



Terry's Travels

TT4-1 New Zealand and Aus by Bike 31st January 2001

Happy New year Everyone,

2001 was a year of VERY great ups and downs. Seeing friends, family and travelling - especially by motorcycle - were amongst the ups, Tibet was a high point at 6,000 metres. Getting a new motor home and taking it to Spain, the new Triumph and touring the Mid - West being up with the highs, to be followed by the September 11th atrocity - a low point for all the world.

Recently I lost a good pal (mates since 1960) and I have two others with health problems.

Exciting plans are already made - although a bit rushed - for 2002, which I hope to share with you all. I have bought some new technology this Xmas whilst back in England - a small digital still camera, new colour printer and my first PDA (small hand held computer PC 2002) . The new PDA and camera will be travelling with me and should help me start a Web site later in the year when I buy a new powerful computer.

I leave on Jan 2nd with Bill my motorcycle pal to ride in New Zealand (his first visit) before meeting up with Di and friends in Western Australia in March. Then on to South Africa to see the SA Grand Prix for motorcycles in Welkom in April where they are to race the new class of fastest racing bikes - exciting stuff. May will be the start of Di and I living in "Mercie" the motorhome whilst touring Europe to see the Grand Prix races. That's lots to look forward to and I should find internet cafes to supplement my portable in sending Emails as I travel. I really look forward to seeing and hearing from you all around the world . As ever if you can catch me or us anywhere on the travels just let me know.....

HAPPY 2002

Terry



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I met Bill with his HUGE suitcase at Heathrow before we joined the Qantas flight direct to Bangkok. The Amari Watergate had a limo service - so we lived it up having our own driver take us to dinner at the fabulous Sea Food Market restaurant - fish doesn't come better. It quickly told me why I like barmy Thailand so much. Then, yes I admit it we then went for a massage. After looking through the window of the sex by numbers females (I think!) we opted for a massage only - HONEST. A separate large room had 20 mattresses on the floor and as the only clients Bill and I had adjacent ones. The aging (OK - ugly and weighty females) chattered away whilst working on our bodies through thin pyjamas. Just what we needed after the long flight - surely this would move the DVT clots around. Certainly we both slept well that night. Then what else do you do in Thailand? - take a Buddha trip. First the over 5 ton solid gold one - then the 43m long reclining one and numerous ones showing different expressions. My new digi camera was put to good use on an extremely anorexic one - he starved himself on the pathway to enlightenment - before finding it wasn't the way.

Enough of polluted Bangkok, city of TEN million and an hours flight to Koh Samui and a different Thailand. About\$2 got us a moped each and a bit more for a jungle elephant ride - fabulous. A splendid dinner in peace on the beach - this is living. My new triple coated Japanese super thin lightweight titanium (1 hour service) spectacles being delivered to me there about 10pm.

Back in Bangkok to fly onwards to Melbourne (OZ) the limo driver was back - I'd only left my credit card at the hotel!! - and I'm supposed to be the experienced traveller.....

Terry - rainy Auckland NZ



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It felt somehow surreal to suddenly be in downtown Melbourne (OZ) eating breakfast with super coffee on the sidewalk. A Chinese waiter served us well, a Yugoslav cab driver and later a Greek one who took us FREE to a restaurant - his brothers?? We even saw the Harry Potter movie - great fun.

It felt a really short flight to Auckland (NZ) and felt very familiar - my third visit. We collected a Kia rental car and headed S of the city to my pals where my old BMW has lived for 12 months. My friends were away for a couple of days so I drove us to Miranda with its thermal pool. Can you "chill out" in a hot pool? - but anyway we did.

Then we picked up the old Beemer - after sulking for some fresh fuel all was well apart from a relay on the starter playing up. Then to NZ bikes for Bill's rental BMW R1150GS with luggage and clothing. Returned the rental car and we were set. Then it rained. We shopped. The following day was brilliant and a visit to Piha beach was a super ride. The sun is VERY powerful - apparently the hole in the ozone layer is bigger this year. A leisurely breakfast after Bill had changed the bike to a bit smaller 800GS and a visit to the internet and at last it stopped raining. We started our trip north over the Auckland Harbour Bridge and it REALLY RAINED. We left the main road for shelter and safety - eventually finding a hot bread shop. Amazingly water was pouring from the ceiling!! Onto another cafe and Bill dropped his bike at zero mph. It wouldn't restart - is this having fun or what?

