



PENSHURST RSL TRAVEL CLUB
& TRADE TRAVEL
**GREATER ADELAIDE,
VICTOR HARBOR
AND KANGAROO ISLAND
FRIDAY 24 FEBRUARY –
FRIDAY 3 MARCH 2023**



Several members contributed to writing this report and their names have been mentioned alongside the dates. Many thanks for their fabulous assistance. Also, a huge thank you to Chris Warner for her hundreds of photos and Jenny Scally for a few more – many of which can be seen on our website.

**Friday 24 February – Sydney to Adelaide
(Sandra Archer)**

An early start was needed to pack as much as we could into Day 1 of our South Australian tour (a 2 am start for me!). The flight to Adelaide left Sydney at 7.15 and arrived at 8.55 am.

Les, our friendly bus driver, took us to Glenelg. Some of us bought a takeaway lunch and took it down to the beach to eat. Whilst there, we saw a group of school students drawing in the sand with sticks. Some seemed to be pushing sticks into the sand. What were they doing? I ventured down to ask their teacher. She informed me that her St John Bosco students were drawing huge mandalas in the sand. A professional artist had inspired them with her example. They were investigating mandalas and their connection to meditation.

We then headed for the air-conditioning in the local Town Hall and ventured into the Museum and Gallery. The Gallery had an unusual exhibition which was hands on. If you turned a handle you might see a flying car with a koala driving it, a ghost beside a bed or a strange creature gyrating. Weird, but interesting! The Town Hall was made from beautiful blue stone. Other landmarks were the long jetty, the ferris wheel and a monument commemorating 100 years since Adelaide was settled. This monument had a replica of a three-masted sailing ship on top of it.



Next, a cruise on the Torrens River in the boat “Popeye III”. Walking to the wharf, we came across a beautiful rotunda which had been made in Glasgow, Scotland and donated by Sir Thomas Elder. Its zinc roof was highly decorated and some sections had been painted gold.

To complete our bus tour around Adelaide, Les drove us to Carrick Hill which was a stately home and garden built in 1939 and bequeathed to the people of South Australia by Sir Edward and Lady Hayward in 1983. Wendy, our tour guide for the property, was very knowledgeable. She showed us the valuable collections of paintings (many of them Australian), furniture, chinaware, embroidery etc. The grand staircase was a feature. Art lovers were totally absorbed by Wendy’s commentary which included insights into the Hayward’s personal life as well as their magnificent home.



A relaxed buffet dinner at the Ibis Hotel (our accommodation for the next three nights) was appreciated by a now tired, but happy group of travellers.

**Saturday 25 February – The Barossa Valley Gourmet Trail
(Sue Moore)**

We awoke to more pleasant temperatures and some sprinkles of rain. After a hearty breakfast, we were welcomed onto our coach by Robin the driver as well as Elizabeth. It was good that Elizabeth could join us and we appreciate Jenny standing in to co-ordinate us in Elizabeth’s absence.



As we drove through the suburb of North Adelaide, we passed many big, old, grand houses with a number of them being heritage-listed. With us being divided into two groups, we attended the Penfolds Winery and Maggie Beer's Farm Shop in Nuriootpa. We tasted wine at Penfolds, including a \$135 bottle 2019 St Henri Shiraz. Maggie Beer, a celebrity chef, has written cookbooks and managed a restaurant with her husband Colin; the restaurant was named the best in Australia in 1991. Maggie's aims are for her recipes to make appealing, nutritious and delicious food. Her Farm Shop includes cooking books, pates, dips, sauces. There are caged pheasants, a quince orchard and a small lake surrounding the shop/café.

When the two groups reunited, we drove to Seppeltsfield to the Seppeltsfield Estate where we heard more history and interesting facts about the Seppelt family and business. This was followed by another wine tasting and sumptuous feast for lunch.

After we returned to our hotel, five of our ladies walked around the nearby streets to view street art. Our day concluded with another hearty meal.



Sunday 26 February – Mt Lofty, Hahndorf, Beerenberg Strawberry Farm (Helen Spaul)

We left this morning at 8.45 am. Peter, our driver for the day, explained some of Adelaide's history:

- Colonel Light set out the city in a grid pattern (as he did in Christchurch NZ). Many workers from Europe were sponsored to the city and the standard of the build was high. The various 'stones' around the area were used in the builds and strong heritage rules ensure that these still stand.
- By royal decree, King William IV named the city after his wife Queen Adelaide.
- George Angas ensured Freedom of Religion (thus all kinds of churches). Because of this, families of Prussia were encouraged to now live here and establish new communities.
- Matthew Flinders named the Lofty Ranges. It is 40 years since the destructive bush fires and many homes and gardens have re-established.



