

Background

Our 2013 trip down south was the result of a congruence of fulfilling long-standing promises, invitations and opportunism. It enabled us to combine business with pleasure in a sequence of divergent events and activities. The main catalyst was an invitation from the Australian and New Guinea Fishes Association, ANGFA, to speak at their biennial convention in Melbourne in October, 2013. We discovered that ULN had also been invited to the conference. When we advised him that we were going to combine my speaking engagement with a visit to Kangaroo Island he simply proclaimed, "*I's coming!*". When we announced our intention to Rosalind Smallwood she reminded us of our promises to come and stay with her at her home on the Bellarine Peninsula. That seemed like a command and so began months of planning and anticipation for these events. The opportunism was a chance to catch up again with Geoff Mosley and Elizabeth Nettleton and to meet John Cokley a literary agent who had agreed to help me develop my books to reach a wider audience.

Wednesday, 9th October Brisbane to Ballan etc.

The Flight: It began rising at 4.30 to be at the airport by 6.00 am. It was an uneventful flight down flying over few identifiable landmarks but remarkable for how little "bush" remained below.

At Tullamarine we got our car without trouble and inserted our GPS and were able to navigate without trouble to Ballan except for the fact that the GPS took us needlessly on a pleasant diversion through Bacchus Marsh. We had no trouble locating John and Pip Cokley in their very light filled house near the Council offices.

Lunch in Ballan: Over a very pleasant lunch we discussed our publishing project. We resolved that to reach the widest potential market my bio book on Fraser Island should be a sort of "pop-psychology" book of about 80,000 words developed in an essay style. "No More Beating About the Bush" by whatever title would be a similar size and be more a series of stories on safaris with adventures and photos to particularly interest caravanners. John points out that there are almost half a million registered caravans in Australia and this is a large potential audience. I need to get to work as soon as possible to have the bio book ready for a publisher and editing. It was a stimulating and fascinating discussion and we left Ballan about 3.30 pm headed for Hurstbridge.

Hurstbridge Reunion: Catching up with Geoff was animated and stimulating and a meeting of warmth with so many memories from the past 45 years being revived. Geoff took us on a tour of the farm that epitomises the story of the TV series, "The Good Life", although Elizabeth has never quite forgiven me for depicting it as such.

The most memorable and enduring memory I have of this is Geoff taking us into his office. It is a former farm out-building that is chock full of papers and publications that were literally packed to the ceiling and filling boxes on the floor that had to be carefully stepped around. This is where Geoff has meticulously worked for the past two decades producing detailed publications on Norfolk Island, Blue Mountains, Royal National Park, Antarctica and matters relevant to World Heritage and conservation generally. He is now engaged in writing his memoirs in meticulous detail. Alas I wasn't able to recall some vital details that he was seeking from our days in the ACF together.



Photo: Geoff Mosley in his Office. Amazingly he can locate just about every document he needs to refer to.

We looked at the dam, talked a lot, kicked the ball for Trunks and went for a walk before dinner.

We had dinner in a small Hurstbridge restaurant with a long and very lively discussion interrupted only by the owners desire to close. It continued over coffee back at Boyds Road until quite late.

Thursday, 10th October Hurstville to Pt. Lonsdale

Our previous night's discussions resumed and continued through our walks and through lunch interrupted only by Geoff going off to check details on some matter of discussion.

After lunch we set our GPS and headed off to meet up with Rosalind Smallwood in Point Lonsdale.

Unfortunately there was some heavy rain as we travelled the 110 kilometres from North-east of Melbourne to South east of Geelong. However unlike the previous day when we had travelled along a cluttered Western Ring Road twice going to and coming from Ballan, this time the traffic flowed very freely. Perhaps the publicized shortage of fuel at some service stations may have induced some people to limit their travel,

We arrived at about 3.30 and Rosalind had a busy and interesting agenda for us taking us first to see some of the sites of Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff with the Point Lonsdale highlights, particularly the Lighthouse, the notorious Rip and Jetty.



Point Lonsdale Lighthouse the first of many lighthouses encountered during this trip

After appreciating the endurance of the fishers on the jetty it was on to Queenscliff, a second lighthouse and a sample of what gentrification has done to convert this once small fishing village into a Yuppie destination. I was there in 1990 and I lament the loss of the natural area just north of the ferry terminal. Still the area has some wonderful character houses that have made some ideal for some settings for some “Miss Fisher’s Murder Mysteries”.



