



Log of *S/V High Drama* No.18 Australia April, 2003

G'Day Mates!

We've thrown together a couple of slabs of stubbies, a few bangers for the barbie, and enough tucker to get us up the line. Most of the mates in our mob are also heading on. So it's no more whinging about life ashore, it's goodbye to the Sheilas at Mooloolaba Yacht Club!

Log 18 has been completed as we prepare *High Drama* to head north from Mooloolaba to the Great Barrier Reef and beyond. This Log provides a photographic journal of our travel in Australia since January 2003. Although we had a land based Internet connection in Mooloolaba, by the time you read this *High Drama's* dock lines once again will have been cut and we will be island hopping up the coast. We receive email by radio while at sea. As always, we enjoy hearing from you. Due to persistent spam for discount Viagra, I am no longer publishing our email address. (The spammers not only think I'm impotent, but they also think I'm cheap!) If you don't have our Sailmail email address, please contact the web master. We'd love to hear from you!



Australia: Overview according to humorist Bill Bryson

“Australia is the world’s sixth largest country and its largest island. It is the only island that is also a continent and the only continent that is also a country. It was the first continent conquered from the sea, and the last. It is the only nation that began as a prison.

It is the home of the largest living thing on earth, the Great Barrier Reef, and of the most famous and striking monolith, Ayers Rock (or Uluru to use its now official more respectful Aboriginal name). It has more things that will kill you than anywhere else. Of the world’s ten most poisonous snakes, all are Australian. Five of its creatures – the funnel-web spider, box jellyfish, blue ringed octopus, paralysis tick and stonefish – are the most lethal of their type in the world. .. If you are not stung or pronged to death in some unexpected manner, you may be fatally chomped by sharks or crocodiles, or carried helplessly out to sea by irresistible currents, or left to stagger to an unhappy death in the baking outback. It’s a tough place.”

Bill Bryson, **Down Under**, p.19, 2000

On the Road

Australia warns drivers about crossings of her native sons.



Kangaroos and wallabies



Echidnas



Wombats

And the Aussies try to keep tourists alive in intersections:



Maybe this is political commentary; who knows?

Down the Coast to Canberra

We returned from the United States just after New Years’ weekend 2003. After getting a few boat projects underway traveled south by rental car to Canberra, the national capital of Australia. On the way we stopped at a few attractions.



Byron Bay Lighthouse on the eastern most point of Australia



View from Byron Bay Lighthouse



A two-year draught has plagued Australia. Bush fires ravaged areas near many cities, including some Canberra suburbs. One Canberra suburb lost several hundred homes. Nine years earlier homeowners had successfully defeated an effort by fire protection managers to cut a fire buffer in the surrounding woods. Smoke from fires near Canberra obstructed visibility within the city.

Canberra

Our Canberra highlight occurred when we located long time and infrequently seen friend Kathy Kennedy Lepani, an Albert Lea woman who landed a fair distance from the tree! Kathy, her husband Charles, and daughter Veitania treated us to a feast and evening of conversation that covered three generations and several continents.



Ann, Kathy, and Charles Lepani in front of Parliament



Friend, Veitania, Kathy and Ann

Canberra is a planned city laid out by American Walter Burleigh Griffin beginning in 1908. Melbourne and Sydney apparently failed to agree on the location of the federal parliaments, so the Australian Capital Territory (like the District of Columbia) was carved out between the two cities to definitively end the rivalry. Australian themes permeate the city. For example, the roof area beneath the flag on Parliament in the photo above left is a grass path. This symbolizes that citizens are always superior to the institutions of their government. The Houses of Parliament contain colors of native eucalyptus trees instead of traditional British red and green.



Upper House



Eucalyptus leaves

The Aboriginal Embassy

Australia's indigenous inhabitants, Aborigines, have made strides politically and culturally in the last generation. Unlike the Maoris in New Zealand who fought colonization and negotiated a treaty, Australian Aborigines were widely disbursed, fought very little, and were never recognized under law. The British and later the Australian government employed the legal fiction of *terra nullius*, that the land belonged to no one at the time of British settlement. Although the Aborigines had law, since it was communicated orally, it was not recognized and the doctrine of *terra nullius* prevailed until 1992. The High Court overturned the doctrine and the political process has been dealing with native title to lands with varying success, depending on the perspective of the speaker.

The Aborigines established an Embassy right in front of the Old parliament House, on the Commons. Each time we passed by the Embassy, a handful of Aboriginal people talked while seated in a semi circle behind the building.



The Aboriginal Embassy



The view from the embassy. Note the smoke.

On to Sydney

We said "So long," to Kathy, Charles, and Veitania and tentatively planned to visit them in the Trobriand Islands in Papua New Guinea in June. Kathy will be working in the village of Losuia on her PhD in anthropology in AIDS education.

We drove into Sydney, booked an inexpensive room above a pub, and prepared for the Australia Day celebration. Our 3rd floor room kept us a safe distance from the noise below.



The Lord Nelson, the oldest hotel and pub in Sydney.



The Lord Nelson Pub in the morning.

