

## The Tasmania Trip

A 7-night trip to Tasmania with stays in Launceston and Hobart sounds as though it will be a leisurely pleasure, but the one just completed by 24 of our members and friends was anything but leisurely. From the time we met at 6.15 am at the Bowls Club on a cold Monday to arriving back 8 days later it was full on. The organisation by John M and Group Travel was brilliant and efficient, starting with the pre-printing of all Boarding Cards at Tullamarine and the changing of our itinerary to include MONA. The stay at only two hotels had the benefit of not unpacking every day but did mean the travel was longer.



Using Launceston as a 4-night base we saw Entally House at Hadspen (a nearly 200 year old house and garden), cruise on the Tamar River and the Cataract Gorge, Table Cape Tulip Farm with its breathtaking field of colour, the Emu Valley Rhododendron Gardens (owned and run by a Rotary Club inspired not for profit group)



Travelling North up the Tamar River we visited the Beaconsfield Mine (now closed but site of the two miners trapped in a cage for 2 weeks), Platypus House and Seahorse World (interesting commercial farming facilities), a very casual, informative and comfortable wine tasting at Tamar Ridge Winery



Third day we braved the snow and cold of Cradle mountain, a great lunch and a visit to the attractions there. On the way back a visit to the mural town of Sheffield.

On the way to Hobart we visited the historic towns of Ross and Richmond, at Ross where despite the heavy cold rain we were given a very full informative tour of the town and its history. At Richmond, a visit to the miniaturised Old Hobart Town, a depiction of Hobart in its early development in 1820.



An early visit to the Salamanca Market to provide retail therapy to some was followed by a very leisurely cruise from Hobart's Docks on a luxurious catamaran along the Derwent River, the D'entrecasteaux Channel, past Bruny Island, salmon fishery pens to



Peppermint Bay where an excellent 4 course lunch was enjoyed by all. The day was finished with a trip to the top of Mt Wellington which turned into an exhilarating and anxious trip through a blizzard, a malfunctioning windscreen wiper and an opening door which nearly lost our leader



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A change to the itinerary had us all visit MONA, which for some was the highlight but others were more confronted. The museum is an architectural wonder with exhibits that reflect the owners personal taste, it certainly cannot be ignored as few would have been bored, most would have been stimulated and/amused and a few were shocked. The range was impressive and the talk given by the "Tattooed Work Of Art" was interesting and fascinating to say the least.



The last day before travelling back home saw us having a sightseeing tour of Hobart including a thought provoking visit to the Cascades Female Factory where up to 12,000 convict women were kept lived and worked in harsh conditions from 1828 to 1856. This was followed by a full lunch at the Cascades Brewery before the end of the tour at Hobart Airport.



The Tasmanian Trip was enjoyed by all with no adverse comments that this Correspondent heard and the group mixed well.

The accommodation was excellent in both Launceston and Hobart and the fully inclusive meals were substantial and varied. A few extra kilos were brought home after the trip.

The travel arrangements by coach both in Melbourne and certainly in Tasmania with the driver Richard were excellent and with all travellers under threat of being left were on time for all the starts.

The trip was organised by a travel company, Group Travel and coordinated by John Mackintosh with no doubt assistance from Maureen, which as a team gave all the participants a trip which was varied, fully catered and with no glitches, though I am sure there were some but they were not obvious as they were handled without drama.

WELL DONE ALL