

Australia

April 2017



Bob and Molly Hillery

This was our second trip to Australia. On our first visit in 2007 we visited the cities of Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne and spent about a week on the island of Tasmania. This time we decided to go a little further afield and put together an itinerary that would take us from coast to coast of this vast country—although admittedly only in the southern one third along a narrow band from Perth to Sydney.

We flew by way of Los Angeles and Brisbane to Perth, the capital of Western Australia. In this beautiful city and its surroundings we spent a week before boarding the Indian Pacific Train that would take us across the western desert and into South Australia's capital, Adelaide. Here we spent another five days taking in the surrounding wine country before picking up a car and driving along the Great Coast Road to Melbourne.

From Melbourne to Canberra and then to Sydney we were repeating some of our earlier trip but we have always found that any destination is worthy of a second (or third, fourth, ...) visit. These three were no exception.

Before flying home from Sydney we had spent a month in the country and had traveled over 5000 miles by plane, train, car, bus and boat. We saw dramatically different regions and a wide range of terrain—from the 1500 miles of almost dead flat desert, to fantastic coasts and ocean views, to the varied architecture and culture of five capitals.

Obviously Australia has a lot more to offer the visitor and several additional trips would be necessary to thoroughly “do” the continent, so perhaps it is time to start planning our third vacation here.



Australia is a country and continent surrounded by the Indian and Pacific oceans. Its major cities – Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide – are coastal. Its capital, Canberra, is inland. The country is known for its Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge, the Great Barrier Reef, a vast interior desert wilderness called the Outback, and unique animal species like kangaroos, koalas and duck-billed platypuses.

Australia is the planet's sixth largest country after Russia, Canada, China, the USA, and Brazil. At almost 3,000,000 square miles (very similar to the US 48 contiguous states) it accounts for five percent of the world's land area and although it is the smallest continental land mass, it is the world's largest island.

For about 50,000 years before the first British settlement in the late 18th century, Australia was inhabited by indigenous Australians, who spoke languages classifiable into approximately 250 groups. After the European discovery of the continent by Dutch explorers in 1606, Australia's eastern half was claimed by Great Britain in 1770 and initially settled through penal transportation to the colony of New South Wales from 26 January 1788. The population grew steadily in subsequent decades, and by the 1850s most of the continent had been explored and an additional five self-governing crown colonies established. On 1 January 1901, the six colonies federated, forming the Commonwealth of Australia. The population of 24 million is highly urbanized and heavily concentrated on the eastern seaboard.

Australia is a federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II at its apex as the Queen of Australia, a role that is distinct from her position as monarch of other Commonwealth realms. The Queen is represented in Australia by the Governor-General at the federal level and by the Governors at the state level, who by convention act on the advice of her ministers. Thus, in practice the Governor-General has no actual decision-making or de facto governmental role, and merely acts as a legal figurehead for the actions of the Prime Minister and the Federal Executive Council. The federal government is separated into three branches:

Legislature: the two house Parliament, defined as comprising the Queen (represented by the Governor-General), the Senate, and the House of Representatives;

Executive: the Federal Executive Council, which in practice gives legal effect to the decisions of the cabinet, comprising the prime minister and ministers of state who advise the Governor-General;

Judiciary: the High Court of Australia and other federal courts, whose judges are appointed by the Governor-General on advice of the Federal Executive Council.

Australia has six states—New South Wales (NSW), Queensland (QLD), South Australia (SA), Tasmania (TAS), Victoria (VIC) and Western Australia (WA)—and two major mainland territories—the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and the Northern Territory (NT). In most respects these two territories function as states, except that the Commonwealth Parliament has the power to modify or repeal any legislation passed by the territory parliaments.

Australia is a wealthy country; it generates its income from various sources including mining-related exports, telecommunications, banking and manufacturing. It has a market economy, a relatively high GDP per capita, and a relatively low rate of poverty.

Until the Second World War, the vast majority of settlers and immigrants came from the British Isles, and a majority of Australians have some British or Irish ancestry. Australia's population has quadrupled since the end of World War I, much of this increase from immigration. Following World War II and through to 2000, almost 5.9 million of the total population settled in the country as new immigrants, meaning that nearly two out of every seven Australians were born in another country. Australia's population is currently projected to reach around 42 million by 2050. Nevertheless, its population density, about 1 inhabitant per square mile, remains among the lowest in the world.

