



PENSHURST RSL TRAVEL CLUB

NORFOLK ISLAND

MONDAY 6 – MONDAY 13 JUNE 2022

DAY ONE: Weather windy, but fine. 27 of us met at the International Airport from 7.30 am and joined a suitcase queue, hastily organised by the lovely girl from Trade Travel there to see off our group and one other. After the

relief of saying goodbye to our suitcases, it was a two-hour nightmare in zig-zag queues to negotiate passport control and security - we had been forewarned by the media! We reached our boarding area only to be told that the gate had changed. Our troubles weren't over (or should say Qantas' troubles) as, due to the high westerly winds, only one runway was open. Plus, our 737 plane had originated from Melbourne, needed cleaning and towing over from Domestic to International. After a rather flustered-looking crew arrived (to enthusiastic applause), we finally took off at 12.30 pm, two hours late. Despite the high winds, the flight was pretty smooth, but lacking in the finer things - like lunch! Their "simplified" meal service consisted of a small packet of crackers or sweet biscuits/drink which didn't cut it, after passengers had been out of bed since at least 5 am.

Norfolk was overcast on our arrival at around 4.15 pm (Norfolk time) and, after collecting bags and going through their formal procedures, we were met by Baunti Tours and boarded one of their small buses. It was so lovely to return to this gorgeous place after our club previously visited in 2009. Like Australia's east coast, the island had seen recent deluges, so it was even greener than before (if that was possible), and it was such a relief to see that nothing had changed. Even our hotel for seven nights, the South Pacific Resort, which had received a facelift in the meantime, was much as we remembered. On arrival and whilst supplying everyone with their keys, we were given a cool drink and singers to entertain us. Our organiser, Elizabeth, had chosen this hotel again due to its close proximity to the island's shops in Burnt Pine less than five minutes walk, but, despite champing at the bit, we would need to wait till later in the week.



By now we were desperately tired, but that night was the **Commandants' Dinner** at the nearby Paradise Hotel & Resort and, needless to say, we were looking forward to the meal – any meal! It really was a fun night though with Lieutenant-Governor Philip Gidley King (First Settlement with two terms 1788 - 1790 and 1791 - 1800 and one of the good guys); Second Settlement: strict disciplinarian Commandant James Morriset 1829 - 1834 and Commandant Alexander Maconochie 1840 – 1844 another good guy. The night was capably run by "Clare" and we learnt much about Norfolk's

history and its treatment of the convicts over the three hours, whilst enjoying the three-course traditional English dinner. The magnificently-dressed actors took short breaks, joining us for the meal and were more than willing to answer any of our questions. One of the actors, Brook, became our guide/driver several times during that week and he was fabulous. We slept very well that night.

DAY TWO: Damp this morning. Up early for a 7am breakfast (it would be around this time every morning – groan). A great selection of cooked food though and a commercial toaster that actually worked! That may have been because of the large sign on the thickly-taped-over control knob saying "Do Not Touch". Departure time for the **Discover Norfolk Island** tour was 8.30 am and our Baunti guide/driver today was the equally wonderful Rachel. As we drove, she spoke of the island, its size 8 km long



by 5 km wide, permanent pop in Jan 2022 was 1,748, the K-12 school with 300 kids, 35 teaching staff (18 of them local) and the recent transition from the NSW curriculum to Qld. Unsuccessfully dodging the mud at the Queen Elizabeth Lookout, we managed to photograph the island's iconic views of Quality Row and Government House before heading down the hill, then turning around at the Cemetery appropriately situated on the shores of the strikingly blue Pacific Ocean. More photos at Kingston Pier and a wet, but quick photo stop at Emily Bay. Everyone talks about Emily Bay and a brief story from the Australian History Research website says: *Standing today in Norfolk Island Cemetery is a memorial tomb (with Latin transcription) to Emelia Wilson, born 6 April 1803 Norfolk Island, erected by her brother George Wilson in 1831 when he served on Norfolk Island and found his sister's grave in ruins on the foreshores of the Bay. Emily – Emelia – Amelia died between May 1803 and June 1804, daughter of Ralph and Margaret Wilson.*



