

Australia trip 1979

31 October

Left Edmonton about an hour and twenty minutes late. Brought to the airport by Karen, Mark, Elaine. Elaine was good—didn't cry. Good flight to Vancouver. Delta's Airport Inn OK. Everyone was tired. Meal on plane was fair, with meat tough.

1 November

Left Vancouver 8:30 am, about a half hour late, on DC-8 Spacemaster. Full! Sat near an immigrant family from Uruguay. Communication poor. Wine and other drinks free.

Meals good. Seats uncomfortable after a while. Honolulu airport was hot and very dirty. Strike of maintenance workers about 2 weeks.

Stop at Nadi was short, just before sunset. Quite a bit of turbulence on the trip, also near Sydney where captain talked about 130 mph headwinds. Arrived Sydney about 10:30 pm on 2 November.

Everyone tired. Took a KSA Hire-Car to the Gemini at Randwick (cost \$9.00). Too expensive but we were tired. Staff at Gemini friendly and helpful. Were going to charge \$35 vs. \$28 quoted by Henry, Changed next day. Room (511) comfortable. Slept well and woke up early.

3 November

Walked around Sydney. Bus ride to city about 15 minutes. Visited Haymarket, World Travel, NRMA, Opera House. Chinese dinner at Happy Family Restaurant. Good thing Bill Groot had Australian cash. Came in very handy.

4 November (Sunday)

Randwick Presbyterian Church ('conservative' wing of Presbyterian Church, rest went to Uniting, with Congregational and Methodist), Stuart Clements preaching. Coffee after church—met Harriet James-Boonstra from Hamilton (1970). Met up with Bill and Ev De Rooy at 2 pm, walked around Botanical Garden and listened to a rock concert, then by cab to Reformed Church of Sydney at Willoughby (Artarmon?). Very old building (shared). 'Tea' with the Bierlings on Cooney Road. 'Migrants' from 1950.

Greeks run restaurants; Australians won't do the work and have had it too easy, 'riding on the back of the sheep' over the years. Housing and food high! Took the train back to Sydney and after coffee and cake said good-bye and took train and bus back to the Gemini.

5 November

Packed up and hailed a taxi for North Ryde, about a half hour. Hungarian ex-wrestler taxi driver, 30 years in Australia, who was interested in moving to Canada. At North Ryde found that the renting company had been sold and moved to the other end of town, southwest of the airport. So, back in the taxi. Half an hour and \$25 later, arrived. Had to wait for about an hour, in frustration, but finally got things taken care of. Everything from the suitcases fit in the cupboards and by about 1:30 we were on our way, slowly, and relieved that all was in order. Bought groceries at Liverpool supermarket and drove to Mittagong.

6 November

On our way about 9. Tossed a coin for sleeping in upper bunk. Bill Groot won the toss so they'll sleep there the first week. He also won the toss for driving first week. Driving was a bit scary at first but the unit handled well and we did not go over 80. Roads were curvy, rough, and slow. Tires are hard (50 psi) and the ride is rough unless the road is smooth. Quite a bit of heavy truck traffic. Arrived Canberra at noon and booked 2-hour Radio Motorcade tour of the city. Quite nice but the guide was hard to understand at times. Saw Australian Mint and Serbian church with 81-year-old Karl Matzek who for the last 8-9 years has been painting mural on walls and ceiling (from a stepladder). Beautiful work. Camped at Yass and walked through the town. Not too impressive. Nice wine with dinner.

7 November

A long day today. Got up at 6, started out before 7, and had breakfast at Snake Gully, by statue of Dad, Dave, Mom, and Mabel, and the dog on the Tucker Box, at Gundagai. Road rough and camper bouncy and rattling. Travel slow until past Albury on the Murray River Highway. Better pavement, few hills, and very little traffic. Landscape changed from desolate to more fertile-looking. Northeast of Albury saw a field of Patterson's curse (blue-purple flowers) in pastures. Camped at Kerang. Caravan parks generally good, with good washroom and shower facilities. When we came into Victoria we had to peel our apples and eat or dump our tomatoes and oranges. Too bad. Fruit fly concerns. According to the men at the checkpoint, Victoria is the only state that does something about it.

