off onto more interesting local roads. I realised I hadn't seen another car for a half hour.

Our first small township was civilised, it had a bike shop and a racecourse where we saw a race. There were few spectators but the TV is well used for gambling (more later). Watching TV that night we saw the Tamworth C&W Festival was on so.... Along the way we saw the Hunter Valley Wineries, the home of Aussie Wine and very commercialised for tourists. Onwards past stud farms with huge pastures rivalling Kentucky in the States. One called Emirates Park gives you an idea of the ownership. Half an hour from Tamworth we called in a local for a beer where the friendly owner explained how difficult accommodation was. He phoned a friend 15mins back and we booked in. This proved good advice since Tamworth's population grows from 16,000 to 66,000 for the Festival. We looked around in amazement and returned to the local to hear their band and eat a steak off the barbie. Chatting to the locals they said it doesn't come any more country than this!

Next day in Tamworth was mega. We saw the world record set for a line dance in the main street. Yes 6,275 people - brilliantly organised and fun. Then a cavalcade of 70 floats, many playing Country which took an hour to pass. Top that - but we did going to the outdoor launch of Lee Kernaghans new CD. We met Charlie Landsborough an English songwriter and heard many buskers.

Harleys were here in quantity and style, in fact the States would be pushed to better this event.....

Terry Lake Entrance NSW Australia



Terry's Travels

RTW1-16 Spectacular Blue Mountains

10/2/2000

Now we were driving the wide open spaces calling through Mudgee a splendid and more recent wine area. Driving gravel roads and watching for "Dunnys" (toilets) we saw the first Roo just hopping along at the side of the road. I'd heard of Bathurst and motoring. Not only did we see the town but Di drove the circuit - twice. This is a great town - the Internet is free at the library, but was fully booked. A local village was established on gold mining and was as quaint as they come. We had an Evanshire Tea (similar to Devonshire) and watched the many local characters. Our motel that night had a Teppanyaki restaurant attached, a good meal with interesting company, a Swiss couple who had emigrated to start a Winery near Adelaide. The chefs party piece was to cleverly sign his name in salt on the griddle - from his side.

Leaving Lithgow we now set about all the Blue Mountain touristy stuff. The ZigZag railway. Called that because it Zigs to a rockface, then Zags down the mountain. Run by enthusiasts it has steam at weekends and an art deco diesel.

The views, waterfalls and forests make this whole area special, the highlight being a ride on the worlds steepest cable railway. This Victorian relic used to haul coal - scary. Then the Gondola a horizontal cable car. The "mister" said it was fairly safe to walk around whilst flying! A phone call and the bike has turned up, stuff this rental car - it's back to Sydney.....

Terry the Dragon (it's my year in the Golden Dragon Year)



Terry's Travels

RTW1-17 Worlds Most Expensive BMW

12/2/2000

QUESTION - How do you get a 1978 BMW 800/7 to become the world's most expensive?

ANSWER - Export it to Australia!

The story is l-o-n-g, complicated, confused - and expensive. From England we must have bureaucrats along with the convicts to get the colony going - they have all thrived. My feeling is that the bureaucrats should now become the convicts! Having got that out of my system and not wishing to be a whingeing "Pom" the good news is the bike started 1st time.

It was interesting to collect the crate from the busy container depot, unpack the bike, quarantine it, fuel it and RIDE - to get a vehicle inspection and then a temporary registration. Finally we were ready We met Sheila and Greg again and were introduced to Greg's sister and hubby, another tinny or two and more travel talk. John goes abseiling but otherwise seems normal. It was another fun evening and we hope to see them all sometime, somewhere.