We had a coffee and some date cake and emerged into a drier world (although we were still wet). Why is it that your hair goes so soft in rainwater? The bikes started and we started heading North.....

Terry - en route to Cape Reinga (the North tip of North Island)



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With temperatures in the low 70's and drying our spirits lifted. We headed N on the highway 1 and got an immaculate 2 bedroom apartment in an Indian owned motel (\$75) at Wangarei. We had seen quite a lot of cop cars and heeded the 100kph limit. Traffic was more than I remember but it is peak season with schools still on their summer holidays for another week or so.

Next day the road became quieter, the scenery bigger - we were LOVING it. The bikes were swinging the bends with gay abandon - surely a motorcyclist designed these roads! We booked a motel - our own A frame chalet amongst big pine trees. Then we rode onwards N to the tip of NZ - Cape Reinga. The last 20km were gravel - I hope they leave it this way. The trees thinned and we saw the breathtaking view of the Cape. The Cape is one of the most scenic splendours that I have ever seen and the weather was perfect. Golden beaches washed by two oceans meeting. We sat and drank it all in before riding back S to our motel. Bill got off - shook me by the hand, his face beaming and said "it was the best days riding of my life". We were both tired, hungry and very happy. Scallops and snapper for dinner, one between us would have been plenty.

Ninety mile beach (in fact 68 miles long) beckoned the following morning and we rode another gravel road to access it. Not a person on the beach as far as the eye could see both N and S - fantastic. We rode until we found some soft sand and thought better of it. Talk about lily livered - especially as I'm reading a book by Theresa Wallach who was the first person to cross the Sahara to Capetown with a friend and a Panther motorcycle and sidecar in 1935!! Still it was prudent with no cellphone service and no passing traffic. This is all some of the best stuff that North Island can serve up.....

Terry Bay of Island NZ





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More great forest road riding took us to the popular Bay of Islands. We had luxury here our motel overlooking the Bay with two bedrooms each with TV and a giant spa bath. Bill went to swim with the dolphins but came back disappointed as they weren't home to guests that morning. Then more wonderful riding right across the mountains to the W coast. Spectacular beaches around Hokianga Harbour and Omapere with a quick ecology change into the Kauri forest. We stayed at a small inn in Rapanui and watched NZ on their winning way against the Aussies at cricket. Then pumpkin soup and Hoki and chips - it was O.K. awoke in the night hearing a car alarm sounding, then a car leaving at high speed. The landlady had let us put our bikes safely in the garage fortunately.

A little rain next morning so we had a leisurely start before visiting the Kauri Museum. When you see the old trees recovered in perfect condition from the swamplands, some up to 50,000 years old, to be crafted into such beautiful objects it makes you realise that this is man and nature in harmony. A glass bottom boat ride and a look at properties near Warkworth broke the journey back to Auckland. Then the rain started big time, with it at its worst as we crossed the Harbour Bridge - the Copthorne Hotel overlooking the harbour was very welcome and the porter carried our dripping luggage. Just a shower (this time in the bathroom) later and we were ready for our big Friday night out. Green lip mussels (helps the arthritis!) and spicy pork and onto a bar. Pretty good live music and we sat outside and watched the locals. Bare bellies and off the shoulder is the fashion. The men just rely on bleached hair to look with it. I love people watching - and this place buzzes - classy too.....

Terry - Auckland ,NZ.