Friday 11th October Bellarine Peninsula

This was a day of anticipation of the arrival of ULN who had texted us and so on our way to collect him we made a diversion to the Bluff at Barwon Heads, overlooking the site of the TV series, “Sea Change” The shed of Diver Dan remains on the jetty.

In Geelong we collected ULN at the Gull bus terminus and had coffee at the fish market before setting off on the northern side of the peninsula for the Basin Reserve, one of the last remnants of the original Bellarine forest with its endemic Bellarine gums. It was adjacent to a Secondary College and it was good to see the students taking advantage of this reserve.

Proceeding back to Pt. Lonsdale we were fascinated by a bout forty dead foxes strung up along a fence beside the road. It is apparently an old custom still practiced here.

After lunch we headed for the Ocean Grove sanctuary another remnant reserve, this time mainly of casuarinas and coastal vegetation. Alas it was badly impacted by Phytophthora and there was barely a live banksia to be found along the Banksia Trail and there were countless dead or dying Xanthothreas and many stricken casuarinas. It was a plant graveyard and accordingly there was little wildlife to be observed.

We returned to Pt. Lonsdale for pizzas before setting off for our final destination of the day to see the sun set over Lake Victoria. Alas the cloud blocked out the sunset but not our appreciation of the wonderful array of swans and waders.

Back in the warmth of Rosalind’s home we enjoyed desert and saw the amazing images of African wildlife captured by ULN during his recent adventures there.



Lake Victoria late afternoon

**Saturday 12th October
Pt. Lonsdale to ANGFA**



It was a busy scramble to get away on schedule from Pt. Lonsdale but we were keen to be in Melbourne for the start of the ANGFA Convention. We arrived at Ciloms Hotel, the Convention venue, at 9.00 am and then returned the car to the nearby Tullamarine Airport.

There is not a lot we can relate about the conference that was a privilege to attend and we gained a greater appreciation of this interesting organization of enthusiasts. It was great to meet Leo O'Reilly who will soon be studying fish on Fraser Island.

**Sunday 13th October
ANGFA to Adelaide**



The audience at the ANGFA convention

Both ULN and I made our presentations today. They were well received and we gained much.

We left Ciloms and caught our poorly organized Virgin flight for Adelaide. Su had arranged to meet Judith Dawson at the airport but there was some confusion before we eventually met up and went to our nearby motel for coffee and a chin-wag. It was a full day.



**Monday, 14th October
Adelaide to Kangaroo Island
Cape du Couedic**

We had no trouble getting to the very attractive Adelaide Airport in the last stages of its current refurbishment and after breakfast boarded a Rex Airlines Saab aircraft for the 30 minutes flight to Kangaroo Island. It actually took less time than it did for us to get the keys for the Hertz car. Once in though we headed for Kingscote 15 kilometres away to stock up with food supplies for our six nights in Flinders Chase National Park.

Kingscote seals: While Su and I shopped, ULN spent his time sidling up beside a seal on the wall around the tidal pool. He procured some wonderful images. We had lunch in the foreshore picnic shelter with a Pacific Gull and a bevy of quarrelsome Silver Gulls as our audience. Then it was our turn to squat with the seals. ULN told us how friendly they were but while we had our lunch a cranky bull had moved

**Commercial operations in South
Australian National Parks**

Commercial sales: I was favourably impressed by the new and well designed Flinders Chase Visitor Centre. It offered a coffee lounge, café and meals and also served as a souvenir and wine shop as well as the park HQ and information desk.

Accommodation: South Australia Parks offer many commercial features especially on Kangaroo Island where the Service has acquired a number of dwellings with the light houses. However in addition it has converted many superfluous building into rental properties even the 4x5 metre Postman's Cottage near the Rocky River Visitor Centre. These seemed to have less impact on the park than the campground. At Postman's Cottage Cape Barren Geese came right to the door and Scarlet Robins were constantly knocking on the window.