Australia, April 2017

Friday March 31 to Sunday April 2

We left home at 1pm after having breakfast with Elizabeth and Colin. We were at the airport by 2pm and turned in the rental car before checking in (a little slow) and going through Security (no TSA pre-check for the first time in years!). Despite this we had about an hour in the Sky Club before our 4:20 flight to Los Angeles.

The flight was a little bouncy but we managed to get a short nap after our dinner and arrived in LAX essentially on time to a very pleasant late afternoon with temperatures in the sixties. We had a long walk to the International Terminal and, since we were traveling to Brisbane on a Virgin Australia flight, we were turned away from the Delta Lounge – but allowed in the very nice Etihad Lounge.

It was almost four hours before our boarding time but we spent the time eating, drinking, reading and lounging, so the time went by relatively quickly.

The flight from LAX left a little late but the time was made up before our arrival in Brisbane. It was a very long flight (over 13 hours) but we managed to get some sleep and enjoyed the Virgin Australia Business Class service. We had a couple of very rough periods during the night but overall the flight was good and didn't seem as bad as the length would indicate.

We arrived in Brisbane early (7am) SUNDAY morning, having crossed the dateline and essentially missed out Saturday altogether. Since this was April Fools' Day, we didn't feel too badly about missing it – and we'll get it back on the return flight!

Brisbane was warm (over 70F) even at this early hour but there was no rain – unlike the torrential downpours from Cyclone Debbie earlier in the week. Getting through Immigration, baggage claim and Customs was very straightforward and we very quickly got our bags re-checked for our onward flight and caught the shuttle bus to the domestic terminal. Here we had only about a 30 minute wait before boarding started for our flight to Perth.

On leaving we flew right over the city of Brisbane which looked to have a number of tall skyscrapers in the central business district. This area was alongside a broad, snaking river which clearly was swollen from the recent rains and was a deep brown color. I didn't see evidence of flooded streets but we had seen pictures a couple of days ago indicating that there was widespread flooding here.

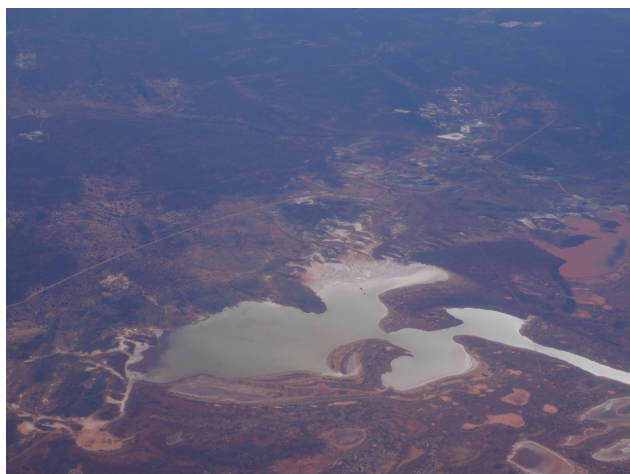
Once away from the city and heading west the landscape was very flat and, near the coast, quite green and heavily forested. This soon changed as we went further inland and the land was predominantly red or sand colored with very few obvious rivers. Although there were no towns (I saw one 50 building hamlet in the first hour of flight), there were indications that the land had been sub-divided into large rectangular areas presumably with some type of farming in the groomed areas.



The only “roads” that I could see were dirt tracks which snaked across the land and may well have been dried river beds.

Even this level of cultivation and civilization was soon gone and we were flying over dry, barren land not unlike parts of the western United States, although here it was largely flat – or at least appeared to be from our vantage point. Certainly there were no

mountains and the only sign of altitude change was in the color of the land (red, brown, black) and a few river valleys. There appeared to be no trees or any other sign of vegetation; certainly this was desert country with vast areas of mudflat cracked surface.



