

# Tasmania

November – 2003

Fri 31<sup>st</sup> Oct

Well it all started around midday after waking up after night shift. Yep keen I know, but this is holidays we are talking about. Finished packing the car and away we went. We ended up 400 km away in Eden after a high frequency of toilet stops. I should point out here that Zuz is about 3 months pregnant. The caravan park was 5 min south of Eden with some very nice sites with nice soft grass. Takeaway for dinner.

Sat 1<sup>st</sup> Nov

As I was already in holiday mode, I made it up before sunrise to go and take some photos. So down the beach I went and it was very nice. But I then discovered that my 24-120 lens had no auto focus. Bugger... and a few other choice words were allowed to escape the mouth. On the bright side, I had a spare so all was not completely lost. Now, time to go and cook breakfast. Got the stove out and discover the day was sent to test me. The stove did not work either. Missing an O ring and leaking. Can I go back to bed, hit the reset button and start again.

My turn to drive today and the plan was to get to Lakes entrance for lunch and have some fresh prawns. Picked up some polarised sunnies at a service station on the way. More about them later. We got the Lakes Entrance and it was raining on and off, windy and quite cold. So something else was ordered for lunch and then off to find a place to camp. Decided on Lakes N.P. which meant driving down to Sale and then back out to the lakes with the N.P. located at a place called Loch Sport. Although it was in the middle of nowhere, it was fairly big. Drive over the long causeway to 90 mile beach. Plenty of fisherman, but a huge side rip. Local sea birds were almost the size of a chicken. After that we found the N.P. and paid our dues, all of \$8.80 and headed for our site. Some black cockatoos gave us a fly by showing the day was starting to turn. Weather was still windy and threatening. Pitched tent in a Wilson prom type site. We put the rain tarp up under protest from some. As we cooked up some pasta it started to sprinkle ; ) Nearly set fire to the stove due to a leaking hose and had to fight off killer mozzies during a game of scrabble.

Sun 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov

Too scared to use the stove so cold fruit for breaky. An early start saw us packed and gone by 8:10 aiming for Phillip Island. Drove the road less travelled and along the coast. Stopped a couple of times at 90 mile beach to enjoy some awesome scenery. Even when going inland a touch were treated to the same. Basically made 4 left turns, but did not end up where we started ?? Zoomed past the Prom (Wilson's that is) Zuz took advantage of a nice wet dirt lookout to put some mean looking mud up the side of the beastie. Bought another stove hose which turned out to be the wrong one and found a camp ground on the Island. At \$28 for an unpowered site it was pretty xcy, but nice none the less. A lightning tent pitch and we were off to the visitors centre to get tickets for the Penguin parade. Then up to Cowes for lunch, a huge serving of fish

and chips. Our next walk was to be around the mangroves after the obligatory wee stop. Zuz was very thankful when Neil found the toilet after 3 laps of a public park. But was not too happy when she was 'sacked' from driving (taking too long to get ready)

Mangrove walk was nothing to write home about so we headed for Nobbies. On arrival the wind was blowing a gale. What we were about to be witness to was some pretty amazing scenery. Wild seas and rock outcrops. Lovely green grassy hills and an assortment of wild flowers. Plus the 6 million seagulls flying around, due to it being a nesting colony. The scenery and colours were breathtaking. Walked out of there truly gob smacked. Both from the scenery and the fact that we did not get shit on.

We had some time so went to check out pyramid rock. No crowds, no birds. Just more wind, stronger than before so it was exit stage left and off to swan lake. A quick walk to see the hides. Not too much to see except for a martin nesting in the hide.

Now it was time for the penguin parade. Turned up to the visitors centre all rugged up. Had a look at the reference material / a film and even some penguins in a nesting box, yep real ones. Then time to head down to the beach with all the tourists to sit and patiently wait. Occasionally a group could be seen in the breakers until the call must have been made to storm the beaches. It was amazing. Big groups, little groups and the odd individual tentatively waddling up the beach. After catching all that, we followed a few as they walked past the board walks and to their nest. One little fella impressed as he ran all the way. They were fairly noisy too, screaming out and with the occasional blue thrown in for good measure. Truly and amazing and highly recommended sight to see. Another was seeing all the mutton birds coming into roost in the distance. Swarms covered the sky.

Mon 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov

Managed to sleep into 8:00 due to the past few days catching up on us. Had our showers, clean up the beastie and cooked some eggs for breakfast. Stove phobia has been overcome.

