

From the Pacific to the Indian Ocean & the Wild, Wild West

Report courtesy of John Shrides (Indian Pacific) and Ian Dale (Cruise extension)

Photos courtesy John Shrides, Ian Dale, Julie Matthews & David Cotton.



Day 1. Our adventurous group of 17 left chilly Melbourne for the flight to Sydney where we joined the Indian Pacific Train for our 4-day journey to Perth. The first day on the train was through the forested peaks and valleys of the Blue Mountains, where the late setting sun provided wonderful views. That evening we were treated to the first of many stunning meals and the show case of Australian wines and beers for all to enjoy.

Day 2. The first night was quite eventful as the train rocked, rolled and lurched its way across to Broken Hill where we had a very early start for the off-train excursions. Getting up early was not a problem as most of us didn't sleep much that night. By the afternoon on day 2 (after lots of food and a catch up on some sleep) we arrived in Adelaide. There was a good range of off-train excursions to choose from and we arrived back on board the train for a coffee and night cap before bed looked good after the previous sleepless night.

Day 3. We woke to the scenery of the Nullarbor Plain. Around mid-day we arrived in Cook for a short break, which allowed time to explore the town. In the evening we arrived at the remote outpost of Rawlinna (the largest sheep station in Australia). This was a truly memorable outback experience where we were served a roast dinner under the stars.

Day 4. By morning we were well and truly in the west. We travelled through small country towns surrounded by wheat fields before arriving in the afternoon in Perth. Our bus was waiting for us and we were soon checking into the hotel. After a happy hour gathering, including catching up with two members that flew direct to Perth, the thought of the king-sized bed was too much for most the travellers, so it was an early night.

Day 5. An easy day with a half day tour of Perth, Fremantle and a Swan River cruise. A highlight was Kings Park Botanical Gardens. The remainder of the day was free time.

Day 6. A full day tour which included New Norcia, a Wild Flower farm and the Pinnacles Desert. New Norcia is the home to Australia's only Benedictine Abbey. At the Wild Flower Farm we found out how the flowers are dried and exported across Australia and overseas. Late afternoon we arrived at the Pinnacles Desert. Our guide provided in depth information on such a fascinating place. It was a late evening back into our hotel.

Day 7. A full day tour to Margaret River, Busselton and Cape Leeuwin. After morning tea in Busselton it was off to one of Margaret River's oldest breweries for lunch and tastings. After a further stop at Sandalford Winery (and tastings) it was onto Mammoth Cave for a guided tour. We then continued south to Cape Leeuwin lighthouse where the Southern and Indian Oceans meet. A further stop in Margaret River before arriving quite late to our hotel.

Day 8. A free day

Day 9. Unfortunately, after a great run of lovely days the weather turned and the trip to Rottneest Island was very rough and for a couple of members and many other passengers it was a call out for a sick bag or two. We had a Discovery Tour bus trip in the morning, followed by lunch and then in the afternoon, although quite cool, we were able to explore the island.

Day 10. It was time to head back to Melbourne for most of the group. However, 5 members continued their journey on the Sun Princess, through Asia to Singapore.

This tour certainly provided the opportunity for members to embrace the ideals of Probus which are Fun, Friendship and Fellowship.



Central Station Sydney



Waiting to board



Waiting to board



Waiting to board



IP Lounge



IP lounge



IP Dining



IP Dining



IP Dining



IP Lounge



IP Cook



Hahndorf Tour



Kings Park Botanical Gardens



Kings Park Botanical Gardens



Swan River Tour



Pinnacles Tour



Pinnacles Tour



Busselton



Busselton



Margaret River Lunch



Rottneest Tour



Group Dinner



Group Dinner



Group get together



Group get together



Group get together



Group get together



Group get together

Cruise extension on the Sun Princess



" And then there were 5 ! (Freda, Julie, John, Val & Ian)

The five of us left the group in Perth and boarded the Sun Princess for 12 nights.

We travelled to Lombok, Kuala Lumpur (Port Kelang), Penang, Langkawi and Phuket before finishing in Singapore for a few days.

Various excursions were taken to Traditional Houses, Craft Villages, Kuta Beach, Temples, Cable Cars, Cultural Complexes, Rice Museum, more Temples, Reclining Buddha, Muslim Fishing Village on Stilts and a cruise to James Bond Island by Long Tail Boat.

And then there were 4 !

Julie had a medical episode on board and was off loaded in Phuket and taken to hospital for tests. Given the all clear and re-joined us in Singapore some \$2,500 poorer !! (Thank goodness for Travel Insurance).

In Singapore we all had a front row seat to have breakfast with the Orangutans. Lots of walking and exploring especially the Gardens by The Bay both by day and night for the magnificent light and sound show.

And then there were 2 !

John, Val & Ian headed home.

Freda and Julie continued to explore including Raffles returning home two days later.

Then there were none !



View of top deck on Sun Princess



Breakfast with Orangutans



Lombok



Kuta on Lombok



Kuta



Lobster dinner on board



K L Twin Towers



Penang



Penang



Penang



Phuket. Julies trip



James Bond Island by long tail boat



Fishing village Phuket



Long tail boat engine



Sentosa cable car Singapore



Singapore Zoo



Lunch At Newton Hawker with locals



Lunch At Newton Hawker with locals