8 November

Went to Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement in the morning. Expensive (\$3.20 each) but very good. Some old things like western Canada old things but other quite different. Spent about 2.5 hours there and sent off a letter to Edmonton. Saw a class of well-behaved Australian school children at the "museum". Also saw some kangaroos sitting around. Took quite a few pictures. Saw wheat fields, some on the green side, some dead ripe, but no harvesting yet. Rapid changes from desolate to fertile—much with irrigation—to desolate again. Orange and grapefruit orchards. Stopped at one orange grower and talked. Later bought a large bag of grapefruit (\$1.80) and a small bag of oranges near Mildura, only to be stopped on entering South Australia.. Not allowed!
It was about 5:30 so we stopped for supper, juiced all the oranges and grapefruit and cooked the apples, and ate the tomatoes on tomato sandwiches. The Murray River is murky brown but seems to supply lots of irrigation water.

[*Dixie*] Stopped at Renmark overnight—very large campground with good facilities, right on the Murray. Bill and Bill have many words of wisdom for better or worse.

9 November

[*Bill*] Stopped at Leo Buring and Orlando wineries in Barossa valley for some samples. Buring's were good. Orlando's only so-so. Bought some Riesling, Sauterne, and sparkling Liebfrauwine, for \$6.51. Arrived at Peter and Anne's about 5 pm. Had supper and a good visit.

10 November

Shopped for hats and blouse at Tea Tree Plaza in the city of Tea Tree Gully. Lots of people in a modern large shopping centre. Saw beautiful old Pilgrim Church on Victoria Square downtown, looked at the city of pubs, churches and parks from Windy Point on the hills and walked on the beach at Glenalg. A bit windy, but warm ocean water and lots of people. Water was of Gulf St. Vincent. Met Frank and Morna Liebich at supper. Friendly and hospitable people.

11 November (Sunday)

Scots Uniting church of Adelaide (near U of Adelaide campus) was well attended by elderly people, but the hymns and sermon did not seem particularly biblical. Coffee at Liebichs was with scones and jam and cream—very nice. Then off to Cleland Conservatory and fauna park. Cheap, 30 cents per person), saw kangaroos, emus, dingoes, koala bears. And a bunch of small birds, including a white cockatoo. The park closed at 5 so we moved to Burnside Park for a barbecue supper of lamb chops, beef sausages, and hamburger, with homemade tomato sauce. Excellent food. A bit chilly and windy but the food was hot, off a metal griddle. Stopped at Waterfall Gully but the falls were not impressive. Met Robyn, Anne's sister (friendly girl) and her medic friend Vinn (?) and talked about her trip to Canada, US, and Europe. Set the alarm for 2:30 am (9 am Edmonton time and phoned the kids for about 3.5 minutes. Cost \$2 per minute. Everything OK. Todd kept us awake for a while after that.

12 November

Went to RAA and bank, bought a 'spirit burner' and had a tour of Angle Park High School/Community Centre. Very impressive facility, opened late 1978. Combined function causes some problems (library, children's behaviour, scheduling). Idea seems good. Left Adelaide and stopped briefly in Hahndorf, settled by Hahn, looked at some paintings by Hans Heysen. Nice old village but not tremendously impressive. At a service station in Adelaide the camper van rolled back and put a small crease (\$10) in the bonnet of an elderly white Triumph. Nothing serious, fortunately. Reached Kingston, one third of the way to Melbourne and about 310 km from Adelaide, at about 7:30, after a long boring trip along the Coorong. A bit worried about running out of petrol but at Policemen's Point found a station (32.5 cents/L, though) with a Sri Lankan illegally working visitor. The road at times was a real boneshaker. Sat up late at Kingston, to 11:30, paying partnership crib—worked OK. This was the time to trade beds—our turn to sleep in the upper bunk. A bit hard to get in and out and maneuver around, but the foam is thicker and more comfortable than below.