As we were heading for the ferry tonight we packed the car accordingly and went to explore a little more of the island. First, up to Forest caves to see the caverns that get exposed at low tide. Walking along the beach we managed to walk right past them. Too preoccupied with the dinosaurs in the sky i.e. Seabirds. The beach was a real treat on the eyes, lots of beautiful red outcrops, green scrub. Then coming back we climbed onto one outcrop and found the caves. Not too bad at all.

Then on the way back up the beach we saw something moving on the beach and from several hundred meters I call the echidna. Strode up carefully with camera in hand. It was a big sucker and awesome to see him walking along the sand. Back over the dunes through the mutton bird rookeries and into the car. Then off to Cape Wolinia for another little walk, but first needed to feed the youngen. Huge chicken sniz and the biggest hamburger I have ever seen.. And remember I have been to the states 6 times.

We had to walk along the beach for a km to get to the walking track. Very scenic this part of the world is. We were only going to go up to the pinnacles, but in the end did the cap loop at 6 km. The cape is the biggest mutton bird rookery and wow did it reek. Even heard a few still in the burrows. The top of the hill (at 112m) gave a great view of the island. Also stumbled on what looked like native tomatoes, but gave them a miss.

Now it was time to bid Phillip Island a fond farewell. Well worth the price of admission. On the way to Melbourne we filled up at 84c a litre. Have not filled up at that price for a while. Arrived at the ferry dock with no wrong turns and a little early. Ditched our remaining fruit and veg and went about our business of checking in. This is one big ferry. Handed in the gas bottle and drove to the parking spot. Then upstairs to our cabin. Was it 8244 or 8224 Zuz ? ; ) The cabin was good and more roomy than I expected. Shower was 5 star. Time to explore the ship and grab a bite to eat. \$21 for a good feed to a captive audience was not too bad. We bought our parks pass, grabbed some info and called it a night after charging every battery we could.

Tues 4<sup>th</sup> Nov

Off to an early start and a walk up on deck to see the sun rise over the Tasmanian land. Ate breaky and awaited to depart. We got the call to go to the car . off the ferry, through quarantine, pick up the gas bottle and Yeah Ha !!!

A decision needed to be taken. Left or right? In the end we went right and cruised up to Ulverstone to stock up on supplies. Mainly fruit and veg. We took the scenic route along the coast, through a nice little town called Penguin. Even the garbage bins were penguins. It was beautiful with millions of spring flowers out in all the gardens. Stopped at a few scenic lookouts along the way.

Made it to Burnie and stopped at the information centre. We picked up a little book that would become a bible of sorts on our trip. "60 great short walks". A very smart book. This led us on a side trip, firstly to a fern glade walk which is a known platypus hang out. Very interesting, but no platypus and in the end that was a good thing as if it was that easy to see them then we it would not have appreciated it as much as when we did finally see one after.

Then off to Rhododendron Gardens as the flowers were in their spring bloom. Many a colourful flower in this large garden was a target with the camera. And the size of the bumblebees flying around. Off to another garden which was a little over the top with its life sized ornaments. Again full of colourful flowers in bloom. The last part of our little side trip was to visit guide falls. A short walk from the parking lot saw us at the base of a wide short fall. Out with the tripod to take a few happy snaps before lunch was taken in the company of some friendly ducks. All this within 12 km.

Back in the car and off to Stanley and a campsite there. We finally found it as there were no signs and picked ourselves a site for a huge \$4.40. Very middle of nowhere. After setting up camp we thought we would duck into Stanley for a look around. Found a little interactive lookout that persuaded us on the scenic route we would follow. Which took us past and old Homestead, beach with penguin signs, the cemetery and ended up at 'the nut' at the bottom of the chairlift. With a rush of blood, we decided to climb it. Then for some really stupid reason, we decided to run up the last bit. The light was awesome with blue, yes finally blue skies and the views from the top were amazing. There was even a kestrel doing the rounds up the top. The town looked so neat and tidy, almost like a model village. As it was late, take away was on the menu, eaten down by the sea then back to the campsite for bed.

