



Rat Tales

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Ballarat Bushwalking and Outdoor Club

KANGAROO ISLAND: EASTER 2007

Disclaimer – let me begin with an apology – every day was so action packed it felt like 2 days – I may have the sequences somewhat jumbled and may have even left out important memories for some participants!!!, but hopefully the report will provide some insight into our trip.

6-30am on Good Friday saw 15 bodies plus luggage set off westwards in our 21 seater bus. Three drivers and 10 hours saw us arrive at Cape Jervis, S.A. just in time to squeeze onto the 4.30 pm ferry. A further trek inland to a central area of the island saw us arrive at Kiawarra Food Barn – our home for the next four nights. We were greeted by the sights of one very cute echidna who had members diving for cameras from the get-go.

The abode was a large 4 bed-roomed house with some very interesting Indian type furnishings and after the initial chaos of 15 people running around choosing their beds, a comfortable arrangement was arrived at.

One internal toilet was a challenge, however, some additional portable toilets attached to the “restaurant” came in very handy.

The first morning saw us all up fairly early, breakfasted, cut lunches in hand and on the bus once again, ready to begin our exploration of the island.

155 km long, 55 km wide, with 540 km of coastline, we are talking pretty big. Having been mapped and explored by both Matthew Flinders in ‘HMS Investigator’ and French corvette ‘Le Geographe’ captained by Nicholas Baudin in 1802-03 place names have both an English and French feel to them.

We began our first action packed day on the beach at Seal Bay among the Australian Sea Lions. It is unbelievable to be able to get so close these creatures. I think everyone was touched by the young cub calling out for his mum as she loped towards the water.

By this time we were all well acquainted with the bus’s “Killer Door” which threatened to snap up anyone standing within Cooe when opening.

Some of the rest of this day is a confused jumble in my

mind – it seems so long ago!! But there was a stop at Clifford’s Honey Farm where Honey Ice-crème was the go, and Emu Ridge Eucalyptus Distillery (which was closed).

Next stop Emu Bay – a very sheltered beach – a couple of brave soles stripped off for a dip while the rest of us just strolled along the beach, or sat on the sand, (or even made use of the soft sea grass beds dumped along the beach).

It was then on to Kingscote. One party set off to the store for supplies, while the rest of us enjoyed the entertainment of “the Pelican Man” – a daily occurrence of pelican feeding.

A late change of plans when the 5 o’clock close of the town supermarket meant we had to resort to the town Hot Spot, The Ozone Seafront Hotel for a very enjoyable meal. The day ended with the discovery of a leaky tyre on return to camp.

Sunday began with the menfolk changing the flat, then an early trip to Parndana to stock up on supplies and to try to locate somewhere to have tyre mended. Mission accomplished, we returned to Home Base to pick up the rest of the crew, then headed to the south western region of the island. A quick look around Flinders Chase Visitors Centre where some of us had a good sighting of another Echidna, and took a stroll along the Discovery Centre – then off to the Remarkable Rocks (remarkable!!), Cape du Couedic Lighthouse (delightful!!), then down the steps to Admirals Arch. When you first view the rocks below all you see is water ..., waves, rocks, then as your eyes adjust you begin to see one or two seals, then some more and more seals “appear”, and you wonder how you could have been so blind as not to see them when you first looked.

The group took over a viewing platform right underneath the arch where we were joined by a big fat crow, and once we got used to the smell, enjoyed lunch with one amazing view. Lunch consumed we reluctantly moved on to our next stop – Snake Lagoon. A short trek along the Rocky River ended on a small but absolutely brilliant beach at Maupertuis Bay. The waves were frequent,

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the water invigorating and all enjoyed our time there.

But we must keep on trekking, back to the bus and to the Platypus Waterhole Walk, just before dusk to try and catch a glimpse. Initially no luck, only some Kangaroos, and a pig of all things but that's another story. A quietness fell over the waterhole, then Ann and I saw some large rings coming from around the bend of the pool. Sure enough a large platypus made his way around the edge towards us. He swam past the viewing platform to a point about half way around the pool and then worked his way back again. During this time most of the group managed to catch sight of this elusive creature and felt very lucky to have been in the right place at the right time.

Darkness had descended by this time and John Mauger did a sterling job of driving us back home, dodging countless daring animals darting across the road at regular intervals. Only one silly possum was sacrificed on the journey.

You would think that was the end of a very special day – but wait – there's more – a barbeque was quickly rustled up, followed by Karena's Line Dancing School and many enjoyed toe tapping the night away.

Our last full day on the island and it was Caves, Koalas, Walks and Beaches. A guided tour of Cape Borda Lighthouse complete with a lesson in world weather patterns. Then back to Parndana to pick up repaired tyre and on to Camp for a stir fry prepared by Marianne which received a bit tick. The evening meal was, however, delayed somewhat while John and Frank returned to Pandana for Frank's glasses!!

The final night ended with some light entertainment – Jokes by Peter, Poems by John R, and a singing trio which expanded to 4, then 5, then I went to bed after that so who knows.

The final day. An early start back to Penneshaw to catch the ferry. 15 bum numbing hours later saw us safely returned to Ballarat. Many did not want to get off the bus and long noisy goodbyes occurred at each drop off point.

A big Gold Star to each of our drivers, John Mauger, George Alexopoulos and Alan Esnouf for all their efforts over the 5 days. And a Big Hand to Alan for organising such a memorable time.