Our last night was near Sydney in a place called Ramsgate, very lively and on the ocean. We had rented a mobile 2 bedroom cabin and when we left on the bike the maid would have been pleased with all the goodies that we left behind. Necessary now were to ride the World's Most Expensive BMW. The first call was to Botany Bay where modern Australia began. I felt somewhat equipped for the journey since I had learned some Australasian.

sammie=sandwich:

pani=toasted sandwich:

de facto=common law (as in wife):

judder bars=humps, sleeping policemen:

trundler= shopping trolley:

hoon=idiot, revhead, loony:

jandals=thongs (the ones for the feet!);

cockies=???:

pokies=gambling machines:

I had also been taught the Aussie wave (keeps the flies away!) - no problems mate

Terry the Dragon (now in my year of the Golden Dragon)



Terry's Travels

RTW1-18 The Illawarra and South

14/2/2000

Down the coast from Capt Cook's landing place we left the busy, hot, polluted traffic to enter a State Forest and quieter area. Round a corner and two lines of hot Sydney residents queuing in two lines to enter. This wasn't what we planned, but the hottest day of a so far below par summer had brought them all out - and it was a Saturday. Having passed through the booth - no charge if you are just driving through * it really was untouched forest and the odd lake. In the terrific heat I felt somewhat threatened. What if a fire broke out? Warnings were everywhere requiring a permit for a fire. It was wonderful to hit the spectacular coast and cliff drive. An early stop found us in Bulli and we got the Motel's last room. English managed (they are everywhere!) and a recommendation to eat at the RSL (or Russell) in fact it stands for Returned Servicemen's League. An Aussie tradition and centre of social life. The meal was excellent and the booze cheap thanks to the considerable number of "pokies" - like a mini Las Vegas. We drank at the bar with large TV showing Rugby with the locals very enthusiastic about this 1st match of the season. We then dined in the dining area and had coffee and drinks in the dace area with a good musician and some dancing. The whole environment was of friendly sophistication - and we liked it.

Visiting the Coolangatta Winery was interesting being built by convicts and the live jazz entertaining the diners was to a high standard. That afternoon when we passed through "Yatte Yattah" I simply knew that Di must be connected with this place. Biking has many appeals for me , one is the solitude whilst riding - even with a passenger. Another is the smells of forest, Eucalypts, flowers - you even know when road kills are coming. One Wombat had ballooned and looked ready for floating away. Joking apart on a bike the wildlife is something not to hit. Wombats can even take the suspension out on a truck. This day finished with a picnic in the motel watching the well produced "David Copperfield" with Pauline Quirke

Terry - Melbourne OZ

Valentine's Day - so xxx's(French) and xxx's (Aussie)!



Terry's Travels

RTW1-19 500+ Miles so Far

14/2/2000

WE had the first wetting with 15mins of rain - then we dried out half an hour later. A guy we saw was well equipped, he was driving a truck with camper back that also went on water - an AquaCamper. Many side trips helped to see the varied coastline, even beachside property advertised with views to NZ. A night spent in Eden, I was careful not to bite the apple, then a visit to a Whaling Museum on Double Bay. Now an area for whale watching, it used to be a place for whale catching. The largest ever caught there was NINETY SEVEN FEET. Even more amazing that a whale called "Old Tom" even helped the whalers catch their prey. His skeleton is now in this splendid museum. There's even a British Admiralty report of a whaler who went missing during a catch and finished inside a whale for 15 hours - and lived for 20 more years with bleached hair! Further S the Sapphire Coast was quite a wilderness area as we crossed into Victoria State. The State had power problems due to heat, strikes and breakdowns.

No aircon was allowed from 1pm to 7pm but yet the pokies were permitted. We love the tiny rural petrol stations that invariably are cafes, info centres, craft shop - in fact you name it. Sitting having a pot of tea in the dust on a rickety table is charmingly served with leaf tea and a strainer. Lots of passer-by's to talk to. We try not to buy fuel in these places since I already have had to clean red dust from the carburettors despite extra fuel filters. The weather forecast was predicting 100 degrees and now with a total fire ban The wind was blowing hard too and felt like riding into a fan heater on full. One dodge that worked well was soaking my T shirt, wringing out and wearing under my leather. It takes about 2 hours to evaporate- then re-treat.