Wed 5<sup>th</sup> Nov

Woke up for a mango breakfast and pulling down the tent. Going back to Stanley to go through 'Highfield', the 1800's outpost. Most interesting and the restoration job was going great. Many a story of the characters and events of the time. Coupled with

more spring flowers it was also a very pretty sight that we took some time to suss out. Had planned on prawns for lunch, but at \$35 a kilo, I think we will pass on that and take up the pub's offer for a steak sanger and a chicken burger. Stanley had a real good feel to it. Reminded us of Portree in the Isle of Skye. Would love to go back to either. Then we travelled down to Aurthur River with a small trip to a lighthouse. Very remote and desolate countryside that I am sure was rather hostile as well. Aurthur River was like a ghost town so we looked at the river instead. Then it was off to the 'edge of the world'. The water across the bar of the river was brown, throw in a lot of white water and tonnes and tonnes of driftwood on the shore certainly made for a very ancient looking landscape. Not a nice place to get shipwrecked for sure. I was looking at it on a beautiful day. No wind and vivid blue skies.

Next stop was 120km down dirt road in Corrina. A small pit stop to look at some place called coda rocks. Zuz was driving like a rally champion. We stopped many times for photo stops. At one of these I decided to do the camel thing out of the sunroof of the Rav4. Then 5 kms down the road "Oh shit!! My sunnies were on the roof" So I opened the sun roof and looked up. They were caught in the roof racks. How arsy was that? We continued on to Corrina.

On arrival, we were welcomed with a 27 Black cockatoo fly by. Pitched the tent, had a little walk around and cooked dinner. Yummy toasted sandwiches. Then we sat there listening to the beautiful sounds of the birds in a remote, most beautiful tranquil part of the world away from any of its cares.

Thu 6<sup>th</sup> Nov

Pancakes for breaky as we had to wait until 9:00 for the punt to start working. \$11 to cross the Pieman river on the 'FATMAN' barge. Took 5 or so minutes to cross, but was pretty cool. After a quick stop at the Cordinna cemetery where there were a couple of old grave with wooden headstones we headed towards Zeehan. Only 12 more kms until we got back on the black stuff. Cruised through Zeehan which had a very wild west feel about it and on to Montezumas falls. A 9.6km hike to a 104m high waterfall. It was on an old railway from the 1800's so it was a fairly easy walk although it was pretty wet under foot so the waterproof boots got a good workout. Now, to the falls. BIG!! Very nice. They even have a suspension bridge across the gully so we could get a better view. The safe load limit was one with a pack. Hmm that's pretty specific, isn't it. Very wobbly, but the views were great. After many a photo and a chat with people we met in Stanley we went back to the car. On the road to Strahan, which is a very pretty little town that unfortunately had been bitten by the commercial bug. Pretty expensive tours of the river and flights as well. But we did enjoy the mini pies and sour dough from the famous local bakery.

So we drove out to Hells Gate, Macquarie Harbour which was 75m across and looked at a pretty shitty campsite. With time to kill, off to ocean beach to see the mutton birds returning. As we had even more time to kill, some bright spark said let's cook dinner here. Cooking dinner watching the sunset over the ocean and a nice one at that. Just as we were about to leave after dark, in came the birds. It was awesome, flying in about 6 feet over my head. Then back to the tent for a good night's sleep. We also enjoyed the comforts of a shower.

Fri 7<sup>th</sup> Nov

As the store was only 75m away, we had cold milk with our breakfast and then took the opportunity to do some washing. Then we took a stroll around town and through the wood works. A carpenters wet dream. Some of these items on display were incredible and showed amazing skill. A sight that works fail to do any justice. And then there was the smell. We then looked at the Huon pine mill. Even the offcuts were beautiful. What a job eh? More bread and a cuppa from the bakery, then off to do our first 'short walk' for the day to Hogarth Falls. Only a 40 min walk along a scenic creek. The waterfall wasn't too bad either even if it was a little small.

Now we were off to Lake St Clair via Queenstown. After going through some wonderful mountain / lake scenery the barrenness of the silver mining town was quite unique. We stopped and had a look around. Very wild west about it. Saw the apt railway and the monument to the miners. The lookout had a great view and we were privileged to see the steam train come in and turn around on the turntable.

3 more planned walks before L.S.C. The first was Nelson Falls. Even saw a little trout swimming in the creek. These falls were beautiful and only a short walk. Click, click, click of yet more beautiful creek and rainforest scenery. Then on to the toughest walk of the day. Donahugh's lookout. As with most walks it is up a big hill, look around and come back down. Although this 40 min stroll was no different the view was well worth the effort. Sweeping views of magnificent mountains and the Franklin river cutting through the plains. As it was late arvo and the light was soft, it made it look like a 360o postcard. Back down to the last walk of the day. Just a quick one down to the Franklin River itself. As usual, it was nice and scenic.

