

## On to Adelaide

Our last note was posted in Perth where we had spent our first week in Australia. Early on Sunday morning we were picked up at the hotel and taken to the railway station where we boarded the Indian Pacific. This service has been running across the entire continent (Perth to Sydney and return) since 1970 when Australia settled on one standard railway gauge. We had chosen to splurge on the “Platinum” service which meant we had a private cabin with bathroom and full sized bed. The room converted to a nice sitting area during the day but we were also able to spend quite a bit of the time in the lounge where we had all our meals and the occasional snack or drink.

We left Perth (on the half-mile long train) at 10 and were soon through the suburbs and into much more rural areas of farmland and forest before entering the western Australian desert. The journey to Adelaide (where we would disembark) would take almost 48 hours and we would travel through some of the most isolated countryside in Australia and even the world. Flat, mostly barren desert sounds like a boring way to spend two days of a holiday but there was sufficient variety and immense views to make it a very pleasant journey. In addition, of course, we were traveling in relative luxury on a train—an unusual experience in itself.



In the evening of the first day, after dinner on the train, we stopped at the mining town of Kal-

goorlie where the 1890s Gold Rush had started. It is still a mining town (of over 30,00 population) and boasts one of the largest deep pit mines in the world—the 3.5 by 1.5 750 meter deep “Superpit”. We visited an overlook at this site and got an impression of its enormity even though it was late at night when we were there. The mine is scheduled to continue to grow until 2029 when it is estimated that it will be fully worked and closed.

The next day, Monday, we stopped at 6am to have breakfast off the train in “the middle of nowhere” at the sheep ranch station of Rawlinna. The ranch is 2.5 million acres and 70,000 sheep a year are shipped from this depot. Then it was back to the train to complete the trek across the Nullarbor Plain along the longest stretches of strait rail in the world.

We had a mid-afternoon stop shortly after crossing into South Australia at the tiny hamlet of Cook. This was never a big town but today has a population of just four—those who provide re-fueling services for the passing trains and offer accommodation to drivers. Apparently it was the privatization of the railroads in 1987 that caused this town to shrink from two hun-



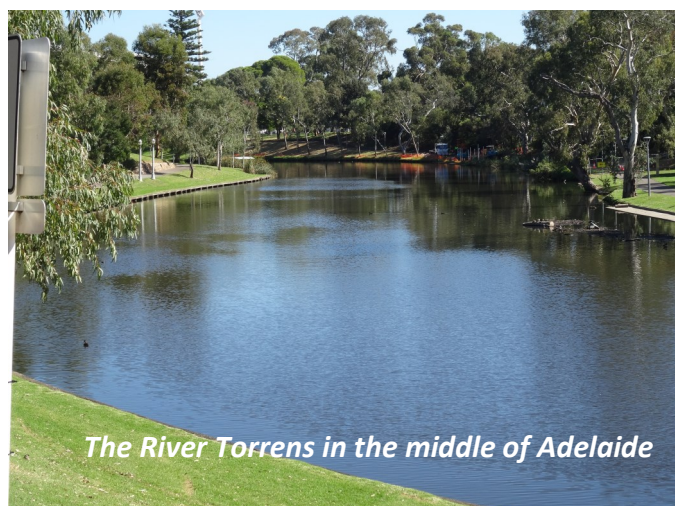


dred to just a handful overnight. From Cook we continued across the Nullarbor Plain, now on Central Standard Time—1 1/2 hours ahead of Perth.



Throughout the evening and the night we continued east across a large part of South Australia before turning south towards Adelaide. Some-

time close to midnight we passed Woomera, famous for its tracking capabilities and an important contributor to the successful 1969 moon landing. We arrived in Adelaide at 7:30 am and were taken directly to our hotel and then spent a rather lazy day in the city.



*The River Torrens in the middle of Adelaide*



*The Adelaide Oval Cricket Stadium*

On the three remaining days in Adelaide we spent 1 1/2 in the city on our own and the other 1 1/2 on organized tours of the surrounding area. One tour took us to the Adelaide Hills (about 2000 feet high on the northeastern edge of the city where we had good views over the valley as far as the beaches and visited a 150 year old German town. This area was settled early by Germans (who brought their wine making skills) who left as a result of religious persecution in their homeland.



*The Adelaide Hills And Hahndorf*





South Australia in general and Adelaide in particular has had a wide variety of European immigrants in its history and, although claimed by Britain and remaining very British in many ways, has accepted many ethnic groups. It was never a large penal colony and, in fact, attracted a lot of very wealthy immigrants. The city of Adelaide was laid out on a square grid system and is surrounded by parkland. It also has five major squares and many magnificent buildings and, with a little over a million population, is easy to get around and looks very prosperous.



The tour of five wine estates was a full day out in which we were given any-



where from four to seven different wines to taste at each stop. The Barossa Valley is very pretty and the estates are set in some beautiful countryside so—even without the wine—the day would have been great, especially with the perfect weather. The wines themselves were varied and covered a wide range, from sauvignon blanc to shiraz to ports and even warm mead at one stop. Australia is perhaps better known for its red wines and even the estate staff acknowledged that New Zealand whites generally had them beat, Not being much into reds (Molly enjoyed the shiraz and merlot in particular) I went more for the sauvignon blanc but was particularly attracted to the dessert wines and their sherries and ports. At least that's what I remember.

On our last full day in Adelaide it was Good Friday and (unlike the US and, we understand much of the UK) this is a national holiday and most businesses were closed. In fact, many people we met were enjoying a four day weekend with Easter Monday taken as an additional holiday.



*Victoria Square*

Despite the holiday, there were many coffee shops and cafes open so we were able to do our planned walk-



ing tour of the city. We started at the huge central park of Victoria Square and walked to the northern edge of the city center, admiring many fine Victorian and early 20th century buildings. The one square mile city proper is bounded by four terraces so we had walked from the center of the city to its northern edge at North Terrace.



One of many in the City of Churches

Left, the old town hall

Right, the ANZAC War Memorial



***Railway Station***

***Old and New Parliament Buildings***

***South Australia Library***

Once at North Terrace we walked past the railway station, the old and new Parliament buildings, the war memorials and the library, all within a few hundred yards and bordering the University of Adelaide campus which we had seen two days ago. By now it was early afternoon on another glorious day (sunny and 75F) so we decided to take the city tram to the beach suburb of Glenelg. This was about a 30 minute ride on a modern light rail system and took us through the southern residential areas of the city with some very large homes as well as many smaller bungalows to see along the way.

Glenelg is a small but vibrant community and today (a national holiday) it was packed with locals who had come to spend a few hours in the play areas and on the beach. There were several large hotels and apartment complexes overlooking the ocean (Southern or Pacific?) and a long pier over the beach and water. We strolled around for a while, found a coffee shop (charging a 15% surcharge due to the holiday!) and then took the tram back to the center of town. We felt good at having mastered the public transit system and had had a very interesting and pleasant day in what is a very beautiful city.



Tomorrow (Saturday) we pick up a rental car and start our journey further east, taking in a large stretch of the Great Ocean Road along the way to Melbourne where we will arrive on Monday and from where, hopefully, we will have further updates on our trip.