The next highlight was an obligatory visit to the gorgeous St Barnabas Chapel and quite some time was spent here. As we entered, their organist Peter was playing and the acoustics were amazing. We would see Peter again (as a guide) later in the week. *Info from two websites: The stained glass and especially that in the rose window is particularly beautiful and is reflected in a polished marble floor. The wonderful timberwork is decorated with pearl shell inlays and the massive beams in the ceiling reflect the craft of the builders – shipbuilders. Considered one of the finest old buildings in the South Pacific, St. Barnabas Chapel was erected to commemorate John Coleridge Patteson, Bishop of Melanesia, who was killed at Nukapu in 1871. In 1865, the governor of New South Wales, Sir John Young, offered Patteson a grant on Norfolk Island for his headquarters. In 1867, the Melanesian Mission moved to Norfolk where it was called St Barnabas.*



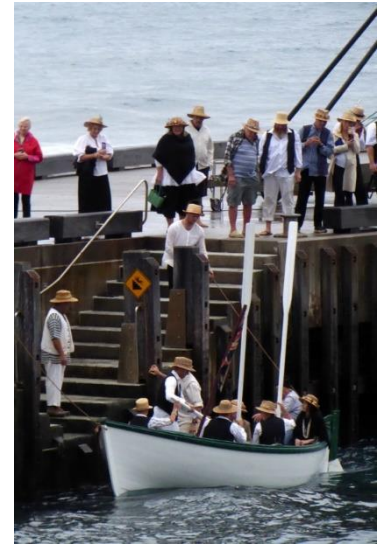
Becoming the mother church of the Church of England's missionary work in Melanesia, the foundation stone for the chapel was laid on the November 1875, but the building was not completed until June 1880. The church was consecrated on the 7th December 1880. The mission operated between 1867 and 1920 when the mission headquarters were moved to the Solomon Islands. During that time, thousands of students from the Pacific Islands came to the Mission College to live and study, living apart from the rest of the island's population and being mostly self-sufficient. The church is still used for regular services.

By this stage, it really was quite wet, but Rachel drove us to Anson Bay for a cuppa, fortunately in a picnic shelter large enough to accommodate us all. In the early afternoon, we were to visit the nearby family-run **The Hilli Goat**, the only goat farm on the island. After some phone calls, Elizabeth found that we were to have lunch here, even though not mentioned in the itinerary. We were welcomed by Emily who, with her husband and son, are part of the three generations living on the property. What a delight their gourmet lunch turned out to be – both seasonal island produce and direct from their veggie garden, plus Hilli Goat Cheese with homemade breads and chutneys to top it off, dessert too, and served with a wine or two if wished. As well, they sold organic skincare products made from their freshest farm ingredients. We thoroughly enjoyed our time here and were sad to hear that, after all of Emily's hard work, the goat farm's feeding costs were increasing to such a degree that they might be forced to close that side of the business. We hope not. Also on the property was a workshop from where her parents, Steve and Alison Ryves, sell their lovely stoneware and porcelain NI Cottage Pottery that has been operating since 1974. Alison is also well-known for her pretty Dichroic glass jewellery which is also sold here and in a few other shops on the island. Before leaving the property, some of us visited the goats and others had a field day in their shop!



After a couple of hours back at our hotel, we were collected at 6.15 pm for the short drive to No 9 Quality Row for a **“Who Killed the Surveyor” Mystery Dinner**. Several of our group were supplied with costumes before very proficiently taking on their roles. There were breaks in the proceedings during the three courses/glass of wine, soft drink, tea & coffee where the “actors” could relax. The story: Set in 1859 on Norfolk Island, we were to go back in time and dine with the Chief Magistrate Frederick Young and his wife Mary. Frederick is hosting this dinner to honour His Excellency, Governor General Denison who is making yet another visit to the island. A young English surveyor from Sydney is found washed up on the cove southeast of Point Hunter and, during our three hours there, we were tasked with working out who was responsible for Charlie’s demise (Lois solved it). We won’t give away the ending, but it was a lot of fun and our members may have found a new calling!

