

## Queensland Walkabout Tour 2012

Another great Tour with a brilliant gang, new places, experiences, good food, drinks and the camaraderie that comes with the big 41 Club family.

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> May:** most of us flew from Christchurch then gathered up the last of the troops including Krishna (International President) and Vini Kumar at Brisbane Airport. Completed hire details in the dark for our 25 seater bus with attached trailer and set off for Hervey Bay, not nice drive with rain setting in and an unfamiliar vehicle. We arrived after 11:00pm to find our President Andy and Bob Parton (our German OTD co Traveller) had spent the time waiting sampling the local liquids and were very pleased to see us so after getting everyone sorted and to their rooms we also did a little sampling!!!!!!!

**Friday morning:** the local paper wanted an interview with the International Visitors so took us to the beach for photos, World famous in Hervey Bay!

Meet and Greet night at nearby Boat Club where we discovered that all bar 2 of the Aussies who came over for our AGM last year and then went on the tour around the South Island were there. All so delighted to catch up and see us again, wonderful.

**Saturday 8:15am start!** Onto buses and all taken to Historical Village, morning tea and mass photos then on boat to Fraser Island for lunch and Apex 40 AGM which beat all records for length due to a couple of contentious issues.

Country style pub for the "Bush" themed night, lots of fun with the Apex skits.

Gave us a bit of a worry though; 3 of their clubs did versions of "Waltzing Matilda", would have thought they could be a little more original!!!

**Sunday 8:30am:** On buses again to Maryborough and visit to restored homestead; Haddow House" then walking tour of old part of Maryborough, lunch then 41 Club NZ AGM with address by K.K. and Bob Parton. A very short and to the point AGM, well done.

Beach Themed night at Boat Club with Awards and fines session then the Kiwi Comedy Kapers (Aussie spelling), our tour group went first with our reworded Waltzing Matilda followed by Po Kari Kari Ana which we managed to sing well enough to gain several commendations for and then the Blenheim Gang brought the house down with their slightly risqué version of "Little Jimmy Brown", brilliant!!

Busy but fun weekend, great food, and sights but the best as always is the people.

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup>:** After the beautiful breakfast at the Boat Club and the usual fond farewells we set of northward via Bundaberg then on to Gin Gin for lunch, a quick side track to see Lake Monduran then a long drive up to Rockhampton with many road works holding us up.

Everyone was very pleased to arrive, our longest day.

Pre-dinner drinks started here and every night after, noisy but fun.

**Tuesday:** another long drive to Mackay with a lot less roadwork's thank goodness, Sugar cane country but no harvesting. 2 nights in lovely hotel, parking area had only 25mm clearance for bus, I must say a bit nerve racking.

**Wednesday:** Drove up to Eungella National Park, not a great day, weather was crook with showers and mist up in the hills, quite a climb for bus to get to Broken River where we found several Platypuses in the river as well as turtles, first time for all of us.

Some decided to do a loop track walk of about 45 min's and all to be back at bus at 12 but unfortunately one member decided to follow the main group by himself at a later stage, took the wrong track and got lost for over 3 hours. We sent out search parties in all directions but no luck and eventually had to go to Ranger Station to organise Rescue and inform Police, fortunately he walked out in time for me to stop the search.

With the wet weather the leaches were out and several of us had them on us, our lost member came out with heaps of them on his legs and feet and crikey once removed it takes ages for the blood to stop, lots of tidy up to do.

Called at a pub not far down the road where we had heard of their famous pies and yes they certainly tasted good after our mostly foodless day.

Bloody good to have our group all together again and unharmed.

**Thursday:** Short drive to Airlie Beach so set off later and arrived with time for all to have a wee explore. Nice place but very touristy as all the places appear to be along that coast.

**Friday:** Heavy rain showers but sun in between. Onto boat and over to Hamilton Island for a good explore then on boat to go to Whitehaven Beach, Barbeque lunch on-board then landed on the beautiful beach; white sand that stretches for miles.

Most of us swam in "Stinger Suits", wait till you see the photos of the "Tele Tubbies".

Played beach cricket, walked the sands then back we came, lovely day had by all.

**Saturday:** was a day off relaxing, though we took bus to refuel and then all had a bit of retail therapy. 4 of us went out fishing in afternoon, Allan Shuker only one with any luck.

**Sunday:** we left a little later as it's not so far up to Townsville with very similar countryside and sugar cane growing but not too many roadwork's so made good time.

We had our lunch at wildlife park "Billabong Sanctuary" where we watched the Salt Water Crocodiles being fed, the free flight raptor's and the snakes, well worth the stop.

In Townsville early enough to do a bit of an explore.

**Monday:** had a lovely day out to Magnetic Island in beautiful weather, would be a lovely place to relax for a couple of days, sandy beaches, warm water, no stinger suits and semi tropical vegetation.

**Tuesday:** another long drive to Cairns, bananas and pineapples made a change from sugar cane. Lunch on another long white sandy beach, togs packed in trailer so we only paddled. Seemed to drive a long way through Cairns before we found our hotel, thank goodness for GPS, they're great for towns and new places but once out the road signs are pretty good.

Every night by the time we had pre dinner drinks the gang had worked out where all the places were to have a meal and by the time pre dinner drinks were had it didn't matter too much anyway so as you can imagine lots of fun.

**Wednesday:** drove short distance to Freshwater and went on the Kuranda Scenic Railway up the mountain through the rainforest, lovely trip indeed, spent 3 hours up there, nice place, very touristy then came back down on the Skyrail gondola. Amazing flying over the treetops, valleys, hills and rivers, a wonderful day had by all.

Day only slightly marred by Rental Company demanding the bus back a day early so they could get it back to Brisbane for next hire, they did get us another one for the next day though and we kept it to transfer us to airport on Friday morning.

**Thursday:** left early in the morning to get the light on the beaches and forest on the way up to Port Douglas, morning tea on the beach then on to Mossman Gorge where we did the big

loop track in the rain forest, quite dry, so no leeches and everyone was back at bus on time. Back to Port Douglas for lunch then swim on one of the lovely beaches before we arrived back in Cairns for our last night.

Yet again a hilarious pre dinner session where the gang went to great lengths with nibbles and then presented me with a Crocodile Head Snapper Thong thingy then demanded that I do a parade in it; once would definitely be enough, not a pretty sight!

Had finger food meal on terrace of hotel then proceeded to hold fines session, great fun and proceeds were spent on pizza's to finish with.

**Friday;** up at 4:00am and all packed on bus by 4:30, amazing everyone was on time so off to airport, check in and eat boxed breakfasts provided by hotel before we flew back to Brisbane to hurry up wait for another 4 hours before flying home. It was dark but clear as we came over the Southern Alps to see all the snow glistening on the Canterbury Plains especially north of Christchurch.

Definitely a lot colder than Cairns!

A great trip with lovely people, a happy gang, no complaints apart from bus seats and wonderful to have Bob & Gisela with us, they enjoyed everything and amused us all.

It's very satisfying to be able have people enjoy what you have planned for them and Tina and I enjoyed it as much as they did.

Thank you my friends

Derek

*Once some 41er's, mostly from the Kiwi Land  
Crossed o're the Tasman to come and visit thee  
And they sang and they yarned and they poured another cold one down  
We'll go a- walkabout once you set us free*

*Walkabout Kiwi's Walkabout Kiwi's  
How about a-Walkabout along with me  
And they sang and they yarned and they poured another cold one down  
You'll come a-Walkabout along with me*

First verse and chorus in rewrite of "Waltzing Matilda" for the Group Skit in Hervey Bay.