

Journey to Western Australia Sept and Oct 2002



Please forgive me if some image colours are incorrect.
This DTP I converted with PDF995 April 2004.

A Journey Finally Made

This is John and Marie D'Alton's journey to Western Australia September and October 2002.

A journey that Marie has wanted to do to see the W.A. wildflowers.

A journey that John has wanted to do partly by train.

Of course we both enjoyed both aspects and so much more. The train part only being thought about for a couple of years but Marie has longed for decades to see the wildflowers.

We thank Sue White of Harvey Travel at Milton for arranging our airflights, Indian Pacific train and Hertz rental car.

We also thank our dancing friends Bill and Lorraine Cortes for various hints as they have lived in W.A. Bill barracked for West Perth football club and also the Fremantle Dockers.

We again thank our daughter's family, the Fields for looking after our home. Grace did a good job tending to Marie's plants. My computers had a long sleep.

It was a mixed type journey: by air to Perth, by driving ourselves from Perth to Kalgoorlie (Kal), Indian Pacific train from Kal to Sydney and finally air to Brisbane.

On the first day in W.A. in Perth we could see that it is about ten or twenty years back, a much laid-back place but the people swear in public, not the bad words but never the less quite noticable. The people are very friendly. Of course we both enjoyed the colder weather which extended our wintertime. As usual in our travel books I note the outside temperature at 7 am to 8 am with my thermometer placed outside our accommodation. It certainly is easy to find accommodation, toilets and food in our big country compared to Europe.

When I use the word "home" I mean the accommodation we are currently using, be it a caravan park, motel or hotel etc.

There are two large photo albums which Marie has assembled, she always does that part while I make our Journey Books. There are extra items of information which we don't put in the albums and keep for reference. If anyone would like more information we may have it. Also if anyone would like to receive only the text by E-mail I can send it.

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Colours on the maps are :-

- Airflight
- Racheal, our driving route
- Tour Coach and bus
- IP train
- Orange/brown
- blue
- green
- black



Our accommodations are represented by a black spot on the other maps.



Departure

Sunday 1 September 2002

We had our usual one suitcase each, Marie had her new wheelie carry-on bag and I had my backpack.

Marie's suitcase weighed 20kg, my suitcase 17kg. My weight 61kg.

John and Lyn in Melbourne 'phoned us to wish us best wishes. At 8.30am Maria drove us in our car (Butterfly) to Brisbane Domestic Airport. Christian also but David and Grace were going to church. My metal hip caused the security detection unit to beep. Qantas QF619 departed at 10.50am to Melbourne direct was a smooth flight with a small snack on the way arriving in Melbourne at about 1.10 pm. A 737-800 with 22cm X 20cm video screens under the overhead lockers at about every third seat.

Our Qantas QF777 767-336 departed at about 2.50pm. Another lunch on board of hot beef pasta, salad and an apple bun. These on board meals are quite basic, served in a white oblong cardboard carton which I suppose are easier to handle both before and after the contents have been eaten. A smooth flight. I saw the many salt lakes in W.A. which was an eye opener for me. Marie used Olbas ointment drops to prevent her experiencing the terrible pain she used to get in her nose, it really works for her.

Perth pop - 1.3million

We arrived in Perth at 5.30 (WAST) a four hour flight. This section was part of travel package and we were to be collected (transferred) by a courtesy bus to take us to our Hotel. The sun was close to setting, it was a bit windy and cold, perhaps 12C. We had to wait about twenty minutes for the small bus. He picked up more people from the still signed Ansett part of the terminal. We arrived at our Hotel Emerald on Milligan Street at about 6.45 pm. This was booked for five nights, our room was 111 which was nice but our window looked down onto a freeway so was very noisy. It was bearable with the window closed but Marie and I always like fresh air in our accommodations.

We had our first meal in W.A. in the hotel's restaurant, Marie had satay chicken for \$14.50 and I bangers and mash for \$14.00.