I can't see justification for objecting to commercial activity in National Parks on this scale.

in and he was anything but gracious and he could have done with a breath deodorant. As we travelled the 95 kilometres down to Flinders Chase ULN was already happy

Postman's Cottage: We had no trouble finding our cottage. Its inside dimensions are about 5m x 5m but it was very compact and well equipped with everything that three people were likely to need and at a very reasonable price. We stopped briefly to pick up our park pass at the Visitor Centre before setting off to explore the Cape du Couedic area.



Cape du Couedic: A bitumen road led us all the way from the Visitor Centre to Cape du Couedic where under Su's guidance we headed for a long and very significant boardwalk that led us down to a series of viewing platforms. Then to a complex of stairs to provide a perfect position to photograph the **Admiral's Arch** from. However our major focus was on the huge colony of New Zealand Fur Seals either frisking and playing in the turbulent water or else sleeping (or attempting to sleep while waves from the Southern Ocean thundered in and other seals kept trying to get past. Above them an opportunistic Pacific Gull was on the lookout for anything that might help its nearby nesting mate. The highlight for ULN though was to discover a Pygmy Copperhead Snake out in the very cold and blustery day. He was able

Toilets: We returned to the lighthouse and were amazed to discover that the toilets at this quite heavily visited site were long-drops. It was a surprise that was to be intensified a little further on when it was discovered that the very heavily visited Remarkables also relied on EC toilets. It was the start of a new line of inquiry about National Park management in South Australia.

Remarkables: The Remarkables were located at the end of a branch road to Cape du Couedic. This is an assembly of visually stunning wind sculptured granite rocks. Like the Admirals arch it could only be approached

It was a very late dinner. We were in camera overload. Not only had we not kept up with photography during our previous three days, but in this first day on Kangaroo Island I had taken almost 300 photos. We were kept more than busy for some hours working on photos to 11.30 pm

Tuesday 15th October Kangaroo Island Cape Borda

It was a slow start for the morning while Su cooked a hot breakfast. Then it was also a slower trip to Cape Borda on the roly-poley gravel section where the control of the car was particularly challenging. I was most mindful of the briefing delivered by the Hertz agent and the admonition not to damage the car or the penalties would be painful.

We stopped at the graves on the way and resisted by the number of wildflowers along the road because we were determined to make the 11.00 tour. Our guide was the resident ranger, Mick, who offered a well

WC's or Long Drops?

I have long questioned to QPWS insistence on having expensive WC or hybrid toilets in Queensland National Parks. We are even going to be required to provide hybrid toilets on the Great Walks that are being used by only about 2,000 people annually based on the most generous estimates.

In South Australia we found long drop toilets (two hole) being used by sites with more than 6,000 visitors at Cape Borda. Even more impressively only composting toilets to cater for the 100,000 visitors annually to Seal Bay. There was no perceptible odour to betray the fact that these were composting (EC) toilets.

The more amazing fact though was that Cape du Couedic's long-drop toilets cater for 110,000 visitors annually. Such heavy usage means they need to be pumped out at some periods of peak visitation. It is no wonder that the Commonwealth Government are prepared to fund the Kangaroo Island Council to install well designed ECs in remote locations such as Western River Cove where maintenance and water supply are difficult.

Long drop ECs are much less expensive and very functional. However Queensland has been suckered and sold by salesmen's spiel and now insists on a standard that can't be justified on any standard other than aesthetics.

rehearsed presentation on the light and the history of shipping and this part of the island that was sadly devastated by a savage bushfire in December 2. It was

My excitement rose though with the discovery that the toilets were long drops. These were the only public toilets within 50 kilometres and all that was available to the 600 day-trippers to Cape Borda each year (about 4,000 over the Christmas period and the remaining 2,000 spread over the rest of the year according to Mick. Cape Borda had only one ranger who sold the ice-creams, souvenirs and led the tours for a fee. He also serviced the three light-keepers cottages that were rented out. One house had been booked for this night by four people who were staying only overnight.

After the tour we wandered down to the cliff lookout to peer over 200 feet down to the boiling sea below. Su and I dawdling for flowers catching our eye while ULN was focussed on wildlife capturing lots of bird photographs but with a special joy from the cooperative Parma Wallabies he encountered.