Australia Day celebrations commemorate the landing of the First Fleet in Sydney Cove in 1788. Two significant events preceded, the landing, however. First, Captain Cook had claimed the east coast of Australia for England in 1770, and second, the American War of Independence shut down the American colonies as a place to dump convicts. Accordingly, the First Fleet consisted of nine transport ships and two men of war with about 750 convicts, 210 marines, and 40 women and children. Aborigines, however, refer to Australia Day as Invasion Day.

Aborigines hosted a dance in the Royal Botanical Garden to open the Australia Day festivities.



The Botanical Garden lies on sacred land. These Aboriginal dancers invoked the blessing of their ancestors and gave permission to the City of Sydney to use the park for the celebration.



The pub crowds spilled out into the street.



Sailors in the rigging before the Australia Day Race.

Lois and Jason Land in Sydney

A few days after Australia Day Jeff's mother Lois and our son Jason arrived in Sydney for a three-week holiday.



Jason, Ann & Lois viewing the most famous landmark in Sydney, the Opera House.



While in Phoenix one of Jeff's new law partners, Raj Sivananthan encouraged us to visit his parents in Sydney. We did and they and they treated us to a wonderful lunch high atop the Sydney Tower. They shared their experiences of years in Sydney and provided excellent suggestions for tourist stops, most of which we could see from the Tower.



The Sydney Tower and girlfriend, and Jason

Ann, Lois, Raj's parents Babi, and Siva, and Raj's cousins, Sanjay, Vinoth,

No museum escaped our inspection, and of course, the National Maritime Museum led the list for one member of our group.



A museum volunteer regaled us for an hour with submarine stories. Jason almost joined up!

Off to Tasmania

The Island of Tasmania lies due south of New South Wales. Among sailors the island is famous for co-hosting the Sydney-Hobart Sailing Race on Boxer Day after Christmas each year. The weather gets a bit dicey as the Aussies say. They sail in the Roaring 40s, southern latitudes know for very frequent gales.



We first stopped in Hobart, Tasmania, at the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania, one of the Sydney-Hobart Race sponsors. They welcomed us with great enthusiasm and cold beer. Moreover, we crossed the starting line of the Sydney to Hobart Race in Sydney Harbor, and the finish line in Hobart--on tourboats!



Many of the streets in Hobart are named after great sailors and navigators. Although we were very pleased that our family had been recognized, we complained to the town fathers that our good friend Mike Morrison got top billing!



For a nation founded by convicts and whose national character includes a healthy disrespect for authority, Australia has an over abundance of dress codes. Even though we claimed to be related to the bloke after whom the hotel was named (Jason even showed him his drivers' license), we were denied access because we had on short pants and sandals.



Hobart hosted the Tasmanian Wooden Boat Show while we were there. Tasmania produces three different timbers that provide excellent wood for boat building. Their craftsmanship is superb.



Wooden sailing dinghies



A lovely ketch

And who should we run into at the beer garden at the Hobart Boat Show but Fred and Renee from *Aldebaran*, the Milwaukee Wisconsin folks we have traveled so closely with for the past two years.



Ann, Renee, and Lois



Jason, posing as Hunter S. Thompson, and Fred

After Hobart we traveled to Port Arthur, Tasmania, the remains of a former penal establishment. When convicts on the mainland of Australia committed additional offenses, they were exiled to Port Arthur. The highlight of this attraction was the night Ghost Tour. The tour guides narrated tales of guts and guile throughout the history of the prison. In the darkness the tales came alive to their suggestible audience. One particular scary tale took place in the basement of the medical officer's home, where all prison autopsies were conducted. Everyone jumped at the punch line, and several frightened folks scampered for the door.



Port Arthur changed from a prison where the lash was administered liberally to a model prison where prisoners were isolated, and placed in small individual cells. No one spoke to them, nor were they permitted to speak. Rather than being killed by infections following the lash, some of the humanely treated prisoners quietly went insane.

Sights Around Tasmania

Below are some of the sights we saw as we circumnavigated Tasmania by rental car.



Cradle Mountain, which looks like Mt. Fuji and Mt. McKinley the day we visited them: fogged in.



Ann and Lois checking the map on a hike.



Russell Falls in Mount Field National Park



View from Sara's Island prison, for convicts who were too tough for Port Arthur.



Ann navigating on tourboat



View of Ellendale Meadow



Sign in information center in Strahan, Tasmania, site of one of the first and most fierce battles in Australia between environmentalists and developers, and a power company.



Lighthouse at entrance to Strahan known as Hell's Gate by convicts who were sent here. We briefly traveled out into the great Southern Ocean on a tour boat. We decided that we definitely would not sail in the area.

Critters at the Tasmanian Devil Wildlife Park



Tasmanian devil



Roo



Ann enticing the beasts.



Lois got into an argument with this one.



Roos hop on two legs when they go fast. Neither their tails nor front legs touch the ground.

Although people periodically claim to see Tasmanian tigers, they were hunted to extinction by European settlers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Efforts are now underway to clone a thylacine from DNA of a well preserved specimen from 1866.



Tasmanian tiger, a marsupial also known as a thylacine.