Now it was double time to the camp site at Lake St Clair. Paid for 2 nights up front and picked a spot with a fire place in the open after much discussion. It was pretty late so a quick pitch of the tent and cook dinner.

After dinner, sat around and downloaded some photos and watched an army of possums parade around. Well not just parade around, but take possession of the campsite. I even had to chase one out of the car. It did not help matters that someone spilt their dinner on the deck.

The weather was absolutely beautiful, watching the wild life, listening to the loudest wattlebirds squawk until the last light was gone then a full moon to boot.

Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Nov

Woke to the sound of those same noisy wattle birds and the presence of possum poo outside zuz's side of the tent. Steal our food, shit in the tent and the kitchen. Lucky they are protected, that's all I'll say. It was an easy relaxed morning, then decided to do one of the walks. After going through the visitors centre, seeing some great info and learning how to identify scat plus a number of other interesting facts we decided on the forgotten lake walk and registered before walking off.

We got to a junction and it was agreed that we would do the longer part of the circuit first. Up we went. It was marked as a moderate 4.5 hour walk. The start was up, up and more up. We also took most of the camera gear as well which was not smart....no stupid. On the way up we came across a fallen tree across the path. Now I mean BIG. This sucker was 7-8 feet in diameter. No way around or under it, so over we go. Then probably 15 or so minutes after this and an extra 100m in elevation. Neil realises that he left his sunnies somewhere along the track. Yes, the same roof driving sunnies. So I put the pack down and raced down to where I was sure I 'dropped' them. On the way down I met a couple who asked "Looking for sunny's". Yep. "They're at the big tree." So I rock over to where I thought I put them. No glasses, so I kept going back

down to the fallen tree. Still no glasses. Then back up to the spot again, searching more thinking I am going blind. Then as I was about to give up it was one last look to the sky to ask for Hueys help. And there they were. Hanging on the trunk of the tree 6 foot in the air. Ahh the relief. Then back up the hill to where Zuz was. In all wasted a fair bit of time and a shite load of energy. We continued on what seemed like an age before we saw another couple who told us we were near the junction and it was mostly down hill from there. Thank God for that. We were buggered and had climbed near 300m. We got to the junction and enjoyed the view. I must say it was spectacular. We continued on past some alpine marshes and took a photo. Well if we are going to hike them up a hill, we may as well use them. By the time we had arrived at shadow lake we were too buggered to go to forgotten lake and sat down to lunch as we had been walking for 3.5 hours already. Supposedly another 2 to go. Took photos of the lake and headed back. Zuz started to count the steps. It took us 1h 27min to get back. Very sore all over. We cooked dinner, this time without the possums as the new campers had that pleasure. A quick spag and sauce dinner and 4 cups of tea to re-hydrate.

As we are total gluttons for punishment we put the walking boots back on for a 1 hour return walk to platypus bay, where they also had a platypus hide. We walked up with springs in our steps, fuelled by the excitement of the chase. The mind is a very powerful thing. Could this be our maiden wide sighting after so many attempts. We got to the hide and within 2 minutes HALE-LU-YAA!!! We have a platypus sighting. Our first one in the wild about 50m in front of us. Watched them for about 30 min and strolled back down with the most satisfied feeling. Time for a relaxing cuppa and some light entertainment watching the other people chase away possums. Then we saw another strange little critter. With torch in hand, we identified him as a Quoll of some kind. Never seen one of them before either. After a hot 6 min shower we went to bed only to be surprised by a noise next to Zuz. A possum had got into the vestibule of the tent and was sitting on zuz's bag. Took us 5 min to evict the lil critter. The off to a well earned sleep. Very sore when lying down, probably due to the 20km I put into the legs today.

Sun 9<sup>th</sup> Nov

Not the best of sleeps and still rather sore I cleaned the shit from the kitchen before packing up. Treated ourselves to a cooked breakfast. Salmon omelette and poached egg and bacon. Then back on the native trail. For a time, I thought I was a formula 1 driver. Sure Zuz will dob me in. But gee it was fun.

We found ourselves at Mt Field N.P. To do some more...guess what...walks. this one was Russell Falls. A very easy walk to the base of the falls. Well they say seen one waterfall seen the all. Not in this case. A nice wide multi tiered waterfall and I could not get all of it in the camera. Then on to the next one, Horseshoe falls some 200m upstream. But first we have to ascend the very steep slopes to get to the top of Russell falls. It was also worth the effort for the foliage and bushes around it. 10 minutes of photos later and down we went. Next!!! Was the Big trees short walk. 700m on an easy grade for 30 min or so but ended up being 40 or so after reading all the info signs along the way and staring at the size of some of the trees.