After lunch we took a slower return to the Rocky River Visitor Centre via the Shackle Road stopping at various places to photograph the flowers. We turned into the Platypus Pool and spent time admiring the presentation of the platypus platforms and interpretation. It was interesting that all of this was for an introduced native animal which wasn't seen. Then while I returned to the Visitor Centre I diverted to inspect the campground with 3 Caravan sites, 20 tent sites, with camp kitchen and excellent facilities.

By 5.00 pm the animals were all out and ULN was in his element shooting more Tammar Wallabies and two shameless echidnas. Then it was back to the Postman's Cabin although Su had some trouble finding it on her cross country route following vague directions.



Kangaroo Island and Fraser Island Comparison

Area:

Kangaroo Island: The third largest of Australia's islands at 4,500 km².

Fraser Island: 1840 km².

Protected Area:

Kangaroo Island: 24 terrestrial protected areas covering over 116,000 ha (or 25 percent)

Fraser Island: >98% all in the Great Sandy National Park

Dimensions:

Kangaroo Island: 150 kilometre 90-57 km

Fraser Island: length 120 kilometres (75 mi) and approximately 24 kilometres at its widest.

Population

Kangaroo Island: 4,417 (2011 census)

Fraser Island: 194 (2011 Census)

Annual Visitation:

Kangaroo Island: over 186,000 visitors per year (2009)

Fraser Island: 300,00 to 350,000

Administration:

Kangaroo Island: The whole island and nothing else is in the jurisdiction of the Kangaroo Island Council

Fraser Island: Fraser Coast Regional Council responsible for less than 2% of the area most is administered by the Queensland Government through the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

Wednesday 16th October

Kangaroo Island Seal Bay

The weather was much more benign. The wind had moderated, the temperature was warm and it was fine and sunny. We began the morning quietly before setting out to Seal Bay, our principal objective for the day. However we diverted twice on the way and as a result we didn't get to the site until after 1.00 pm.

The first diversion was to look in at Vivonne Bay

Raptor Domain: We were making good time to Seal Bay when we noted some vehicles queuing up at the gate of the Raptor Domain. We had just passed when ULN said that a mate of his, Dave Irwin had set up this centre. We abruptly performed a U-turn (not unfamiliar to anyone who has been on a GO BUSH safari) and joined the queue. It was a pleasant reunion for ULN with his old mate much admired for his astute observations of birds and behaviour.

The stopover provided us with an opportunity to see a variety of birds on display in a very free setting.

These included a Nankeen Kestrel, a Tawny Frogmouth, a Boobook owl, a Hobby Falcon, Wedge-tailed eagle, Blue-winged Kookaburra and a Barn Owl. It was a 1.5 hours well spent. The presenters were excellent and delivered a simple message in a formula: "**Species - Habitat = Extinction.**" We then proceeded on to Seal Bay for lunch

Visitor Centre: There are 100,000 visitors to Seal Bay per annum out of the 180,000 visitors annually to Kangaroo Island. The Visitor Centre caters for all of this with an amazing degree of self-sufficiency. The most remarkable observation is that apart from the solar powered Visitor Centre that has expanded laterally to cater for more functions including sales and interpretation, the toilets are entirely composting as the photos testify. Six thrones and a male urinal cater for 100,000 visitors annually yet the toilets were spotlessly clean with no whiff of mal-odour emanating from them.

Sea lions: Nobody was able to access the beach except by a guided tour but there are wonderful elevated board-walks and lookouts that can be made unaccompanied. Our guide was Ron who took us down to the beach and explained the biology and habits of the Australian Sea Lions very clearly. Ron was busy and says he does 4 or 5 tours daily and he has been doing it for about 30 years. However the guides help ensure no adverse human sea-lion interactions. There is little doubt that the sea-lion experience must be one of the richest experiences of our Kangaroo Island trip.



Board walk: The Sea lion colony is very well managed and that is aided by an incredibly long elevated boardwalk that takes people on unguided visits down to see the sea-lions. It was a wonderful experience to be surrounded by sea-lions and have a wonderful overview of the beach including four seal researchers. The platforms controlled the visitation without any need for management signage.

Bales Beach: Returning to Flinders Chase we took advantage of a small deviation down to the beach named after Alfred Bales who lived off the land in this inhospitable place. The wind-lashed beach was bereft of seals but there was a quite elaborate day use area with (of course) composting toilets.