The cold beer never tasted so good. I met another biker who said how good Tasmania was to visit. The pool at the motel was very welcome and a few days swimming everyday was getting me fitter. We heard rain during the night and couldn't believe the change. Still raining and down from 100 to about 58 - unbelievable that now we were keeping warm. It was just drying when we refuelled at Inverloch and met a husband and wife both riding their own sidecar outfits - in itself very unusual but as we talked to them WOW. They had ridden all the way round OZ having started married life and riding in 1947. Wonderful people at 75 and 72 years old.....

Terry in Tasmania



Terry's Travels

RTW1-20 Philip Island and Melbourne

16/2/2000

Gooday

Sorry there's been a lot to read - it will slow down again. Philip Island was a destination I really wanted to see having watched GP's on telly. It's an island connected by a bridge some 30miles S of Melbourne. It's a popular track with the racers and even under grey skies we could see the lovely setting. How fortunate that the cars were qualifying for the weekend's Aussie V8 Touring Cars - the seasons first. Barry Sheene commentates on this series too. The visitor Centre was like a version of Daytona with all the goodies for sale. The island also has prolific wildlife with a colony of rare Fairy Penguins, seals and a great variety of birds. Melbourne is a huge city with 75% of Victoria's population. There's a free Victorian Tramcar that rattles and bumps around the city centre. In fact the brakes failed on ours so we changed trams. The City's a mixture of old and new - very London like. We rode the bike to the other side of the bay and found delightful cafes and play areas. We then tried to go to the St Kilda Festival and outdoor concerts. No-one told us 350,000 were going!! - we had to give up. Their bike was fluffing too - so back to the motel. The bike wasn't my Valentine the following morning but an adjustment to the contact breaker and I fixed it. It had me re-calling "Zen and the Art of M/Cycle Maintenance" - all about mind over matter if ever you get your brain free. The outer suburbs are quite nice and time around the sunny pool before we go to Tas. Yes it's Valentine's Day and it's an overnight dinner cruise. Am I a smoothie or what?.....

Terry in Tas



Terry's Travels

RTW1-21 Tasmania and The Penal Colony

21/2/2000

Melbourne was busy as we headed for the ferry. It was at a red light that we met our knight in shining armour. He was mounted on a BMW r850 motorbike and offered to guide us to the boat - about 10 mins if you knew the way. We waved our thanks as he rode away sitting high in the saddle. Then 2 hours hassle to get on board the crowded boat. Whilst waiting we met a couple on a Yamaha Diversion and met them for a drink before dinner and a quiet cabin. Riding off the boat and into Tasmania was a total contrast - a lot like Scotland and NZ. We rode with Donald and Rosemary to Launceston and a cuppa. Once again I was spotted with my British plates and an English couple now resident in Tas were soon giving good local knowledge. Di and I decided to ride some more in the improving weather and swapped Emails with our new friends. The riding became wonderful through the mountains. The bends needed watching as there was loose gravel around some of them - and the stunning scenery was so distracting! St Helens on the E coast was the night's stop and some scrumptious salmon whilst overlooking St George's Bay - this is living. It was a joy to ride early on the fresh sunny morning and continue down the scenic E coast reaching Bichenor for brekkers and the I/Net. Two unusual coastal features are close together. The Tasman arch is a natural square cut bridge over the rocky coast. Swallows and gulls were flying through and using the uplifting wind. The other was even more manmade looking- almost like a section from the Corinth Canal with the Tasman Sea rushing in.

Our stay that night was in Eaglehawk Neck Bay, this was a strategic site being a narrow isthmus that lead to the peninsular which is (was) the site for the Penal Colony Port Arthur which during it's life from around 1830 it processed some 12,000 convicts. There is a superb A/V presentation in an old convict built cottage that told it's story with sound, light and cut-out figures. Convicts were such an important part of OZ's history that a visit to Port Arthur was a must. Convicts and their captors were shipped out from 1830 and built a spacious facility first in wood and then stone which has been restored. It was a cruel place with floggings and chain gangs but also was the first to give training. Eventually many were pardoned and became the community. This very same site was where in 1996 a madman ran amok and shot 35 people

Tasmania tourism is still recovering.....