There were several areas of what appeared to be salt flats and multi-colored “fields”, presumably of various mineral deposits. It was very much like the area west of Salt Lake City in Utah and it contained a number of mining pits, clearly visible from above. None were as large at Bingham Canyon in Utah but clearly the whole area must be full of ores, many of which were being, or had been, mined. Surprisingly there was little evidence of human activity; there were many straight, unpaved roads but no evidence of mining equipment or housing for miners.

Closer to our destination the ground became more uniform in color (“soil”) and had the appearance of large fields, obviously laid out for a purpose. It is fall here so late in the season for crops but it was still difficult to imagine that these had been filled with green until recently harvested. Only when we were beginning our descent into Perth was there any hint of green and what must have been farmland. There were even a few obvious settlements and I even saw a small town – the first since leaving the east coast. This area as we ap-



proached the west coast was also quite heavily forested and there were some small hills, the first non-flat area we had seen right across the country.



Approaching Perth

It was an interesting flight despite the somewhat barren landscape and it made Australia feel even larger than it actually is. We covered almost 3000 miles with essentially no human settlements, although there was a good deal of evidence of man’s intervention.

On the route from Brisbane we flew over southern Queensland and then the northern section of South Australia but our route of flight took us well south of Alice Springs and Ayers Rock – although the landscape was that which I would anticipate finding in those more famous parts. The second half of the 5 ½ hour flight was over the huge state of Western Australia – but the landscape remained essentially the same until we were on the final approach to Perth.

We landed in Perth to temperatures in the mid-eighties and under clear blue skies. Our bags arrived and we quickly got a taxi into town and were checking in the Holiday Inn almost exactly 36 hours after leaving home. Despite the journey, however, we decided to explore our immediate surroundings for an hour before cleaning up and resting.

We soon found a local coffee shop (very popular here it seems) and had a nice chat with the waitress who was over here for two years from Manchester, England! Apparently she must return to England after two years here and had had to spend three months helping on a farm in order to stay that long. She wanted to settle in Australia but without skills and/or money her options were slim and probably were dependent on marrying a local!

We walked around the central business district for a while and admired a number of old brick buildings (in amongst the modern skyscrapers) and a couple of arcades that could have been Victorian England. We are looking forward to spending more time in this city and are impressed with what we have seen so far.

Tonight we walked to the Adelphi restaurant in the Hilton hotel, less than ten minutes from our hotel. We each had a salad and shared three tapas dishes, together with a bottle of local wine. It was a good meal (too much food) in casual but pleasant surroundings. The bill was over \$100 (US) which we felt was a little expensive but we have already noticed that food and drink seems to be expensive here compared with home.



Monday April 3

Not surprisingly we were up shortly after 7 and we walked a few minutes from the hotel for breakfast at a coffee shop. Even at 8am it was warm enough to sit outside and people watch as we ate and the temperature was projected to get into the mid-eighties later in the day.

We walked another few blocks from the hotel to get the first Hop on/Hop off bus of the day and start our sightseeing of Perth. We purchased a “Triple Pass” which gave us two days on the Perth bus, a cruise on the Swan River to Fremantle and a ride on the trolley in that town. Today we would spend in the city and go to Fremantle on Tuesday.



Old and New Perth side by side

We rode the bus through the central Business District and then a little way out of the city center to a large complex still being built across the river. The main attraction here is the casino but additional hotels and other entertainment facilities are planned. We didn't get off the bus here but

the ride provided some great views of the city and the river.

Perth is the capital and largest city of the Australian state of Western Australia. It is the fourth-most populous city in Australia, with an estimated population of 2 million living in Greater Perth. The first areas settled were on the Swan River, with the city's central business district and port (Fremantle) both located on its shores.

Perth was founded by Captain James Stirling in 1829 as the administrative center of the Swan River Colony. It gained city status (currently vested in the smaller City of Perth) in 1856, and was promoted to the status of a Lord Mayoralty in 1929. The city's population increased substantially as a result of the Western Australian gold rushes in the late 19th century, largely as a result of emigration from the eastern colonies of Australia.

An influx of immigrants after the war, predominantly from Britain, Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia, led to rapid population growth. This was followed by a surge in economic activity flowing from several mining booms in the late 20th and early 21st centuries that saw Perth become the regional headquarters for a number of large mining operations located around the state.