As we arrived back in Flinders Chase, some rain was beginning to fall. This developed and became quite heavy accompanied by gale force winds that made us very pleased to be in a warm, dry, well-insulated cabin on such a stormy night.



Thursday 17th October Kangaroo Island Snake Lagoon and West Bay

After a wild, blowy night, the day dawned sunny and fine with the wind slowly abating. We worked on our computers until 9.30 and then set off for Snake Lagoon but not before having a closer inspection of the Camp Ground. Unlike other campgrounds, this one had flushing toilets. We later learnt that there was a fee differential for this amenity. This would cost a couple \$27 per night whereas the Snake Lagoon campground cost \$13.50 per night.

We were impressed by the segregated sites of the Snake Lagoon Campground. There were about a dozen camp sites. However we decided on the walk to the coast. It followed through tall forests and then very dense mallee regrowth and then descended down to the Rocky River. The higher elevation was through limestone but at the river the limestone was virtually absent because the river bed had reached down into the underlying black sandstone. Intriguingly the path across the limestone was littered with black sandstone pebbles that had been released as the limestone dissolved on the surface.

The river gorge and the river's entrance to the sea was wild and dramatic. It was a great short walk

and we returned to the day-use area for lunch and an encounter with Eric the Raven who was determined to get his share of our lunch.

After lunch we headed off to West Bay. Here the sea was really wild and dramatic and we felt for those who had perished there when their clipper ran straight into the nearby cliffs withal on board perishing.

We returned to sample a unique Kangaroo Island Honeycomb ice-cream, a unique product of the island before settling in for a couple of hours of domestic chores and homework until 5.30 when we again made our way down to Cape du Couedic

The wind had abated but a big sea was running when we arrived but visibly calmed down while we were again appreciating the Admirals Arch. We wanted to be away by 6.15 but ULN had a Pygmy Copperhead slither through his legs and then proceeded to capture its image. It was a first for ULN of this species and he remains astonished that any snake would be out and about in such chilly conditions.

Our intended destination was to be at the Remarkables for sunset and to have our Happy Hour there. Su packed wineglasses and wine along with a full range of nibbles for the occasion. I was anticipating that with the weather conditions we would have to share the site with countless people. However they were all obviously not keen to be driving after dark and abandoned the rock to just us three and three OS tourists. It was a much more inspiring view than our previous visit a few days earlier and I snapped away 52 images.



The Remarkables glow in the late sunlight

The trip home though was a major challenge with so many roos and Tammar Wallabies (including one dancing or sparring pair) lining the road. ULN being a gentle soul described the Tammar antics as being engaged in a waltz. Despite the abundance of Tammars on Kangaroo Island we were reminded

that they were once abundant throughout South Australia but that they were wiped out on the mainland as a result of the predation of Foxes and cats. Mercifully there are no foxes or rabbits on Kangaroo Island and there are as a result an abundance of Tammar Wallabies.

ULN got us home safely with the car intact. We then enjoyed a late dinner and a very late night with a huge number of images to sort and sift through.



Friday 18th October

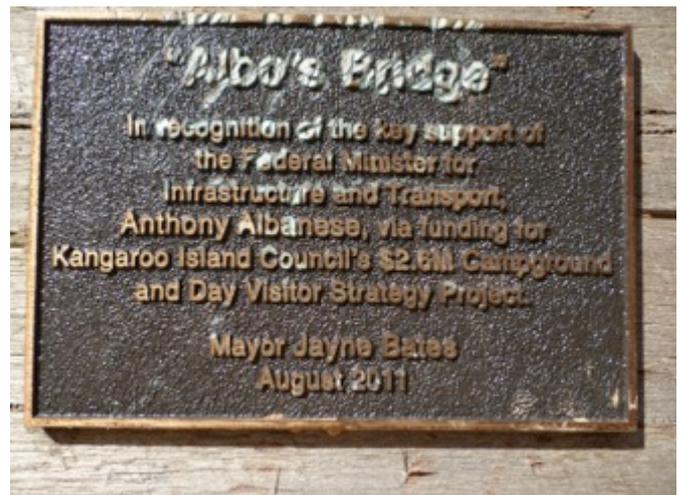
Kangaroo Island

Su's Itinerary — The Northern Coast

After a very chilly calm night the wind started rising after the sun. Still this didn't deter ULN from setting out on a wild goose chase unsuccessfully seeking to find a pair of Cape Barren Geese with four goslings.