DAY THREE: It had been pouring with rain in the early hours and we felt real concern for today’s very important proceedings and the main reason for our visit, the annual **Bounty Day Celebrations**. *The 8th of June celebrates the anniversary of the arrival of the Pitcairn Islanders to Norfolk Island. The Pitcairners were the descendants of the infamous English sailors of mutiny on the Bounty fame and the Tahitian women who, under their leader Fletcher Christian, began a new life on isolated Pitcairn Island. After outgrowing tiny Pitcairn, Queen Victoria gave Norfolk Island to the eight island families, 194 islanders arrived on the Morayshire in 1856.* On such a busy morning ferrying tourists, Baunti Tours was understandably running rather late collecting us, but we made it to the Kingston wharf area just as a lighter boat re-enactment was taking place. The wharf was crowded, but some of us climbed the nearby hill for wonderful views and photos. Heavy



rain was threatening, but thank goodness held off which allowed the hundreds of locals of all ages in their early-settler dress to enjoy their parade. The traditional dress: males in their white shirts, females in their white dresses, and both wearing straw boater-style hats, was magnificent and a spectacular contrast to the bleakness of the day, as the procession moved to the cenotaph for wreath-laying and then the cemetery, visits to several of the churches and ending with a communal picnic lunch. Our group, just a few of the hundreds of onlookers, gingerly trod the muddy roads to reach the assigned Baunti Tours morning tea spot where we enjoyed the seat (first) and cuppa (second). Whilst waiting for the buses to collect us, we watched the children’s ritual of rolling down the hill at Government House on what is normally green grass. With a combination of wet grass and mud, you can just imagine the outcome, but of course the kids loved it! A great website which gives an inside view of the day: <https://www.discovernorfolk.com.au/bounty-day-what-to-wear/>



The tourists were catered for too, with a barbecue lunch held in the enormous, but fortunately dry, Rawson Hall located near the shops just down the road from our hotel. Lots of dishes prepared and served by some locals who had kindly given up their picnic day to look after us, and the free alcohol was a hit! It was very well-organised but noisy with the singer doing his best to entertain the rowdy crowd and probably feeling disenchanted by the lack of attention. Even though we could have walked, most chose to take the bus back to the resort for a couple of hours rest before descending on their bar and a two-course beautifully-cooked dinner in the restaurant. Further heavy rain overnight.



DAY FOUR: A little reprieve this morning and we departed at 9.15 am for the **Norfolk Today** tour. Quite cool and very overcast. The lovely Brook collected us. He explained that many of the islanders have nicknames and his is “Babbling” for obvious reasons! (Making great reading, there’s two pages of these names at the back of the island’s White Pages.) Anyway, he spoke of the island’s solar power problems. Even with a permanent population of around 1750 and visitors 300-600, the rooftop PV (Photovoltaic (PV)



materials and devices convert sunlight into electrical energy) produces more than its daytime demand and storage is badly needed. As well, near the airport terminal, there is the Power House which contains six diesel generators, but only has two or three working in peak times. Between 5,000 – 7,000 litres of diesel are used every day to operate these and this can be a problem as fuel arrives only every 20 weeks from South East Asia and is stored at Ball Bay where we spent a little time with a group photo taken there.

Next stop was particularly interesting, the Bureau of Meteorology alongside the airport. Brook introduced us to Adam and there was great banter between them, culminating in watching the \$100 worth of weather balloon being launched, a journey of 1.5 hours and rising to 100,000 ft. To bring this into line with other places, this occurs at 10.15 am every day, but extra balloons are sent up during inclement weather like cyclones. Such a fascinating place. Next door is the island’s recycling centre with general waste being sent to Australia for disposal.



Back to Burnt Pine shopping area and we descended on Prinke Eco Store, a health food/organic products store (and coffee shop) dedicated to reducing waste and run by Sharon Quintal. (Amazingly, Sharon was our Scenic Tours guide on Norfolk when we last visited in 2009 and it was lovely to see her again.) She talked to us about her store’s journey toward achieving zero waste, particularly plastic, and promoting the art of living simply. She even lends her customers a ceramic mug for takeaways, if they forget their own! Her website says: *Norfolk bales up a lot and sends it offshore for recycling: car tyres, metal (white goods, cars), steel cans, aluminium, car batteries and electronics to name a few. But only a limited number of plastics are sent to be recycled. Most plastic is baled up with our general waste and exported to Australia to landfill. Think about how you can generate less waste ... maybe it's asking the bakeries for your bread to be in a paper bag not a plastic bag (or take a reusable bread bag!) ... maybe make a commitment to always take a reusable coffee cup to your usual cafe instead of getting a single use takeaway cup ... maybe it's pledging to not use glad wrap again - put your food in the fridge in a washable sealable container and take your food to a BBQ covered with a beeswax wrap or washable food cover.*