As part of Perth's role as the capital of Western Australia, the state's Parliament and Supreme Court are located within the city, as is Government House, the residence of the Governor of Western Australia. Perth came seventh in a 2016 list of the world's most livable cities.

Kings Park, Perth and the Honour Avenue

For many thousands of years, Aboriginal people have been visiting Kings Park and it remains an important ceremonial and cultural place for the Indigenous people of Western Australia.

Two years after the settlement of the Swan River Colony in 1829, most of the area now designated as Kings Park and Botanic Garden was set aside for 'public purposes'. John Forrest became Premier of Western Australia in 1890 and development of the park commenced in 1892. Forrest named the land 'The Perth Park' in 1895 but the name was changed in 1901 to 'Kings Park' to mark the accession of King Edward VII to the British throne.

Honour Avenue plaques sit poignantly against a backdrop of eucalypt trees. Each bears details of service personnel who died during war service and were either buried overseas or have no known graves. Each plaque is inscribed with the name of the deceased; unit and rank; age, date and manner of death; and who dedicated the plaque.



***Perth
from
the
bus***



We did leave the bus at Kings Park, which is home to the Western Australia Botanical Gardens. Here we walked for about an hour through beautifully landscaped gardens comprising desert plants and native trees.



There was a “tree top walk” (a rather nice elevated boardwalk) which not only allowed us to get close to the trees but also provided some fantastic views of the river and city from another perspective.



The walk ended in a large area dedicated to Western Australians who fought and died in the World Wars (and since) as part of the Commonwealth forces. Here were several war memorials in a beautiful grassy park area on a promontory overlooking the water.



*Western
Australia
War
Memorial*



Honour Avenue, Kings Park



*The Swan
River
(right)*



We had a drink in the café in the park before getting the bus back to the city. We stopped briefly at the waterfront where we booked a time for our river cruise tomorrow and also made dinner reservations for tonight. Back in the city center (one stop on the bus after leaving the waterfront) we had a coffee in a shady arcade which was built to resemble a Tudor lane in England. (Left)

Perth is a beautiful city and has some very interesting buildings which we plan to explore further later in the week. It also has several pedestrian areas with many shops and cafes (coffee shops everywhere) and is a very pleasant town in which to walk and people watch. The sunny and warm weather just adds to the atmosphere!

We got back to the hotel before 3pm and relaxed until dinner time after a six hour session of sightseeing. We tend to slow down a little after 5 or 6 hours so we are pleased that we have a week in the Perth area before starting our journey east on Sunday.

Tonight we ate at Halo, a restaurant right on the waterfront. We sat outside with views of the water and the city skyline and had a very nice meal. We also chatted with our waitress who came to Australia 13 years ago from Slovakia having had a goal to leave her homeland since she “was three years old”.

Tuesday April 4

We were up quite early again so we walked to breakfast at the same coffee shop we had enjoyed yesterday. It was quite a bit cooler this morning but still pleasant enough to sit outdoors.



About 8:30 we walked down to the waterfront again, taking a short side trip through the old Supreme Court gardens (left), and then waited for our 9:45 boat to Fremantle. Near the waterfront—which is undergoing a very big expansion—there is an unusual bell tower (right) in which are located bells from St Martin in the Field in London.

The Swan Bells are a set of 18 bells hanging in a specially built 271 ft high copper and glass campanile in Perth. The tower is commonly known as The Bell Tower or the Swan Bell Tower.

Taking their name from the Swan River, which their tower overlooks, and forming a sixteen-bell peal with two extra chromatic notes, they are one of the largest sets of change ringing bells in the world.

Twelve of the set are historic bells from St Martin-in-the-Fields church in Trafalgar Square in London; six others, cast in recent times by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, round off the set. The St Martin-in-the-Fields bells were donated to the State of Western Australia as part of the 1988 Australian bicentenary celebrations; the additional bells were cast with a subsequent donation of metals mined in Western Australia.