Melbourne

After Tasmania we flew to Melbourne. The cameraman slept through Melbourne and did not get many photos. We did partake of Melbourne's cultural sites, including museums and galleries and the musical **Cabaret**. Melbourne does host the house in which Captain Cook grew up as a child. We thought it interesting that a city Cook never visited transported his parents' house from England.



Cook's cabin

Back to Sydney

We flew back to Sydney where Jason and Lois departed for the States after three weeks of crash tourism. Ann and I continued to see the sights for a few days.

We visited the Sydney Zoo, for example. The animals there have the best view of Downtown Sydney.



The giraffes keep track of the harbor.



Sea eagle



Koalas spend 20 hours a day sleeping.



We could learn something from them.



A porcupine like animal called an echidna.



A bat in the Botanical Garden. It's larger than a chicken.

The State Library of New South Wales.

What a treasure trove of historical items! Not only did we find Cook's sword and various other items that his mother owned, but also Bligh's original diary on April 28, 1789 when the **Bounty** was taken from him! Most have heard of the mutiny, but fewer know that afterwards he sailed his longboat from Tonga through hostile waters in the Fiji islands through the Great Barrier Reef to make landfall at Restoration Island on the Queensland Coast and then on to Kupang Harbour in Dutch (West) Timor in Indonesia. Bligh maintained ship's discipline in the longboat and kept his log each day, and kept it dry. He and his men sailed 41 days in a rowboat 23 feet long and laden with 18 other men. Bligh had previously sailed under Cook and was a superb seaman and navigator.



Cook's sword at State Library of New South Wales



William Bligh's original journal

The Journal says:

Just before Sunrise Mr Christian & The Master at Arms & several officers came into my cabbin while I was fast asleep, and seizing me tyed my hands with a Cord & threatened instant death if I made the least noise, I however, ~~having a reverie,~~ called sufficiently loud to alarm the officers, who found themselves equally secured by Centinels at their Doors - There were now three men at my Cabbin Door & four inside (a) - Mr Christian had a Cutlass & the others were armed with Musquets & Bayonets - I was now carried on Deck in my shirt, in torture with a severe bandage round my wrists behind my back, where I found no man to rescue to me. I ask'd The reason for such a violent act, but I was threatned to be put to death if I said a word.

The Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Dog Show and The Peace March

On Sunday, February 16, 2003 we had a full day. In mid morning we walked out of the Australian Museum in Sydney and were immediately enmeshed in a full scale peace protest. Although the crowd mood was very calm, indeed polite, there was no escape from the flood tide of humanity. We went along and met some thoroughly enjoyable people. After following the parade route for a mile or so, we dropped out and jumped a bus for the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival Dog Show. Below are a few scenes and signs.



Everyone said, "Just take the 69 bus, you'll get there."



An entrant



A finalist



The judges



Deciding which one to use.

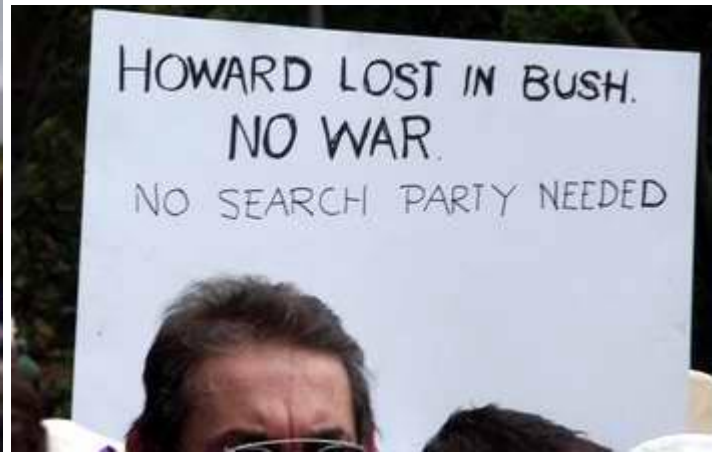
The Peace March



Protestor putting peace dove on statue.

Australia's Prime Minister John Howard has been a loyal supporter of President Bush's campaign for war in Iraq. Many Americans don't realize that Australia has been a steadfast ally of the United States since World War II and lost over 500 men in Viet Nam. Some protestors' signs interested us.







We continue to learn as we travel. At the Gay and Lesbian festival we talked to folks at the Sex Workers' Out Reach Project. A couple about our age handed out material for counseling parents of gay and lesbian children. We learned that not only is prostitution legal in Australia, it is a regulated industry. Prostitutes pay taxes on services rendered. The rate of sexually transmitted diseases among sex workers is half that of the general population. And, they are a politically active group.



Sign in the S.W.O.P. booth at the Mardi Gras

Conclusion

For the next few months we will be sailing inside the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and then perhaps Papua New Guinea. We plan to keep our options open as we travel up to Darwin, the jumping off place for Indonesia. It is too early to know whether people in other countries will resort to violence against tourists as a reaction to the war in Iraq and the Bush Doctrine of Pre-emption. If that happens, we will stay out of harm's way.

Let us hear from you.

Jeff & Ann Brooke
S/V High Drama