Monday 2 Sept 18c

Local sightseeing

We didn't get much sleep due to the freeway noise so I asked could we move to a quieter room which was cheerfully done, to room 204 on another side of the hotel but still within sight of the freeway, overlooking the Swan River but much quieter. Thanks! A bigger room or rather apartment, bath, full kitchen but at no extra cost, great. We noticed the Mediterranean type weather because our lips were dry.

We walked in light drizzle to the city which is only a couple of blocks away. We booked a tour at Harvey Travel to the Pinnacles which is about 400km north of Perth. We walked to the Town Hall that Bill and Lorraine Cortes used to hold ballroom dances in some years ago but it was closed. We caught the free, yes free Blue Central Area Transport (CAT) bus. This one was the Blue CAT which travels in a sort of north/south route in the Perth CBD. One can get off at any of the twenty two stops or stay on and do as many journeys as one needs. Later on we caught the Red CAT which is also free and has forty two stops running in a more or less east/west direction. Both routes cross so one can change to the other CAT so easily. There are different buses, the new ones have a female voice which announces "door closing" and "London Court stop", very convenient.

We did a short tour of the Perth Mint and saw a gold bar being poured. Among the many items on display is a gold bar. One puts an arm through a hole to try to lift the bar off the shelf. A gold bar weighs 400 ounces about 12 kg, I could not lift it off the bottom of the box. It is a better tourist Mint than the Canberra Mint in my opinion. This mint opened in 1899 so the building is quite old by Australian standards so is much more interesting. It appears that it only mints special coins and medallions. We caught the Red CAT which by the way stops near the West Australian Cricket Ground (WACA); had lunch then bought some groceries at Foodland in readiness for when we had our Hertz rental car.

We caught a taxi back home for \$7.00 with a carton full for Marie to cook dinner in our kitchen.

Kim D'Alton

I 'phoned Kim who is a distant cousin I had contacted via the Internet earlier in the year. He sent me by snail-mail a lot of information about my Father which I didn't know. He said he and his family would drive up from Fremantle (Freo) on Thursday night and take us to dinner. Great!

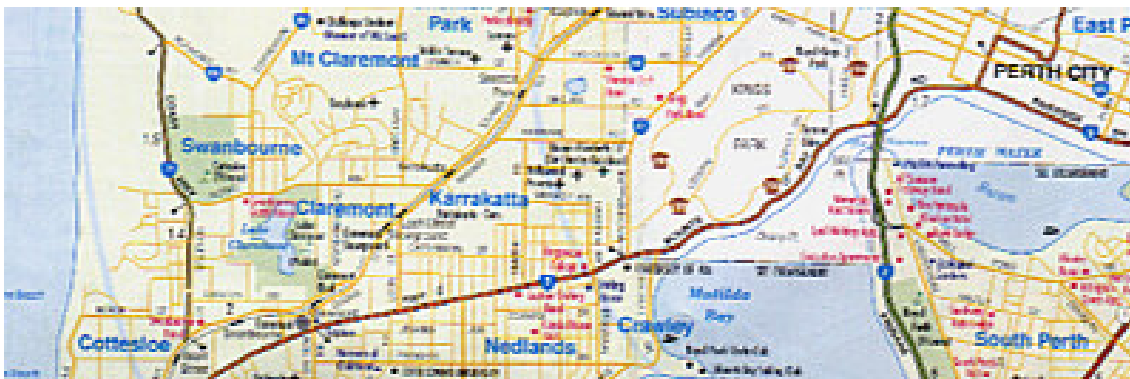
Tuesday 3 Sept 13c

Local sightseeing

Still raining. We caught a Red CAT to the city, walked up the very nice malls which are part of Murray and Hay Streets. No big crowds, a much easier and pleasant slow lifestyle. A nice quieter time. The people were so friendly and helpful. Back to the Town Hall and this time it was open. We walked up the stairs to the big hall where Bill and Lorraine had held their dances. We walked in their footsteps, a good feeling. There was going to be a function for oldies er I mean seniors with music and dance performed by various cultures. Japanese, Chinese and so on. I took a photo. Ceiling fans, side room where the suppers were prepared and an upstairs balcony which I walked up to to inspect.