The 1 ¼ hour narrated journey (the narration was far better on the return!) took us down the Swan River to the Indian Ocean. This is the river up which the first Europeans (Dutch) had sailed in 1697 and named the river after the black swans that inhabited the shores. The ride took us past some very plush waterfront neighborhoods and many yacht clubs and recreational areas. We must have seen thousands of boats (mostly moored) each costing upwards of \$50,000 (many MUCH more) and a similar number of homes that would have cost millions. There is certainly a lot of money in this part of Western Australia.



Down the Swan River to Fremantle

Fremantle is a major Australian port city in Western Australia, located at the mouth of the Swan River. Fremantle Harbour serves as the port of Perth and was the first area settled by the Swan River colonists in 1829. It was declared a city in 1929, and has a population of approximately 27,000.

The city is named after Captain Charles Fremantle, the English naval officer who established a camp at the site in 1829. The city contains well-preserved 19th century buildings and other heritage features.

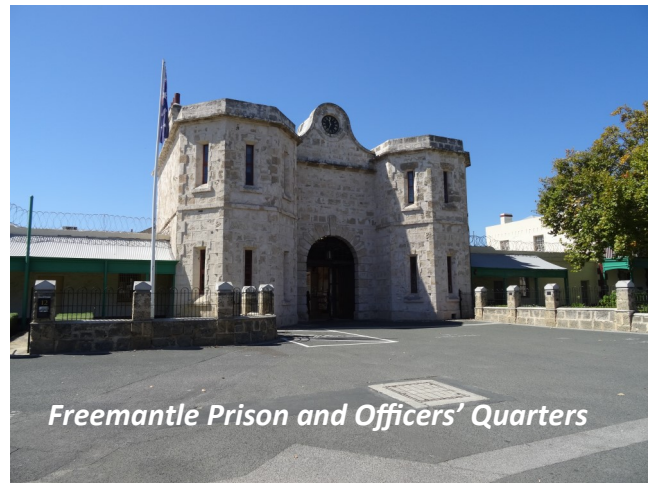
On 2 May 1829, Fremantle hoisted the Union Flag in a bay near what is now known as Arthur Head, and in accordance with his instructions, took formal possession "of the whole of the West Coast of New Holland" in the name of Britain's King George IV.

On 1 June 1850, the first convicts arrived at Fremantle. The thirty-seventh and last convict ship to dock at Fremantle was on 10 January 1868, signaling the end of penal transportation to Australia.

When the first 75 convicts arrived from Britain to support the colony's dwindling population, it became apparent that the Round House (the original prison) was inadequate to house them. The convicts built a new jail, Fremantle Prison, which was completed in the 1850s and continued to be used as Fremantle's prison until 1991. Fremantle Prison was once one of the most notorious prisons in the British Empire. It housed British convicts, local prisoners, military prisoners, enemy aliens and prisoners of war. In 2010 the UNESCO World Heritage Committee placed Fremantle Prison and 10 other "Australian Convict Sites" on the World Heritage List - making it the first built environment in Western Australia to be bestowed this honor.

During the Second World War, Fremantle was the home of the largest base for Allied submarines in the Southern Hemisphere.

After docking in Fremantle we immediately boarded the hop on/hop off tram for our journey around the town. The city is perhaps most famous for its prison to which came hundreds of convicts from Britain in the 1800s. We chose not to take the prison tour (although it reputedly is very good) but we were able to get off the tram and walk near the main gate and see some of the impressive stone walls.



The rest of the tour took us to a bluff with another impressive war memorial park, past the Round House (where the "noon" ball falls every day at 1pm!), along the late 1800s city streets and past the two huge harbors of the city. Fremantle is a major port not only for Western Australia but for cargo from Asia destined for all parts of the country.

After about an hour we left the tram in the Fishing Boat Harbor where there are many restaurants. We soon found one serving fish and chips and thoroughly enjoyed our meal, once again sitting outside on a beautiful sunny day. It was about 85F but there was a pleasant cooling breeze. After lunch we walked slowly through the old city center and admired many



turn of the (last) century buildings, many of which reminded us of similar construction in a number of old US towns. Some had beautiful wrought iron balconies reminiscent of New Orleans.