We visited the summit of Mt Lofty to see the view over Adelaide. From there, Peter drove us through several villages in the hills: Crafers, Stirling (autumn colours, Sunday markets), Aldgate, Bridgewater (old mill), over the Onkaparinga River to Balhannah – here we visited the bakery for morning tea.



Next to Cedars, the home of artist Hans Heysen. Hans was interested in art from an early age and, in his 20s, travelled to Europe to study. Back in Australia, he met his wife while sharing his craft. He and Sally bought their 32-acre property in 1912 from a farmer. As the family extended from four to eight children, the rooms in the house expanded as well as the land to 150 acres. They named it 'Cedars' after the pines on the property. Hans was very interested in ensuring all the trees in the area remained and often paid farmers to keep them instead of selling them for the timber. We visited the house now run by the Trust and looked in the studios used by Hans and the other where Nora, his daughter, worked.

Then on to Hahndorf, the first settlement in Australia planned specifically for non-British immigrants and the oldest German town in Australia. The town was named after Captain Dirk Hahn who was the master of the ship that brought them to Australia during 1838 (reaching Port Adelaide 2 January 1939). The town is now heritage-listed and a centre for tourism with many eating spots and shops to enjoy.

Last visit was to the Beerenberg Strawberry Farm. The Paech family (Lutherans) moved from Prussia so they could continue to practise their faith. The family had a dairy farm and grew all their food. In 1969, Grant and Carol Paech planted their first strawberries. This gradually expanded and they had a shop in the Central Markets. The jam started after an accident – unable to fill an order for strawberries, Grant returned home with the order and so as not to waste them, made them into jam. This sold quickly and the family realised they could diversify. Our group explored what was on sale before boarding the coach for the trip back to Adelaide.



**Monday 27 February – McLaren Vale, Victor Harbor
(Pat Park)**

After a relaxed breakfast, departure was at 9.15 am. Athol was our driver today and he drove us south on the partially completed new highway which does not have a toll or traffic lights. Running parallel to the highway was a bike track used by enthusiasts from Adelaide. It is not used for “Tour Down Under” as it would be too dangerous – the highway is used with police escorts. We drove through the lush vineyards, some covered with netting, of McLaren Vale where grapes were first planted in 1838 by Thomas Hardy and John Reynell.



We arrived at d’Arenberg Cube winery which is best described as unique, quirky and playful. It resembles a Rubik’s Cube on steroids! As we waited for our guide Kim to arrive, we heard strange music coming from the bush hedge. Kim informed us that it was based on the sound of wind blowing through the vines. Very eerie. She then guided us through a variety of extraordinary rooms with weird, magical, wonderful, curious and puzzling artworks meant to heighten our senses. Then to our wine-tasting – six delightful wines of a reasonable price, but far too early in the day to do them justice.

On to Victor Harbor where we purchased some lunch before a tour of the National Trust Museum and Customs’ House. Here we heard some of the history of the district, whaling and sealing heritage and settlement. Quite interesting. Then we caught a ride on the Horse Drawn Tram across the causeway to Granite Island with very imposing rock formations, wild seas and views. It was quite cold and windy so we were happy to leave and to reach our stop for the night, McCracken Country Club Resort.



**Tuesday 28 February – Goolwa Murray Mouth Cruise, Kangaroo Island
(Kerrie Faulkner)**

Athol, our driver, had us on the road towards Goolwa promptly at 9 am, after last night’s taste of luxury with indoor pool, spa, sauna and gym facilities tested by a few.



In days of yore, our holiday travel between Victor Harbor and Goolwa would have been done by horse drawn tram. Athol gave us a detour at Port Elliot to view the beach and surrounding rocks and reefs which had been the folly of ships in days gone by. During our journey, Athol relayed the tragic and often misunderstood interactions between the local Ngarrindjeri peoples and whalers, sealers, explorers and early settlers. Leaving the surrounding sheep farms, we drove into Goolwa to find the well-kept small cottages that had housed sailors between voyages and the stately government buildings, all from the local stone.

At 10 am, the Spirit of the Coorong pulled out from the shadows of the beautiful (and previously contentious) bridge to Hindmarsh Island, to take us along the foreshore of Goolwa. The banks and jetties housed local boats and the remnants of disused barges and paddle-steamers. The boat had to pass through a lock in the barrage, one of five which were built along the Murray to stop the salt and freshwater mixing. This is extremely important in drought times such as the millennium drought in which the water level fell one metre and no water flowed out to sea for 10 years. Our progress through the lock was closely scrutinised by a group of long-nosed fur seals.