You can actually measure one of them and this little sucker stood at 78m. unbelievable. Some were said to be growing in the 1600's when Mr Tasman sailed past. The trees we are talking about are the swamp gums that grow to 100m. Very

wide at the base and would leave you very very flat it one fell on you. We also had a look at the campsite, just in case.

We were heading back into the wilderness. Firstly to see Gordon Dam. It took 2 hours to get to the dam through some magical scenery. Yep seems to be a lot of that on this little island. But also it was a hostile and unforgiving scenery. I can understand why noone lives here anymore. Great views of lake Pedder and Gordon as well. 27 Sydney harbours and lots more interesting facts that I wont bore you with. If you want to know, go see it. But I will tell you that the dam wall is 140m tall. The dam was 24m below full so a ring of eerie dead trees surrounded the lake. We walked down the 186 steps to walk on the dam wall, which had the best echo echo echo I have ever heard. Back in the car abandoning the plans to go down to \*\*\*\*\* due to the harshness of the scenery, the closing in of the weather and the general un-invitingness of the southwest wilderness. But in saying that, it really is a place you have to see and is well worth the effort and big thanks to the people in the past who have fought to keep it. Headed back to Mt Field N.P. campsite. This was the best N.P. camp I have ever seen. Tables, powered sites, warm free showers, even a freaken laundry. Beautifully ringed with tall gums on a creek. Lots and lots of paddymelons around. \$12 for the site well spent. After a quick feed of pancake, relaxing in the dying light and catching up on the diary we went for an early night in the "Land of the Giants" campsite.

Mon 10<sup>th</sup> Nov

Cereal, pineapple and a warm shower to start the day. Back on the road past some hops fields, blackcurrant orchards. Hmm so that's where we grow em. Our first stop was the salmon ponds, which we found out was the birthplace of trout fishing in Australia in the 1860's. It is still a functioning hatchery. Saw tanks with eggs, some with fry and the tanks outside all had different species in them (Brook, brown, rainbow, salmon). As you do, we bought some food to feed the fish. Some were more aggressive than others the Brook and rainbow trout made the water boil. There were plenty of big browns and salmon in the ponds....and I mean BIG. It would be amazing to land something like that from a stream in the wild.

I finished dreaming and back in the car to follow the Derwent into Hobart. Stopped at the visitors centre to suss out what was going on and get some photo supplies. The mall was very nice. As it was lunch time we drove down to constitution dock to buy some food. I had crumbed scallops and chips. Yummy. Prawns were still \$29 a kilo, so still no prawns for us. We had not satisfied our lust for seafood so we went a dozen Pacific oysters. Superb.

After a quick drive through Salamanca to find a loo, we headed off to Mt Wellington. 1270m of prime lookout over Hobart and S/E Tasmania to enjoy glorious views on a very spectacular day. But the very windy road up there after 10 large oysters.....

Then it was time to head for a camp. We were heading down south, so not much to choose from. Stopped at Huonville for supplies and info and made the call to try the no facilities site near the air walk. We drove for an hour to find it was a walk in site. Ok if you are prepared for that, we were not. So back in the car down to a little country town called Dover on a nice little bay. We paid up for a powered site to recharge all our batteries. A huge flock of Black cockies flew into the gums on the foreshore. So that was me for half an hour. Meanwhile Zuz set up the kitchen. The cockies and the serenity of the bay were enough for me to agree that we made the right call ditching the other camp, even if it did mean doing the windy section of road again. But then again there are a lot of windy roads down here. Ended up being a late

night as we were waiting for the batteries to charge. As it does stay light a fair bit longer when you are at 43°13'S (And 147°01'E if you want the precise location.)

Tue 11<sup>th</sup> Nov

Woke to the chorus of black cockies after a bit of rain overnight. After a seedy pineapple for breakfast an early call was made to spend another night. So today we were going to go as far south as we could, by car anyway. The weather was pretty cold and windy. First stop was Hastings Valley N.P. to visit the Newedgate cave. The tour was about an hour long with a very informative guide. This is one of only 2 dolomite caves in Oz. Still the same sort of formations as normal, but definitely a first class cave.