Fremantle

We arrived back at the cruise dock about an hour before our scheduled departure so we found a café nearby and sat in the shade until the boat arrived. The return journey was equally as pleasant as the downstream trip had been and this time the narration was very good and we



Perth skyline from the River

learned a lot about the docks, the history of Fremantle and the very expensive property on both sides of the Swan River. We both felt that we had made the most of our first two days here and that the \$95 Australia Dollars for the bus, boat and tram was money well spent.

This evening we had reservations at "C" revolving restaurant of the 33rd floor of one of the many city skyscrapers. It was a very good three course meal – although very expensive – and we had some great views of the city at night as we slowly turned the full 360 during the meal.

Wednesday April 5

We walked to the local Coffee Club for breakfast again and then returned to the hotel to finish packing before checking out. I walked about ½ mile to the Hertz rental and picked up our car for the next two days.

We managed to find our way out of the city and headed south, the first 25 miles or so being on motorway. We then headed west to the coast road and followed this south towards our destination of Margaret River. Although it looked on the map as



though the road hugged the coast, we were actually a little inland most of the time and got only occasional glimpses of the Indian Ocean. It was a very pleasant drive, however, on a divided highway (most of the time) with trees lining the road most of the way. The most recognizable and abundant tree was the eucalyptus but there were dozens of other species – none of which looked very familiar. We have noticed in our previous trip to Australia and especially on our visits to New Zealand that we can't name any of the trees and plants and none look like those at home.

After about 2 hours we stopped at the coastal town of Bunbury and found a café for a light lunch. Although the town sits on the coast, the center is away from the ocean and the port.

It is a very nice town with many early 20th century buildings and several tree-lined streets. Lunch outside on another sunny day was a nice break before the final 60 miles to Margaret River.

This stretch of road was also quite heavily forested but there was also a little more farmland and open fields. We saw quite a few sheep and some fields of cows but – despite the road-side warning signs – no kangaroos! Close to our destination we also saw vineyards and several wineries as we were now in the second major wine producing area of the country.



Margaret River is a town in the South West of Western Australia, located in the valley of the Margaret River, 172 miles south of Perth.

Margaret River's coast to the west of the town is a renowned surfing location, with worldwide fame for its surf breaks.

The surrounding area is the Margaret River Wine Region and is known for its wine production and tourism, attracting an estimated 500,000 visitors annually. In earlier days the area was better known for hardwood timber and agricultural production.

Once in Margaret River we quickly found our hotel and immediately went in search of restaurants for dinner.

The central business district of Margaret River is essentially one street less than a mile long with shops, cafes and restaurants. None of the latter were what we would call fine dining and the whole area seems to be geared to the outdoor-loving with much more rustic dining establishments than we

normally select. However, we found two that we felt would fit our two night stay and made a reservation at the first: “Ketchup Seafood”.

Everyone we had talked to about Margaret River and its surroundings raved about the area so we were perhaps a little disappointed in our first impressions. The scenery is certainly pleasant, although not spectacular, and the wineries don’t compare with those we had seen and enjoyed in South Africa. Perhaps we hadn’t seen the more scenic areas yet and would get a better look at the area tomorrow as we drive around the area. The evening meal at Ketchup was worth the drive, however. It was an excellent meal – probably the best so far – and we enjoyed talking with the hostess (from Scotland) and the waiter (from Italy). He confirmed what we had been told earlier by a waitress in Perth: he has a total of two years here in Australia, including three months working on a farm – before he must return to Italy.

Thursday April 6

It was much cooler (mid-fifties) and there was a little drizzle as we went into town for breakfast. Despite the weather we were still able to sit outside, under cover.

We then drove south about 35 miles to Augusta and Cape Leeuwin. The Cape is the point at which the Indian and Southern Oceans meet and the land on which is built a 125 feet high lighthouse. This spot is the most southwesterly point in Australia and we had expected it to be the point at which the Indian and **Pacific** Oceans meet. Apparently, however, in relatively recent years the northerly boundary of the Southern (Antarctic) Ocean has been “extended” northwards so it now meets the Indian Ocean – at Cape Leeuwin. This still begs the question as to where the Pacific and Southern Oceans meet but a look at the map suggested the southern tip of Tasmania. The box below details the current views of the International Hydrographic Organization on this as best as I can interpret it!