Just up the road was Norfolk Art, not a huge shop and our group took up a large amount of available space. Surprise, surprise the owner/artist was none other than Adam Jauczius (who we’d met earlier at the Bureau of Meteorology. Adam is a Technical Officer with the Australian Weather Bureau as well as being a talented artist and has been painting since childhood. In the shop, he was aided by his mother who helped him with our purchases, mainly prints of his local scenes. Chris and Ron were lucky enough to be gifted one of Adam’s original paintings, after Chris volunteered to assist him with a painting technique.

The sun was finally showing, as we took the very quick drive to the RSL Club right across the road, to enjoy a free drink and an historical talk by local (and possibly Secretary/Manager) Terence “Tet”.

The **Taste of Norfolk** tour followed with a visit to Joanne's farm home located near Driver Christian Road to the south-east. Here Joanne, ably assisted by our guide Rachel, was busily preparing and cooking what she called Banana Fritters and, of course, we enjoyed sampling them. (We would see Joanne again later in the week.)

The recipe is amazingly simple:

6 green bananas, 1 small teaspoon bicarb of soda, ½ teas salt

Peel and grate bananas into a bowl (that could be messy!) and add bicarb and salt. Beat well together and fry by tablespoonfuls in boiling fat. She used canola oil. Delicious with meat, fish or syrup.



Green bananas could be difficult to come by in Sydney, so a **similar recipe** (from the NI Cookery Book) is:

6 ripe bananas, 2 tablespoons of SR flour, pinch salt

Peel and mash bananas finely. Mix with flour and fry in spoonfuls. These take a little time to cook and should be turned frequently.

Next visit was to Alison and Adam Christian's home where Adam spoke about the varieties of sea salt made on the island in partnership with John (also doubling as a tour driver). Rosemary, citrus, plain and looking at introducing other flavours such as pepper. He stressed that we do need iodised salt in our diet. There are four butchers on the island and here we were given samples of their delicious sausages and beef cooked in lemon. As we left, Alison invited us to pick mandarins from their tree and we didn't need any persuasion.



Across to the south-west of the island was the thickly-wooded Paddockwood Farm where tour guide and apiarist, Brook, has a couple of hives. From these, his reward is 80 kg honey per year, but the season is limited with a right and wrong time to harvest it. Some of us were concerned about the bees flying a bit too close for comfort, but Brook explained that they won't sting if they don't feel threatened, so we needed to ignore them – and he was right! A fruit and honey tasting here – delicious!

A short drive to Rocky Point Joinery where sadly owner, (Uncle) Roy Nobbs (aka Mesta Plun, meaning Mr Bananas) was absent, but Rachel had been given the okay for our visit. Apparently, he's an avid collector of everything! We were ushered into a room alongside his workshop where there were some of his beautifully handcrafted timber products on display including the unusually-shaped Tahitian ukuleles with fishing line strings (well worth it at \$400). Rachel spoke about Roy who is island born and bred and a builder by trade. Now in his 80's, he's led a very fruitful life: <https://www.discovernorfolk.com.au/here-comes-mesta-plun/>

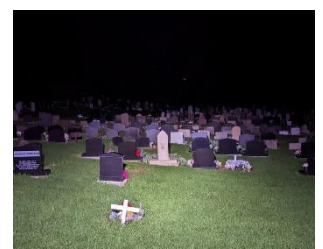


We said a (probable) goodbye to Rachel back at the hotel. Later, as we were heading to the bar, the island treated us to a beautiful sunset. The early BBQ dinner tonight was inside the hotel (probably organised



that way due to the previous temperamental weather), but the chef did a great job. Once again, Brook collected us in the largest coach (used so far) for this evening's one-hour tour **1856 The Untold Story**. It was back down to Kingston Pier and a brief stop at each of the floodlit Quality Row houses, listening to the story of the 8 June 1856 arrivals on Norfolk from Pitcairn Island 6000 km away.