Terry - Wyndham Library Tasmania



Terry's Travels

RTW1-22 Up with the Locals

22/2/2000

Dinner was over and the bar beckoned - not the hotel side but up a few steps to the local's bar. Three guys were spaced around the curved bar. Baileys for Di and a whiskey and water for me. 'Half or Full' said the barmaid. 'Oh! Full please' I said. Two shots were served. We got into conversation with the nearest two guys. I called one "ESH" because that was printed on his work shirt. He saw me looking at photos on the wall of local catches. BIG-VERY BIG Blue Fin Tuna. Of course the conversation switched to big sharks. He told me of a two ton one - I was thinking Bullshit when he said come next door where he showed me the jawbone - OH! Then the third guy fell off his barstool. You know how you watch to see if it was an accident or booze. He was a little unsteady as he walked to the dunny. T shirt read "If I can't eat it or screw it My philosophy is to Piss On It" I ordered the same again, the other waitress said 'Double?' 'Sure' I said. She then poured FOUR shots. See what we're into? "ESH" was drinking more and the talk came to bikes- more specifically he said ' Have you ever had sex on a bike?' Of course my reply had to be 'No'. 'Well' he said ' You need a blanket for the tank, get her facing you, and start riding down a bumpy road.' I nodded, then he said ' Course there's lots of bumpy gravel roads here'. Then a worried look crossed his face 'Your heart's strong ain't it?' Then he looked miles away and noisily re-lived his own experiences. As luck would have it - no blanket in the room, only a duvet.....

Terry - Devenport Tasmania



Terry's Travels

RTW1-23 The Black Cockatoos

23/2/2000

We bumped into the couple of bikers we had met on the ferry on the quayside at Hobart, we then planned a days ride together. An 8am start and we were riding from our motel on the sunny beach and into cloud on the mountain. Then into blue sky at the top and back into clammy, chilly cloud on the other side. It was condensing on our visors so a bit of mental telepathy and into a cafe for coffees and a chat. It gave the chance of knowing Donald and Rosemary better. An hour later and the day looked fabulous the coastal scenery was stunning so we stopped on Verona Beach. The sand was fine enough for an egg timer, quiet apart from the gentle waves and bird noises Koo-eh, Koo-eh. Then we saw two Black Yellow Tailed Cockatoos, most beautiful and impressive with a 24" wingspan. The sea was crystal and we saw two sting rays of about 3' wingspan slowly enjoy their cruise on by- just like us Donald led the way to a secluded hill top via gravel roads to visit a winery. Not a bit as we expected, just a tiny counter, a few bottles with quick squirt dispensers !! - served by the Bride of Dracula. It tasted like poison too!! Nothing could spoil our enjoyment of motorcycling in paradise and we completed about a 100mile loop before saying a sad farewell to our new friends.

The tour around Tassie is roughly clockwise and now it was time to go from Hobart in the South with its famous harbour towards the west coast. More super bend swinging and mountains but much of the farmland was really parched and with a total fire ban. Then higher and into total wilderness and forest and a huge Hydro Plant. It's now really windy and very hot and muggy - and where is the next petrol station? The road surface is very variable and some fallen rocks to watch out for. It made for difficult and uncomfortable riding. We found fuel and a drink as we neared Queenstown.

There had been a recent bush fire and it looked like an alien planet - all grey and black with touches of new green showing from the ferns.

Queenstown is a mining town - originally gold around 1870 but then copper. The rainforest has been stripped for smelting on the surrounding hills. This caused erosion so you see bare hillsides of many different colours with all the chemical bearing lodes. The steep twisty final bends down to the town allowed an even closer look at the amazingly coloured rocks. We were pleased to get to a motel, it had felt the first really tiring day. A beer and a powernap (are you allowed these when retired?) and then the rain came - lots of it. What was a gully behind our room became a raging torrent. The noise still didn't drown the heavy metal group playing across the river - ,thank goodness for the nap.....