We set off at 8.45 to explore the northern section of the island. We made various stops on the way to the first recommended destination, Western River Cove turning off the Playford Highway to the North Coast Road. It was a pleasant Cove with nice picnic facilities and it was time for Smoko. That was when we got our greatest surprise. The beach was a very pleasant site as the photos attest but the infrastructure installed around this site had me green with envy.

Albo's Bridge: My attention was first drawn to the magnificent new pedestrian bridge across the Western River, a relatively small brook. Then I read the plaque at the entrance to the bridge:



The project completed in August 2011 was part of a \$2,6 M Federally funded infrastructure project to enable the Kangaroo Island Council to implement Kangaroo Island Campground and Day Visitor Strategy. I was more than interested because the Federal Government haven't contributed \$2.6M to Fraser Island in the last 10 years despite Fraser Island drawing twice as many visitors annually as Kangaroo Island. What was more interesting is that the Federally funded toilet was a long drop and similar to those we had seen at Cape du Couedic and the Remarkables. It raises the question of whether the grant to the Council extended to assisting with infrastructure in the parks. Anyhow it has set a precedent in my mind and I fully intend to seek a meeting as soon as possible with the Fraser Coast Regional Council to see if and how Fraser Island might benefit from such a program.

From there we pressed on through rolling hills (quite a contrast to the Southern side of the island). Our next stop was King George Beach. This was really a photographers dream if interested in combining rock scapes and seascapes. The Beach though contained no sand — purely billions of rounded and carefully polished stones stood over by vertical jagged columns of sedimentary rocks tinted with bright orange algae. Amongst the array of flotsam that had been swept ashore was a coconut and we speculated about where it may have come from.



King George Beach

Thence it was on to another beach on Stokes Bay. To reach the beach we had to walk through a maze of limestone rocks and overhangs to reach the sand. We had a pleasant lunch of stir-fried rice at Stokes Bay. I went to the toilets to be greatly surprised by the murals and décor. It was as a result of a Caring for Country project that enabled the publication of a book, (free off the net) "Our Life on the Beach"— a book about beach nesting birds for teachers and

students as well as the appropriate murals for the toilets.

Our next port of call was the Stokes Bay Bush Garden. It was a wonderful display of flowering plants although most originated from Western Australia. The Verticordias and annuals provided a colourful display but alas the orchids were largely finished. I was impressed by the design of the garden especially the drainage patterns and the very artistic bush furniture spread around the very large garden.

. We stopped at the small village of Parndana to collect some victuals to see us through and then followed through to the South Coast Road and on to the Hanson's Bay Koala Walk. Here we saw quite a few koalas in various poses but mainly obscurely placed for photography and mainly asleep.

We then returned to Postman's Cottage to enable ULN to resume his wild goose chase, only this time with some very impressive successful photos to show. Then it was down to Emails and processing photos awhile Su prepared a wonderful lamb mince curry for dinner.



**Saturday 19th October
Kangaroo Island
Kelly's Hill Caves & Quiet Day**

The warmer night made an even better sleep. Part of the night was completely windless although the wind rose with the sun. Still it remained a beautiful warm day. We worked on computers and photos until 10.30 when ULN declared that he had almost succeeded in catching up with all of the images he had captured in the field.

We went to the Kellys Hill Caves for a guided tour covered by our Park Pass (included in the Postmans Cottage rental deal), saving over \$50. Any concern.

On the way up to the start of the cave tour, Ian's acute hearing detected the alarm call of the scrub wrens and was instantly alert to the presence of a snake. I soon discovered a large black tiger snake, almost three metres long was slithering along beside the track remarkably close to my feet and so remarkably docile that ULN could touch it without causing it any concern. We watched it climb into a bush and down to the ground while other people walked past oblivious of this wonderful creature just doing what it naturally does and unconcerned about our presence.