We couldn't help but feel uneasy as our coach parked alongside the dimly-lit cemetery, but making every effort to concentrate on a 1956 recording of Granny Quintal in Norfolk, Norfolk's native language. Brook had explained what she would be talking about so we were able to follow some of it.



DAY FIVE: Weather fine. Our breakfast was early again, but we were separated into two groups and timings (morning and afternoon) for the visit to **Colleen McCullough's home**. In the spare hours we could elect to go shopping, walking or just relax. Lunch was also of our own choosing and some ate a light meal in the hotel's coffee shop or down in the main street. One of our members, Judy, was unwell and was seeking assistance at the hospital. Colleen's home "Out Yenna" was an eye-opener and quite different to what most of us had imagined. Situated in a secluded garden for privacy, the attractive white two-storey house looked simple enough, but was absolutely amazing on the inside. Not large rooms, but they contained irreplaceable and priceless collections of ornaments, original paintings, ornate light fittings, stained-glass windows and display cabinets filled to the brim with glasses, mostly crystal. Understandably, we'd been asked to leave all handbags at the front door, in case we inadvertently knocked something off a shelf! According to her housekeeper, Rebecca, who escorted us through, Colleen loved to throw parties pretty much weekly (hence all the drinking glasses) and was a very generous woman with 17 staff! Her partner, Ric, still lives there, but understandably disappears when the tours are on!



After the hospital and its depleted staff couldn't help, we heard that Judy was to be medevacked to Brisbane that night. We felt rather helpless, but certainly wanted to wish her well and fingers crossed that she was insured! Hopefully, we'll be able to find out how she's progressing in coming days. So, we continued on with a **Progressive Dinner** to go to. Our driver tonight was Peter (the St Barnabas organist) and first stop was sister's Joanne and Ashley's home for a wonderful seafood chowder. Then to the home of Louise and Jimmy (Jimbo) who was sick, but Louise, who fed us our main course of roast beef and vegs, was a remarkable woman with many hats. The last place was Alison and Adam Christian's home that we'd visited yesterday. Adam was hiding, but Alison served up her chocolate pie followed by tea and coffee. Another amazing woman. The dinner was a lovely way to end the day.

DAY SIX: Fine with an occasional shower. We were collected at 7.15 am for the **Breakfast Bushwalk**, some of us chose the long (3 km) but most took the short (1 km) while others sat and waited. The length of both sounded like they would be a breeze, but that was misleading apparently. The 3 km was a tough one, a real bushwalk, and the shorter one (with John) at the thickly-wooded Hundred Acres Reserve Loop located on the island's SW wasn't all that easy either and took about an hour. As well at the entrance to the reserve, we were asked politely to avoid the Channel 7 cameras there (filming the breakfast weather



report we think, and of course promoting the island). Apparently, almost a third of the island is national park and public reserves. What amazed us though was the lack of any birds. There are five species that are endemic to the island, but maybe they take a break during winter, as, apart from the wild chooks roaming everywhere, we didn't see any! Fortunately, we arrived back from our walk in one piece to take a drive past Puppy's Point on the west coast and a photo stop in the north-west overlooking beautiful Anson Bay. Nearby, Lorenzo and his catering crew had gone to a lot of trouble to prepare a most enjoyable and leisurely BBQ breakfast. Understandably, we were hungry by this time and it was fantastic to soak up some sunshine.



The rest of the morning was at leisure and some were dropped off in town for shopping (the shops close on Saturday afternoon) and the rest were taken back to the hotel. Time for a coffee and snack before being collected by Brook at 1 pm for the **Convict Kingston Tour**. Brook was most thorough with his commentary as we wandered around the old buildings including the Royal Engineer's Office and remains of the New Gaol,



and the area was not at all busy, so some great snaps taken in this very photogenic location. Slaughter Bay alongside, normally calm snorkelling territory, was uncharacteristically rough and the tantalising waves made for what looked to us like magnificent surfing but apparently the reef, which stretches the length of the beach, would preclude the best of surfers. A showery afternoon tea was held in a sunken area not far from the Salt House at Emily Bay, before moving on to have our first good look at the Cemetery. Most of the old graves are in an area down at the water's edge, a beautiful spot for them. Some of us were particularly interested in seeing where Colleen McCullough was buried. It was easy to find - a particularly simple grave, half way down the top section and adjacent to the main pathway. Then back to our hotel for a 4.30 pm pick-up!