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LOCAL JOKE - "what comes after two days of stormy wet weather?" ANSWER - Monday

The weather, like England, is a great talking point here. Everyone has been telling us that it is most unusual - I hear this everywhere in the world. I have bought (at great expense) a new allegedly waterproof jacket, giant size to go over my big leather jacket of great vintage. This has caused summer to arrive!! - the coat hasn't been needed. This weeks riding has taken us S from Auckland and enjoying beach views of the Sea Bird coast before calling at my pal David's for Bill to collect some clean knickers - whether he needed them or not. His GIANT suitcase is living in David's garage. Overnighing in Hamilton we ate at Pizza Hut and just like kids finished with jelly and ice-cream.

We visited the popular tourist Waitomo Caves, you drift through in silence and admire the Glow Worms with their "fishing" (for moths etc) lines. We then headed for New Plymouth seeing the fantastic volcano Mt Taranaki with snow topping looking like an island in the sea. We rode on and met Bill's pal Colin - they hadn't seen each other for some 30 years. He and his wife made us most welcome - they live in Egmont Village in the lee of the volcano. Much chatter was around motorbikes - Colin had ridden for Eric Cheney in the past when Bill also rode motocross. Names like Ken Heanes and Les Archer were familiar to me but I left them to it around 11pm. They chatted into the early hours.

Next morning I planned for us to ride minor and some gravel roads to Tarata-Parangi-Matau, what great riding but dusty and tricky on a road bike. We came across a guy visiting, after living in Canada for 50 years, he couldn't recognise his old town of Wangamamona which had almost disappeared. The road kill was plentiful - mostly rabbits - and the hawks were doing a good clean up job. More gravel then a steep climb to a 360 degree overlook with the larger than life view of Lake Taupo. A young man from Middlesboro was there waiting for his old car to cool down. He was on a Round the World for 18 months. The fishing brought him to Taupo and he thought the trout streams were the best in the world. Bill was knackered after his late night so we stopped at Turangi and got a room at the excellent Tokaanu Hotel - excellent dinner, bottle of wine for 25 quid each - with room. The swimming pool was too HOT to stay in for long, and we had a sunbathe in the gentle evening sun, yes we are in the thermal area. It's Roturoa next on the 24 year old (and 28,000 miles young) Beemer.....

Terry - Taupo on Lake Taupo,NZ.





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A brilliant morning ride up the shores of Lake Taupo made me feel on top of the world. I had been troubled by a chesty cough for 10 days (unusual!) but that was curing itself. A photo stop for pictures across the lake to the snow capped mountain and we met a couple from Aviemore Scotland who had rented a motorhome. They took the photo of us with our BMW bikes. Breakfast at the Lakeside and an Email session. Bill is adding more addresses daily. I'm still writing to around 70 people in 9 countries.

The 32Meg memory of my Hewlett Packard digi camera is getting full, so I hope to dump onto a CD-Rom ready for my new Web site later in the year. My mobile phone is working well (I'm even into predictive text) and my new Toshiba e570 PDA is working out well. My luggage is holding up OK so far - but Australia and S Africa to go! Bill is getting fitter each day and more relaxed - just what he needed after a lifetime of work. I ask him what he most wants to do and we "just do it".

That's what brings us to hospital - don't worry. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Rotorua is purely a re-hab facility with wax - treatments, mineral spas, massage and mud baths. They use otherology words for most of this. It was great fun - I started with this mud bath. A 4" pipe was plugged into mother earth and fills the tiled individual bath with hot muddy water, you add cold to taste, strip and jump in. The pretty old (make what you will of that adjective!) receptionist then came to check on me. I kept stirring the muddy water to preserve my modesty as she sat and chatted for a half hour. I even got her to photo me in the bath. Then a thermal shower and I walked dripping down a corridor trying to cover myself with mini towels before meeting Phillipa. She's wearing a snug fitting wet suit with cut off legs and bare arms. In her twenties and fit she reminded me of a Bond Girl.

I was ready. She told me to lay face down on the bed and keep one towel. Then the treatment started - jets of thermal water sensuously playing over my body - paradise. Then the touching began - "were the strokes too firm?" she asked. "No" I dreamily answered. The massage continued - I drifted away. She said "How was it for you?" - or something like that. It's nice living in a dream world - but I had a spring in my step as Bill and I went to the Pig & Whistle.

Terry - Rotorua,NZ.