Another CAT to the Perth Railway Station for an electric train to Cottesloe. On the way we passed the Subiaco Football Ground which is the ground that the West Coast Eagles and WAFL teams play on. Its station reminded me of Dandenong station in Melbourne. Bigger and modern which means a lot of people use it during the footy season. By the way, Bill Cortes barracks for West Perth and the Fremantle Dockers.

At Cottesloe we caught a bus to Cottesloe Beach which was a big dance venue during WWII with American troops as well as Australian's in big numbers. Bill used to drive a taxi in the area at the time. The reason for us going there was due to Bill's involvement and for information for my Ballroom Dance History book I'm writing. THE dance place was the **Lido**. I chatted with a couple of oldies women who were standing on the footpath and it so happened that one of them had danced there during the war so she pointed out which was the Lido, on this street named Marine Parade. It is now a restaurant called "la Tropicana Cafe". We had lunch there of cod fish and chips, a beer and an orange juice for Marie. I asked our waiter about the owners and he told us we could talk with them when they weren't busy.



We spoke to them later, Colin and Caren Chazer. They were very interested that I was writing a book about Ballroom dancing and was happy that I mention their place in it. They showed us a photo of four women dancers taken during the war. They spoke about their efforts to bring people back to their cafe. They mentioned two musicians who played there during the war, one of whom Bill remembers.

We caught a bus and train back to the city, only \$2.60 bus and train for about 40km trip for pensioners, us. Then a Blue CAT to the harbour where we thought we would hear bells of the Swan Bells. There are twelve bells of St. Martin-in-the-Fields which are recorded in existence before the 14th century. Marie made a note about politeness of young men in the CAT buses. Twice today men stood up so Marie could sit. Back home where Marie was our chef again for dinner.

Wednesday 4 Sept 13c **To The Pinnacles**

We needed to rise early for our tour to the Pinnacles

but someone had previously set the clock radio to play at 4.30am and in keeping with my liking but Marie's dislike for new technology the first few words included "dot com dot au", Internet talk in an advertisement. We were picked up by a bus at 7.20am W.A. (wait awhile) time but should have been 7.10am. This is W.A. The route is in green on the maps.

This tour cost \$130 each concession price for us oldies. We were transferred to a big coach but after only ten minutes turned back to collect four more people. Where we turned back was at one end of Perth's new freeway named Farmer Freeway after a well known footballer, Polly Farmer who is part aboriginal who played for Geelong in the 1950-60s.

Peter was our driver with Gordon as an extra who was learning the tour route. We received commentaries from both of them. They explained the salinity problem and much more, they were very good. About the special trees which we can't remember the name are being planted to hopefully overcome the problem. Another tree called Maritime Pine is also being used. We passed through the rich Swan Valley with lots of vineyards. We were on the Northern Highway travelling to New Norcia where we arrived at about 10.15am. This is

Australia's only Monastic town founded in 1846. It has been featured in many TV programmes in the past. It's 132km north of Perth. It consists of various buildings,

Monastery, St. Gertrude's Church, St. Ildophonus Cottage, flour mill, Hotel, Museum and Art Gallery. A young woman of the town gave us a talk about the Abbey Church.

Our tour men were rather embarrassed because we had morning tea here but for some reason the coach's hot water system didn't work so the water was only luke warm for our tea and coffee. They had biscuits, cakes and fruit set out on a table, very good. Then on to Moora then Cevantes which is on the coast for lunch at a motel. A good meal. Then to the Pinnacles which are situated in the Nambung National Park about 10km inland. We arrived there at 3pm with about an hour allocated so that people could walk around The Pinnacles area. The area was not what we expected. It's much bigger, about the size of Brisbane's CBD. Now we commenced seeing the W.A. flora. We departed at 4pm and stopped at a little area near the road to inspect some flowers. By now I was using my Pentax camera taking slide photos, some were 20cm close-ups. These we