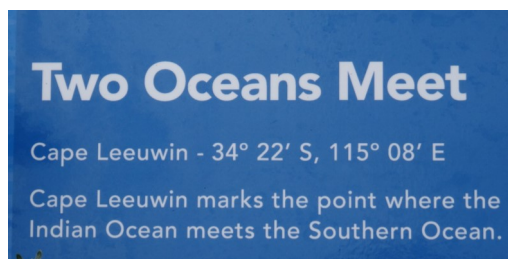
For many years only four oceans were officially recognized (Pacific, Atlantic, Indian and Arctic), but in 2000, the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) officially named the Southern Ocean, and determined its limits. Those limits include all water below 60 degrees south, and some of it, like the Arctic Ocean, is frozen. This would keep the Southern Ocean well away from any major land masses and certainly nowhere near Western Australia. Hence, we should have seen the point where the Pacific and Indian Oceans meet on our trip to Cape Leeuwin.

However, a 1953 pronouncement by the IHO extended the Southern (formerly Antarctic) Ocean northwards to meet the Indian Ocean at Cape Leeuwin and the Pacific Ocean at South East Cape in Tasmania. This is quite a significant enlargement of the “new” ocean (formerly simply the Antarctic Ocean) and, not surprisingly, the world body has not yet ratified this as “final”. Nevertheless, maps have been issued and demarcation points identified based on the 1953 limits, so the Southern Ocean remains larger (de facto) and reaches as far as two points on the Australian Continent.

Should the IHO ratify its proposed definition—or, indeed, offer an entirely new proclamation—we will immediately update this journal!!!

We were on the island of Tasmania ten years ago and, although we saw nothing to mark a point where oceans meet, we can argue that we were very close to that point. Hence we now claim to have been at the meeting point of four of the world’s five oceans. This excludes the Arctic Ocean in its entirety as its extremities are even more complicated to understand.

Regardless, this promontory is a beautiful spot and the area around the lighthouse is very interesting. We paid 7 AUD for an audio guide of the area which gave information on the building of the lighthouse, the three keepers' residence area, the conversion to automation late in the last century and the lighthouse's role as a weather station. It is still an active lighthouse today and judging by the seas we saw on our visit, is still a necessary part of world navigation. The guide also talked about the first person to circumnavigate the continent of Australia, Matthew Flinders, who was born in England, served under Captain Bligh, and completed the circumnavigation in 1803.



It was still cool and quite breezy at the point but we spent about an hour walking the area and admiring the views of the oceans and the grassy land. Most of the area on our way down to the Cape had been heavily forested but trees seemed to be having a hard time surviving on this headland. It was much more pleasant as we drove back to Augusta for lunch and then headed back north to Margaret River.



On the return we took the Cave Road (there are several very large caves along this route) which runs a little closer to the coast, although we had to take short detours to actually get views of the ocean. We did this at two points and, particularly at the second, got some fabulous views of the sandy beaches and the waves crashing against the many small islands and rocks just offshore. And, in the last hour of our day, the sun came out and the temperature reached about 65F. In all, a very pleasant drive with some great coastal scenery.



Tonight we ate at La Scarpetta, an Italian restaurant on the main street of Margaret River. Once again it was a god meal in casual but pleasant surroundings and, true to any good Italian restaurant, we were there almost two hours.

Friday April 7

It was still cool this morning (low fifties) but it was much brighter than yesterday and it promised to be a nice day for our drive back to Perth.



After breakfast in town we checked out of the hotel and went to the Cave Road, the one we had driven from the Cape yesterday. This time we turned north and were immediately in the densest winery district. We decided to stop at one for a tasting despite the fact that it was only 10am. We really wanted to compare it to those we had enjoyed in South Africa and soon determined that the latter were far better. Today we simply stood at a bar and were given a couple of samples (I suppose more might have been offered if we had asked) with no explanation as to what we were drinking. It reminded us of the few times we had done tastings in California and Washington. We bought a bottle of the Sauvignon Blanc and drove on our way north.