Terry



Terry's Travels

RTW1-24 Great Aunt Di

27/2/2000

My mobile rang - Di is now a Great Aunt! - what excitement. N from Queenstown gave great riding again through Strahan which had one of the state's earliest penal colonies. Lots of pristine rainforest then suddenly one of the world's largest tin mines at Zeehan. A cuppa at the Milk Bar in Rosebury sat on a wall in the main street told us a lot about the youth of the area. Those that had 'utes' (pick up trucks) had girlfriends. Those that did not - did not. You can understand why so many get in debt for 'chick magnets'.

* Now I know why I passed so many years working. The glorious ride continued N until hitting the N coast at Wynyard. A lovely place with nearby fossil area from 30 million years back. Up to date houses looked especially good with their tiled roofs - A typical roof here is tin - often painted green.

The motel was near the estuary and a couple of 'teenagers' had been noisily skinny dipping - I missed that but one squelched back noisily through the 10" deep muddy foreshore. I waited for her and she shouted that she did this everyday. What a shock when I saw she was maybe fortyish! Our penultimate day on Tasmania was along the N coast. We had our cuppa in a Penguin mug in the Penguin Cafe in the village of Penguin. Guess what the waste bins were? Then into the mountains near Cradle Mountain through Sheffield with murals, making it a quaint village and not a bit like its namesake in England.

Our final day in Tassie and we rode to Launceston to meet a couple of Brits we met the week before. We also had in mind a visit to some Roman Baths with sybaritic treatments! My hardest decision of the day whether to have a Cleopatra Bliss - Pamper - Euphoria or Utopia. In reality we talked too long and ran out of time. Bugger it. Just a ride up the West Tamar wine region plus our second wetting before reaching a very wet Devonport and the overnight ferry....

Terry - now in Adelaide



Terry's Travels

RTW1-25 The Great Ocean Road

27/2/2000

This famous coastal road goes from Port Philip Bay near Melbourne - West to the border with S Australia. You may recall pictures of "The 12 Apostles" which are along this its coast and battered by the seas of the Bass Straits. It's 300km long and was built by Returned Servicemen as a memorial to fallen Servicemen. The vistas around each bend are quite breathtaking and the small amount of traffic makes it a joy to ride. It was one of the 'magnets' that brought my bike to OZ.

We left the ferry on a wet morning and headed for the Gt Ocean Rd via Geelong. Calling at a large new Info Centre there were 2 outside dunny's. The guy said 'Sorry we keep them locked and a lady has got the only key' - OH. Ten minutes and several other people enquiring later also I got the key. Inside was a Black & Yellow box for used syringes - "Sharpies". The whole drug scene around Melbourne has been very 'in your face' . I returned the key and the guy explained they had problems keeping druggies out of the toilet. Di used the ladies - no "Sharpie" box !

The day was brightening and Torquay was the first stop. It's very much the surf capital of Victoria with all the fashionable named clothing and surf boards. Strong similarities with the surfing scene in America. Even "point Break" Backpacker motels etc (remember the Patrick Swayze film?) We stayed in a B&B - these are normally more upmarket than motels - different to England. We enjoyed a full grilled breakfast for a change with a splendid ocean view. The next days riding was the ultimate with bendy

roads ,beaches, rocks, cliffs and the famous views. Even one rock called London Bridge - which really did fall down in 1990. Loch Ard Gorge where two teenagers were magically washed ashore and the only survivors of shipwreck. We then saw our first Wallaby.

What a great day

Terry - Glenelg



Terry's Travels

RTW1-26 A Rest day at Warranbool

01/3/2000

A hot sunny day and a pool, even shops close by and we decided on a rest day. The pool was heated and could have done with cooling a little! We needed to plan ahead to visit Ayers Rock via Alice Springs near the centre of OZ. We had an outward flight booked from Adelaide and decided to rent a camper there and then return on the Ghan train. Lots of conversation in the pool with an adventurous Aussie has given me future ideas.