As we cruised into the Coorong National Park, on our left we passed developments including one of the largest fresh water marinas in the southern hemisphere, man-made canals, lagoons and lakes for the residents and followed by old-style ‘holiday shacks’. The beauty of the Coorong is displayed along the edges – sandbanks, verdant layers of plant life and multitudes of birds. Thankfully present, and back from near extinction, were Cape Barren geese among the flocks of black swans, pelicans, gulls and other waterbirds. Eventually, the mouth of the Murray revealed itself, as it had to the explorer Sturt after he travelled three months down from the Murrumbidgee -albeit he had been rowed in a whale boat.

The mouth has changed many times due to changes in water levels and shifting sand banks, with complete blockages in drought. Now, due to regular dredging and the use of locks, this is less likely to happen. Our boat turned back to Goolwa where we had time to explore this charming town and have lunch.



Athol drove us to Cape Jervis for the Kangaroo Island Ferry. A somewhat bumpy voyage ensued and we were greeted by the jovial footy coach, Adam, who would be our tour guide/driver whilst on the island. Adam gave us a quick guided tour to Kingscote, enabling us to take a photo of the coastline from the headland at Pennington Bay. Our accommodation for the next three nights was at the nearby Kangaroo Island Seaside Inn.

Wednesday 1 March – Kangaroo Island Produce & Wildlife (Jenny Scally)

Adam picked us up at 8 am to take us to Clifford's Honey Farm. This only uses Ligurian bees which came from Italy and were introduced to Kangaroo Island in 1881. They are unique because they remain the only pure bred Ligurian bees in the world. In 1885, Kangaroo Island was pronounced a Bee Sanctuary with no bees or honey permitted to be brought onto the island. It remains a disease and predator free area. Most of the trees which produce their pollen were lost in the fires of 2019, but they are starting to return slowly. Many of us enjoyed the honey ice-cream on offer.



Next, we visited Emu Ridge Eucalyptus Oil Distillery, a family concern producing chemical-free, natural and sustainable products. Larry showed us how he extracts the oil from the Narrow Leaf Mallee in a fire he keeps going all year round. They also produce emu oil and tea tree oil.



At Raptor Domain, Chantelle and Kirrilee did a great job showing us trained birds responding to reinforcement by food. We watched a magpie, two frogmouths, a curlew, barn owl, mopoke and hobby falcon responding to their keeper's commands and had a chance to hold them using a leather glove. This was followed by a beautiful white-bellied sea eagle, red-tailed black cockatoos, a Carnaby's black cockatoo, and a blue and gold macaw. All these birds were rescued and are now unable to be released into the wild but continue to be ambassadors for their species. The show was finished by a spectacular wedge-tailed eagle. We were warned about the dangers of using poison to get rid of rodents, as this leads to deaths right up the food chain. Two koalas were in a tree near the café.

After lunch at the café, we were on our way to the KI Wildlife Park where we were able to feed Kangaroo Island kangaroos which are a separate breed to all the others on the mainland. They are not afraid of humans and can be patted. The park takes injured animals to rehabilitate and release back into the wild. We were able to pat koalas and some of us paid to be able to hold one – a great experience. There were wild koalas in trees in this park as well.



Our guide, Portia, had so much information to tell us; she was very enthusiastic about her charges. Before the fires, female koalas were being sterilised as there were too many for the island to manage, but after the fires there are only around 4,000 left.

A quick detour took us to Stokes Bay, a beach voted 'Australia's Best Beach in 2023'. After walking through caverns and rocky cliffs, we came across a beautiful sight of sandy beach, crystal clear water and very interesting rock formations. Very worthwhile after a difficult walk!

At the Kangaroo Island Brewery, Kath showed us where the beer is brewed and fermented and gave us a tasting of all the favourites. Some of us were disappointed to find that the stout was not available for a while. And then ... the bus broke down! 40 minutes later, another one picked us up and we finally got back to the hotel just in time for tea.

**Thursday 2 March – Seal Bay NP, Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Flinders Chase NP
(Lois Stevenson)**



Today, we headed to the south-west of the island for a day of nature, coastline and Kangaroo Island history:

Seal Bay Conservation Park is an area of 5½ km on land and 30 km of ocean. The jewel of KI. This area is home to short and long nosed fur seals and the Australian Sea Lions (a hair seal). The latter is an endangered species with about 800 sea lions in total. The colony we visited only has sea lions.