It was an interesting cave tour because these caves were the result of limestone precipitated out of calcareous sand. Kelly's Hill had once been a giant dune. The other interesting information was that the rainfall had almost halved in recorded history and these are now extremely dry caves. When it was suggested that it was the result of the Roaring Forties moving south as has been clearly documented in Western Australia an American woman bristled. It is clearly a sensitive issue to even mention climate change in some company. However the caves are visibly drying out and some of the shawls and formations are withering as can be seen in the photo below.



The caves were interesting but one discovery was a \$3.00 publication being a reprint of a book first published in 1928 describing the discovery of the caves. The advertisements of the time also make good reading indicating the lifestyle 90 years ago

On our way back to our homely Postman's Cottage we diverted into Hansons Bay where we were impressed by the seascape. Su who is sharpening up her photography captured some very clear images of striated Pardalotes.

Back at the Cottage it was a late lunch and a lazy afternoon until ULN set off in the car alone to track down more wildlife

Sunday 20th October Kangaroo Island Flinders Chase to Kingscote

It was incredibly warm night and calm sunny morning as we packed up and were away by 8.30 to see as much of the eastern end of the island as possible.

After Seal Bay we tried to cut across from the South Coast Road to get to Murray's Lagoon but the road was so much under water from the abnormally wet year that we saw a duck swimming where we had been scheduled to drive. After a few deviations we found ourselves on Hog Bay Road heading towards Penneshaw

We bemused by the great number of cyclists heading towards us on the road. They didn't look like professional riders and they came in various shapes, mostly older. We interviewed on to discover that there were 240 of them from Cycling SA and they were just beginning a 9 day ride enjoying Kangaroo Island.

Having failed to get close enough to Pelican Lagoon (or any other freshwater wetland) we attempted to visit that morning, we turned into Baudin Beach where we had smoko on the foreshore. The community takes its name from the French navigator, Nicholas Badin and there is a small monument to him near the boat ramp close to where he spent some time back in 1802-03. On the opposite side of the road is a more impressive sculpture memorial to Mary Beckwith the convict woman he took from Sydney to warm his bed on the trio back to France. Alas we know that Baudin died before he got back to France and that leaves us with an unsolved mystery of what might have happened to Mary Beckwith.



We then proceeded on to Penneshaw where we refuelled, and purchased some more wine before heading off to the Cape Willoughby lighthouse on the easternmost point of Kangaroo Island. We paused though for Uncle Long Nose to photograph a tiger snake that crossed our path. It was an interesting tour of the tall lighthouse and a time for reflection on the hard life and hard work of the people who built and staffed this lighthouse.



There were no facilities as Cape Willoughby so we returned to Baudin Beach for a late lunch. It was convenient as it allowed Uncle Long Nose to meet up with a fellow naturalist and echidna researcher.

Heading for Kingscote we deviated to see where the 240 cyclists might have found a refuge at the very attractive settlement of American River. It seemed that they might have had good amenities but as the weather was rapidly deteriorating with rising wind falling temperature, increasing cloud and a forecast of a storm we were glad we weren't camping there that night.

After just making it in time to buy the sheep cheese at the sheep dairy we found our welcome, warm accommodation at Seaview in Kingscote. We didn't though find the lost spectacles. After an early fish and chips dinner and some great local wine we headed down to join a penguin tour in inauspicious weather that blew a young honeyeater out of its nest and stuck on our car.

The penguin tour was very disappointing and poor value. We could have saved \$54 and had at least as much success on a self-guided walk in the penguin habitat along the Kingscote waterfront. There may have been good information handed out but since almost nothing could be heard as the guide kept looking ahead as she spoke leaving everyone behind in the dark literally. The prescriptions for how the tour was conducted allowed me only a disappointing brief glimpse of these enigmatic animals.

Monday 21st October Kangaroo Island and Adelaide

We made a very early start to be at the airport before 7.00 am. We left the little red Corolla there after adding more than 1,000 kilometres to its odometer reading. We had seen Kangaroo Island from stem to stern much more than most visitors to this most interesting island.

We took the Rex flight back to Adelaide and after breakfast at the airport and depositing our luggage in locker we said farewell to ULN and proceeded into the city to explore a city that I had never really had the opportunity to explore previously because I was either just passing through or had other commitments that engaged me while there.