It felt good to be riding again after a day off and we had breakfast at Heywood - the day of their carnival so we saw a mile race and Police and the Aussie army on horseback. Once again lots of friendly people chatting to us after our best value beans on toast yet. We left the main road and the minor coast road took us to Beachport - so delightful that we stopped early. An immaculate motel and we bumped into a couple from Addingham just 6 miles from where we live in England - it's a small world. The local tourist drive was unpaved sandy road along pristine ocean and dunes. We thought it couldn't be beaten - then we found Robe which had history too. A group of 20 off road motorcyclists were having a break stretched out on a grassy bank overlooking the crystal ocean - this is how life's meant to be.

The riding became average with more plains and salt flats like mini Lake Eyries. V formation flights of very large Pelicans gave us a fly past. We topped for petrol - and found another biking couple from Kent !! Talk about 4 amazed people. They too had ridden from Sydney but had previously ridden in the US and NZ. We swapped phone nos and promised to meet up in Adelaide. More featureless riding until we hit the Murray River and stayed the night in a pub at Murray Bridge. This old bridge being the first over the mighty Murray. We rode the bridge the following morning for the posy photo and were startled to see huge flocks of white Cockatoos in the trees alongside the river. Then it was a short stretch of Freeway towards Adelaide Hills. A detour to the Germanic town of Hahndorf was especially worthwhile. Then via the impressive suburbs of Adelaide with the traffic building up as we reached the seaside towns of Brighton and Glenelg where we stayed. It's quite Florida like here. We had dinner on a balcony and watched the cruisin' down below. Both 2 and 4 wheels and I would say more chicks than fellas. The tram service was handy and we went the 10km to Adelaide centre to meet Paul and Claire (the bikers). We are planning to ride the dreaded Nullarbor Plain together. It was good to have some biker conversation even though I'm a generation older. Enthusiasm spans age gaps. After Di and I walked around the centre which is beautiful - but seemed quiet.

We watch the news and weather so we know of Queensland having power outs and severe floods. NSW with a cyclone warning and Alice Springs has had flooding so it's fingers crossed for tomorrow. The other news items are petrol up 10c per litre - the bike does 60mpg - no worries. GST is going on at 10% - just like our VAT (Value Added Tax) which is now 17.5% in England.

The Olympics are building up and the team clothes shown to much criticism. We like the outspoken news reporting. The Aussies are thrashing NZ at cricket. Strangely Aussie red wine is quite expensive here - the house wines (from boxes) are to be avoided. The food gets better as we travel west - or are we better at choosing?

In closing this long RTW I welcome two more readers. One is new to Emailing and got a friendly 'techie' to help. I imagine his amusement - she thought my scribbled Email was @HOTMASH. It made me laugh!

Terry - still in Adelaide and Glenelg is 39 degrees today.



Terry's Travels

RTW1-27 The Red Centre of Australia

6/3/2000

The last day in Adelaide/Glenelg was spent in the pool and taking the bike to leave for an oil change in the city. The Fringe Festival had started and lots of the outdoor events were just a short walk away. The Fringe area was all pubs and pavement cafes and got busy as the hot evening progressed. Buskers busked and with an outgoing audience it was lots of fun. There was a spectacular ballet overhead on 25' carbon fibre poles with a golden Icarus the leading 'flyer'- I've never seen anything remotely like it. The famous Spiegeltent which I have seen at the Edinboro Festival was being used in a nearby park and was a popular venue. This historic tent has seen some famous performers inc Marlene Dietrich. People are even asking to be married in it. Our final show was 'Fiona & her Sisters' - a bit like an Aussie Victoria Woods. Since she was from Alice Springs it gave a bit of an intro to where we were headed.