13 November

Off to Naracoorte for a 30-minute trip through Alexandra Cave, in soft limestone. Beautiful cave 'decorations'. Cheap, at 40 cents each. Some pine plantations in the area. Many fine pastoral scenes. Pastures and grain fields have gum trees left in them here and there, for shade or unknown reasons. Casterton was a pleasant-looking town. Got some groceries and took pictures of town from above the valley. On the way stopped to look at some evening primrose flowers and

a lizard who wanted to attack Bill Groot's shoe. Along the way saw a sheep-shearing operation near Coleraine. Shearer did 120 sheep in an 8-hour day, for about \$80. Small operation, only 500 sheep. Stopped to look at Nigretta Falls on Wannon River, near Hamilton—camped in that town. Cheapest so far, \$3.10. The pump battery seems to have shorted out and discharged so no water pressure. Discovered it from rotten egg smell in the back.

14 November

Stopped at Mt. Rouse lookout (1200 feet above land) to look over the town of Penhurst, then on to Koroit where we found Con Gavin, a 70-acre potato grower/horse racer. To 15 tons /A with irrigation, 1 ton fertilizer per acre (superphosphate, ammonium phosphate, no K needed). Gets \$80-100 per ton. He took us for a drive around his properties in his loaded Fort LTD. seems like a bit of an operator. Old volcanic plain. Looked at revegetation around Tower Hill—last volcanic action thought about 7300 years ago. Saw some emus, also kangaroo apple (*Solanum* species). Emus like the yellow berries, about 0.75 inches long. Limestone cliffs in Port Campbell National Park and lots of eroded hoodoo-like cliffs out in the water, including the Twelve Apostles and London Bridge. Then a 20-km 'very' winding stretch of gravel before Apollo Bay where we camped. Our first pretty rainy day. Weather warm.

15 November

Slow trip from Apollo Bay along Great Ocean Road—many curves and hills, many beautiful sights. Not many beaches but a lot of rocky reefs. Last stretch to Geelong straight. Found Reformed Theological College at 55 Maude St. and were given a tour by principal Ray Zorn. Enrolment 25 students. Old building (Geelong Grammar School), beautifully renovated—not yet completed. Official opening or renovated building Saturday 17 November. Also met Harry Emmerzael—employed there. From Geelong to Melbourne (75 km) bad side winds and insecure driving, but we arrived and found a caravan park occupied mostly by permanent residents. A bit dirty but manageable. Played some more crib.

16 November

Cloudy in the morning but little rain. Went to the zoo—quite expensive at \$2.80 per person but quite good. Spent about 3 hours. Then to National Museum for a good look at aboriginal displays. Very well done. Good science museum. Missed on USSR old masters display at Art Gallery and, after we had tea, went for a walk in Queen Victoria Park instead. Beautiful roses and big old trees. Then out east to very nice caravan park at East Doncaston. By this time it was 8 pm and we still had supper to make and eat.

17 November

Talked to a Groninger butcher (retired) from Veendam, on holidays in Australia. Only bad things to say about Holland were it was "altijd slecht weer". Spent 3.5 hours at Colin McKenzie sanctuary—beautiful, with all kinds of animals, especially birds. Bell bird makes lots of noise. Then on to Mt. Dandenong for a hazy view of Melbourne and surroundings and supper at Sky High Restaurant (about 632 m) which did not open until 7. So on to Beaconsfield via the back roads and a wrong turn or two. By this time it was

7:30 and no supper yet. Then it turned out that the bacon and sausage had been left somewhere, probably the bakery, so we had corned beef instead. Talked to A. De Graaf, minister of Box Hill Reformed Church—quite a talker, and decided to backtrack to Dandenong Reformed Church next morning.