It was Tony who collected us for the **Baunti Island Fish Fry** in the Anson Bay area. We were pretty much the last tour group to arrive, with several long tables of visitors already in full swing enjoying their generous serves of beer and wine and the wonderful soloist Trent Christian. The BBQ breakfast crew from earlier today were slogging away to ensure the fresh fish dinner accompanied by island-grown dishes was just right – and it was absolutely delicious. So much so, that some of us (remaining nameless) returned for seconds and thirds! The location was also perfect for viewing the sunset – while perhaps a little too cloudy, it was spectacular just the same. We were treated to entertainment by four Tahitian-style dancers that beautifully topped off the evening which ended too soon at 7 pm.

DAY SEVEN: Last night had been very windy and this morning was the same, fine and cool. Breakfast at the usual time and then a short drive to the Sunday markets or a longer drive to church whichever we preferred. Located within the main shopping centre, the markets were quite good, but we were expecting more stalls. May have had something to do with the end of the visitor season so things were winding down. It became quite hot and the two hours spent here were more than enough so consequently we gravitated to the organic shop Prinke right across the road for one of their delicious ceramic mug coffees (and perhaps a sweet morsel). The jewellery shop next door was also open and we parted with some funds there.



A three-minute drive to **Fletcher's Mutiny Cyclorama** and on arrival we were separated into two groups. One was invited to spend a few minutes in the adjacent Queen Victoria's Garden whilst the other went inside. Taken from two websites: *The Cyclorama is a 360-degree painting created by local artists Sue Draper and Tracey Yager depicting the Mutiny on the Bounty story and the descendants settling on Norfolk Island in 1856. An outstanding attraction and Tourism Awards winner, this stunning panoramic*

painting with realistic 3D effects has been impressing visitors to Norfolk Island with its 'wow' factor for over 18 years. In 2014 the Cyclorama achieved the impressive ranking of No 5 in Australian Landmarks in the TripAdvisor Travellers Choice Awards. No photos were permitted inside sadly. On the upside, we did make many purchases in their lovely gift shop, Gallery Guava, and there was an adjoining restaurant which looked enticing, but we would be having a light café lunch back in our hotel.



A lengthy break then to 4.15 pm departure time for our group's final dinner which was outdoors in another sunken but sheltered spot in the vicinity of Bloody Bridge near Cemetery Bay. Here - surprise, surprise - was Lorenzo and crew cooking up a storm on the barbeque whilst we sat enjoying a few beverages. The food was great and, under an almost full moon, it was a lovely



way to end our stay, but it was cool and now dark as we struggled back up the embankment to the bus. Back to our rooms to finish packing!

DAY EIGHT: A leisurely morning before departure, so we made the most of breakfast time. At 10 am, we were required to vacate our rooms and so then spent a couple of hours in the hotel's lounge area waiting for our transport to the airport five minutes away, and it was Brook who collected us. We weren't sorry to see the back of the mud which we collectively spent hours during the week scrubbing from our shoes, but we will miss this gorgeous island and the delightful and particularly proud locals who looked after us so well (and kept popping up in different places), the fresh air, the stately pine trees that are so prolific, the roaming cows and chooks, the rugged coastline with its quaint little spotless beaches, the green – everything was so green – a stark contrast to the blue of the surrounding ocean. We loved it!

We'd been forewarned that there were no food/snacks at the tiny airport and we weren't sure what Qantas would offer, so the hotel kindly whipped up some delicious sandwiches for a small fee. There was a decent crowd waiting for the flight and this time the plane had arrived on time from Sydney, with our return due out at 3.10 pm (local time) actually leaving 15 mins early. An easy flight home and still early (with unusually nothing else landing in Sydney then) so getting through the formalities was easy and most of us were out of the terminal by 5.30 pm.



A huge thank you to organisers Trade Travel, Baunti Tours and Elizabeth who spent her week stipulating departure times, constantly counting and ensuring that we didn't get lost on the myriad of tours! It had been a wonderful eight days.