I must say that I came away more impressed and with a better understanding and sense of familiarity with the Festival City after doing a circuit of the CBD and then visiting the Casino, Museum, Art Gallery and Rundle Mall. It was seven interesting hours before returning to the airport.

I must confess that my impressions of Adelaide was that it was a huge construction site. The largest construction seemed to be around the river with cricket ground, convention centre and work along and across the River Torrens. I had expected to see a serene scene over the river and a city that had an air of stability. Instead I encountered large areas fenced off for enormous new constructions. There were dozens of cranes on the skyline. Even Rundle Mall being torn up. Even at the recently remodelled Airport terminal precinct we had to run the gauntlet through new works. However it is shaping up to become a very attractive open entrée to Adelaide.



Transformed from the normally tranquil Torrens

We left bustling Adelaide at 8.30 and arrived in Brisbane late after a very interesting, and illuminating trip.

The Story of Sooky the Sea Lion

John Sinclair's children's story from Kangaroo Island

Sooky was smart but she was shy. Sooky was a Kangaroo Island Sea-lion. She was really an Australian Sea Lion who only returned to Seal Bay on Kangaroo Island for long sleeps. She would go to sea for three days at a time but when she was at sea she could only sleep for short brief periods because she had to keep swimming

Fur seals also lived on Kangaroo Island but they lived in separate colonies to the sea-lions. Unlike the sea-lions that liked sandy beaches, the fur seal colonies were on rugged rocky shores away from the sea lions. They were different to the sea lions because they had warm furry coats and their ears can't be seen.

Sooky spent half her life at sea and only came ashore for three-day periods to recover from her marathon swims. During her three day fishing trips far out to sea, she never slept. There was nowhere for her or any of the other sea-lions to rest so they just kept swimming.

She had to swim a long way. It was almost sixty kilometres from the shores of Seal Bay to her feeding grounds at the edge of the continental shelf. There she would dive deep down to the sea-bed to feed mainly on scale fish, squid, octopus and crustaceans.

It was when she came ashore that Sooky's shyness really overcame her. She was easily intimidated. Whenever she went to lie down and bask in the sun or on the sandy beach other sea-lions would push her aside. If she tried to get up to the top of the dune other sea-lions bullied her and blocked the way.

After three days and three nights in the cold Southern Ocean, Sooky wanted to dry out and get out of the wind and warm up. Instead she was forced to sleep near the water's edge with no companion.

Sooky didn't have friends in the sea-lion colony so she made friends with other creatures she met. She met quite a few Silver sea-gulls on the beach and Percy, the much larger Pacific Gull kept a close watch over her when she was asleep. When she was at sea she met lots of shearwaters that skimmed the waves when she came up to breathe.

Out at sea she often found herself swimming with fur seals, dolphins and rays and sometimes she even met whales but she had to keep a sharp eye out for Orcas, the killer whales and Great White Sharks who often ate sea lions if they could catch these fast swimmers.

One day while she was swimming back to the shore she almost bumped into a strange animal she had never seen before. It was much larger than a bull seal,

"Who are you?" she asked with a tremor in her voice from the sudden surprise, *"Are you going to eat me?"* she inquired.

"I'm not going to hurt you. I am Loney, a Leatherly turtle, who has come from along way away in the tropics to see what life is like on this side of the continent. I occasionally drop by. Unlike other sea turtles we Leatheries are able to cope in cold waters although we have to go back to the tropics to nest," the big stranger told her.

Loney and Sooky swam for a while together talking about their experiences. Sooky like Loney and told her about being shy and being bullied if she tried to leave the beach. Loney then had some wise advice.

"You may not be as big or as aggressive as the other sea-lions but I will tell you a trick that might help because you are smart. Next time you go ashore sit up and just stare at one end of the beach. Soon all of the other sea-lions will be wondering what you are looking at and start looking there too. When that happens then you quickly go behind them when they aren't looking and you will find the driest warmest place on the beach. Then when the other sea-lions can't see what you were looking at they will come to ask you questions and start talking to you," Loney told her.

Sooky went ashore and tried Loney's trick. It worked. And soon every sea-lion in the colony was talking to and respecting Sooky. She became the queen of the colony and lived in the driest warmest part of the beach whenever she was ashore.



For Sooky Sea-Lion the warm dry sand is like a throne