The females go to sea to feed for three days without sleep and can dive 70 m multiple times before coming to land to feed their pups. Gestation of pregnancy is 18 months. The 300 kg bulls mate and fight for dominance, and all sea lions are micro-chipped. Our tour was able to walk amongst the seals. It took us to within about 10 m of the animals on the beach. Other members chose to do the easier boardwalk. It was a highlight of the tour and a really unique experience.



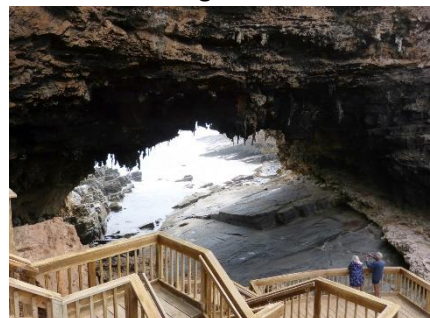
Vivonne Bay, voted the best beach in Australia in 2017. The bay was named for Catherine de Vivonne, marquise de Rambouillet (1588-1665) by the French explorer Baudin who mapped the south west coast of the island. Our group walked to the point of the cliffs to take their photos of the scenery and lobster boats.

Hanson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary is a natural habitat sanctuary and was devastated in the 2019/20 fires. After multiple days of 30+ degrees and 30 knot winds, over 2/3 of the island was burnt. Two people died in the fires, a billion animals were lost. The fire crossed the island from north to south in four hours and it took six weeks to extinguish. The aftermath was devastation with homes and farms lost and no food left for the remaining stock and wildlife. There were 80,000 koalas on the island. It can sustain 30,000. After the fire 8-10,000 koalas survived. Our members were taken on an hour's guided walk to view kangaroos, koalas, reptiles and echidnas in the wild. We sighted the first of them in the regenerated park of five acres. After our walk, we watched a video of the CFS, SES and Army in the midst of the fire – very frightening. We were able to see the regeneration of the foliage in the two years since the fire. Many heroic people from KI, the mainland and overseas fought the fire and helped with the clean-up.



Flinders Chase National Park is the largest national park on the island and became a moonscape after the wildfire. It is home to the Dunnart – a mouse-like creature which is endangered, but incredibly, survived the fire. The group stopped at Remarkable Rocks, an amazing granite outcrop. We walked down a newly-built walkway and up on the dome of rocks for a photo opportunity and to admire the white-sanded beach below. Remarkable Rocks are located at Point Kirkbright which is named after a survivor of a shipwreck. Also within the national park is Cape Du Couedic Lighthouse. This area was not burnt in the bushfire

so the lighthouse keeper's cottage was undamaged. A boardwalk, 0.8 km long and leading down the cliff, allowed our group to see fur seals basking on the rocks adjacent to the rough and wild sea. We continued down to the bottom of the walk to photograph the scenic Admirals Arch, a natural formation where the wild seas have eroded the arch in the cliff face.





On the drive back to our motel, Adam told us that indigenous people inhabited Kangaroo Island about 5000+ years ago, and archaeologists have found middens and artefacts. They were known as the Kartan culture and left the island after a devastating fire. They went to the mainland and integrated with the Gaurna (also Kaurna) peoples.

It had been a remarkable day, offering the opportunity to be close to wildlife, see amazing scenery and see how nature, animals and people recover from a traumatic event such as a wildfire. Near the hotel, we stopped to take a picture of the silos on which were painted a large KI kangaroo and cockatoo etc. We arrived back just after 5 pm to enjoy dinner in our hotel.

Friday 3 March – Final Morning (Elizabeth Northcott)

Early breakfast, 6.30 am, so that we would be on time for our 7.15 am pickup by Adam who was transferring us to Penneshaw for the 8.30 am ferry. Being so early on the road, there were quite a few kangaroos in the paddocks – the most we had seen. Also drove past the Salt Water Works (desalination plant) being constructed for the island.

The trip, across the water to the mainland, was very choppy and, as a result, it took ½ hour longer, all of us being able to cope with this. Athol was waiting for us when we arrived and transferred our luggage to the coach, and then transported us, on a two-hour drive, to the Atura Hotel at the Adelaide Airport where a delicious High Tea, created by Ricardo, was waiting for us. We were not expecting anything so delicious and with such a variety catering for all dietary requirements.

It soon came to 12.45 when we were again collected by Athol to be driven to the departure area for us to check-in and wait for our plane.

Arriving at Sydney Airport, we collected our bags once again, and then went our separate ways after spending the whole day of travelling – coach, boat, coach and plane – back home after having a very enjoyable eight days discovering more of Australia.