An early taxi to the airport and a 2 hour flight over a spectacular landscape started a trip within a trip. The colours of the rocks were largely magenta and with the tinges of green following the rain was very picturesque from 6 miles up. When I remarked how far the airport was from Alice Springs the taxi driver explained that the planner was a taxi driver. The Mercedes 312 Diesel camper was waiting and looked the part. Almost 5 hours driving later we passed Ayers Rock Resort and an aborigine flagged us down. I thought he wanted a lift but he wanted a rum. I gave him \$3 but he wanted to give me a \$20 and send me back for a bottle! He was very miffed when I wouldn't go.

We found our biker friends who had driven all the way and chatted whilst we watched the sunset and nightfall over the Rock. It was unlike anything that we had seen before but was still a bit disappointing. You enter (and pay) for the National Park to see the Rock so we couldn't wild camp and returned to the Resort. Next morning was hot and sunny and we all drove back alongside the Rock.

This time it felt quite awesome. The power of the Rock was evident, it was making humans climb it in terrific heat - looking like flies. Several other sensible people were sitting alongside me gazing at the spectacle when a guy came running from the back of the Rock. He was gasping and unsteady on his feet but managed to click his stopwatch!

There were Dragonflies flying coupled together (must be fun), butterflies in threes and then simply flies - LOTS OF THEM. They are most inquisitive, they insist on looking up my nose, going in my ears and eyes. I had seen people with face nets looking total pratts - now I wanted one. We drove round the Rock marvelling all the way and so fortunate to see it in this setting more green than for at least 10 years. Unforgettable. Then it was on to Kings Canyon, The Olgas which all builds into this picture of a remarkable landscape. Some roads were still closed after the recent rains and the red earth was all newly washed and very distinctive. We called for fuel where Quad bike tours were offered on this million acre property. Our friends left to drive S to Adelaide and we went N to Alice Springs. Back on the Highway we saw the desert was starting to really bloom following the rain. We passed the place where several motorists were cut off between rivers for 3 days. We saw Road Trains - even a BP one with 4 Tanker Trailers. This is not the biggest, a 550hp Mack over 53metres long is IT. Another diesel stop where ostriches, kangaroos and geese were happy to be fed and then back to Alice

Terry - Alice Springs NT,OZ.



Terry's Travels

RTW1-28 Alice Springs and the Ghan

7/3/2000

Alice has proved a surprising place to us. We are staying in a Caravan Resort with a pool and pub. The power has been useful for the microwave and even a little aircon. The wildlife is fantastic with noisy green parrots and quiet but large iridescent green beetles. Stick insects cling to the mesh around the camper. At sunset Rock Wallabies come from the rocky hills to one side of the Resort to be fed. Like mini kangaroos but quite trusting of humans. The pub has good food and music - even a show featuring a range of didgeridoos that was great to see and hear. They are not too easy to play - just gently blow a raspberry into the beeswax mouthpiece. I won't give up my day job (come to think of it - I have). The longer we stay in OZ the more we like the laid back ways and friendly outgoing ways.

There was a street market with buskers and the cafe society gave lots of people watching time. There are quite a proportion of abbos here and they too spend much of their time watching. Quite a few look to live rough in their jeans and T shirts but yet we see a lot in good housing. They are certainly very different to any race I have seen before. The ladies looking especially different with their facial construction. Most of the shops are very stylish and selling quality products, some even made in OZ. The fashions are Bushranger type with desert type colours. Certainly it all gives the feeling of a quality of life here, the properties too reflect this. Yesterday was a little rainy so I didn't get my balloon flight. It finished being a relaxing day - no bad thing after all the travel. We leave on the famous Ghan train at 1pm arriving in Adelaide at 9am tomorrow. Should be good with today's hazy sunshine. The cabin converts into a sleeper and with a bar and restaurant onboard should be a bit like the Orient Express. Hope there's no murders.....

Terry - Alice Springs NT,OZ.

PS - Don't expect many internet places across the Nullarbor