18 November (Sunday).

One birthday celebration (58) after another (47). Royally welcomed at church, and a good sermon about Revelation 12, 'the time will be short' (for the devil). Pleasant visit with Wim and Wilma Van Brussel (pastor). He has been in Australia 25 years and has served in Sydney, Adelaide, Perth (?) and now Dandenong. Talked to brother and father of fellow who married Sue Van Starckenburg (Pembroke). Van Brussel knows Nick Knoppers. Quite a different service from Adelaide the week before. Bought some groceries at 7-11, put the lighter fuse in the camper circuit so the water pump would run again, had lunch at roadside and drove through beautiful hilly dairy country, cleared of mountain ash and other trees (?) about 100 years ago. Camped at Leongatha in the dairy country. Sunday night went to Leongatha Reformed Church (45 families). Attendance relatively poor, mostly the older ones. Preacher was Winston Gandor, Ceylonese, home missionary for Classis Victoria now. Visited Theo and Tina Bons, retired (58) dairy farmer (130 cows on 116+45 acres). From Sliedrecht in 1958, in the dredging business. She is quite a talker and very involved in all kinds of things. Sold his farm land for \$1000/A. Bought a house for about \$50,000. Coffee and a few glasses of sherry resulted in interrupted sleep.

19 November

From lush dairy country through coal mining (power station) in Latrobe Valley to drier areas, some forested and back to coast at Lake Entrance. Watched the scallop fishermen unload their boats. Quota 50 bags per boat per day, at about \$20 each and 20 lbs scallop meat. They go out about 1 or 2 am, about 50 miles, and return about 2-3 pm. Fishing about 3-4 hours, from a depth of about 200 feet. About 70 boats out there all at once. Seems like a lucrative business.

Through a forested area with not much to see—a few logging trucks—to a very small town, Cann River, for a camp. Neat caravan park. Beautiful and starlit sky at night but overcast and gentle rain when we woke up next morning.

20 November

Raining, so time to write our last cards and letters. Bertha: "No more now, everybody better be happy". It drizzled for a while and quit about noon. At Bega we checked out a dairy (cheese, powdered milk, bottled milk). Supposedly a very modern cheese making unit, continuous flow. Sampled some matured (6 months) and some vintage (13 months) cheese. Excellent cheese. At Mirambula (lots of beaches) bought some fish and chips (flathead, bream, gem fish). Fish was good—not too much difference between them, but the chips were a bit soggy and greasy. Also bought two deep-fried scallops (30 cents each). Tasted OK but nothing special. Stopped fairly early at caravan park near beach and went for a walk on the beach., Collected some shells. Quite a few dead birds on the beach., Lost and won a game of crib.

21 November

Went for a run on the beach but it was hard going on the sand. On the way up to Woolongong saw some beautiful sand dunes and walked and ran around for a while. The water was quite a bit cooler than at Adelaide. Sand and beach were beautiful. Trip along the coast was uneventful. Turned west before Sydney across coast range of hills and then up to the Blue Mountains to Katoomba, about 900 m above sea level.

22 November

Quite a bit of truck traffic past the caravan park during the night disturbed our sleep a bit. Got up to clear blue sky and a bit cooler than before. Drove along Cliff Drive and looked at Jamieson Valley 600 m below, with all kinds of cliffs and peculiar rock formations. Bill and I rode the 'heart-stopping' scenic railway. Not so heart-stopping and not so scenic. Had some pawpaw and watermelon in the revolving restaurant (not such a big deal) and went for an hour and a quarter hike down the cliff side to some thin falls (Katoomba Falls). Nice ferns and smells and views. Saw Boar's Head, Ruined Castle, Three Sisters. Stopped at various lookouts off Cliff Drive. Everglades gardens by Henri Vander Velde was very nice, though only a few rhodies and azaleas were in flower.

23 November

Last day on the road. Time to clean up on leftover food and to get reorganized. Cloudy this morning, not the bright blue sky of yesterday. Stopped an hour at Norma Lindsay Gallery at Springwood—died in her 90s about 1969.. Very enjoyable. Then on to Sydney. The 73 km from Springwood took 1.5 to 2 hours. Warm and muggy in Sydney. Unloaded everything at Hotel Brighton, not the classiest in the world, but adequate. Good reception and quick action at Holiday Motorhomes (after 4800 km). All settled in 20 minutes. Good thing we unloaded first at the hotel. Pizza supper at Piccolos's was quite good but the pizzas were not very spicy. Rooms were warm and muggy and noisy from outside.

]Next day on to the conference hotel in Sydney for the APWSS conference. An no diary kept for that week, it seems.]