Back to the visitors centre and the thermal spring. They say the pool was 28° so we walked down to it. Let me tell ya, 28 degrees was a little optimistic, but as it was warmer than the outside temp we jumped into the swimmers and in we went. Had a nice relaxing paddle around the pool. Until we had to get out. Brrrrr, the wind. We took a 13 minute hot springs walk to where the supposed hot water comes from.

Next stop on the tour was Cockle Creek. Basically this was a thriving whaling town in its heyday, but now the sign said population 1. There were a few caravans and boats around. Other than that it was pretty isolated. Took a walk to see the new 3 month old life size bronze statue of a Southern right whale. It was symbolic to the whales and the whalers.

Then battled the elements to walk a bit of the South West Cape walk. This is where Zuz realised she had lost her claddock. Unfortunately not the success of the sunnies incident. It was not much of a walk. 4 hours return to the cape but we only had time for a little bit. A quick peek at the Cockle Creek cemetery and fronted up for another short walk to Duckhole Lake. A sinkhole that was full of water. It was a good walk on boardwalk nearly all the way to a small, but dark and beautiful lake. But no ducks!! Then it was a quick drive back the Dover after stopping at Southport. Not much to it. Succulent toasted sandwiches for dinner and we had to rug up due to the cold and wind.

Wed 12<sup>th</sup> Nov

Woke after some more rain through the night. Packed the camp as Zuz took a long shower. It was Zuz's day to drive so as we were going to the air walk, she got to pilot through the awesome roads this time. After stopping at yet another lookout we got to the air walk and forked over the mula. Walked across a bridge and up many a step to the gantry. It is 602m long suspended many meters above the ground. It was awesome looking down from the Forrest canopy. It was still fairly windy though. The showpiece is the cantilever where it is like you are walking out on nothing to overlook the confluence of the Anderson and Picton and Huon rivers. The wind made this a little wobbly but the view was inspiring. We worked out we had timed it perfectly as it started to rain as we walked back into the visitors centre where brunch of nachos and meat pies were taken. By the time we had finished, there were big patches of blue in the sky. So goes the weather in Tassie.

Time to take on that road again. This time stopping at the 'big tree' that claims to be Australia's heaviest tree. Weighs in at 405 tonnes. So how do you weigh a tree that is pretty firmly anchored to the ground?? 87m tall and of course another swamp gum. The diameter at the base was over 6m. It was certainly a big tree. But the sad side to

this story is that this tree is dying. It has only probably lived for 400 or so years. I just hope I am not around when it falls.

It was time to say farewell to the forests and head for the islands, those of Nth and Sth Brunny. After stocking up on fuel and Banjo's sour dough of course. Paid our \$21 in Kettering for a 15 minute ride on the car ferry and we were on an Island of an Island :) and hightailed it down to Adventure bay to find a place to stay. The weather was cold, very windy and very threatening so we picked the furthestmost caravan park and set up the tent in a fairly protected and nice looking area. Tried to book a Cadbury tour at 16:01 to find out they closed at 16:00. Don't mess with chocolate people. Cooked dinner before going to watch penguins, this time for FREE!! We had to don the wet weather gear and brollys to cook dinner whilst being shocked at some of the duck behaviour that was going on. Lets put it this way the ladies did not get much of a say in what was going on.

Washed up and headed for the neck to see some penguins. We got there just before dark and sat behind the hide to watch and wait. We saw only 10 or so penguins come up the beach before it was too dark. Wohoo!!! As we were walking back to the car we could hear dozens of them. We actually saw more walking back to the car. There was even 2 standing next to the car when we returned. Luckily Zuz was driving slowly as we came across a penguin fair in the middle of the road. Took the opportunity for a happy snap. We also saw a possum in the middle of the road and a paddymelon almost jumped in front on us. Couple this with the rabbit that ran through the tyres on the way there and you can understand where all the road kill comes from. It was still fairly windy, but did not stop us from sleeping.

Thu 13<sup>th</sup> Nov

Awoken by a chorus of black cockies that sounded like they were dive bombing the tent. Got up to watch a few and the light was great with no clouds around. No wind either. A complete contrast from when the sun went down. A beautiful breakfast of scrambled eggs. Zuz even cracked the eggs in front of the ducks as a subtle go away message. Then we packed up to discover Bruny Island. But not before the most important task of booking the chocolate factory tour. Mission accomplished : D Then we headed for cape Bruny. We had the pleasure of following a 2WD car on a dirt road at 20km/h so we decided to stop at one of the lookouts. It was very nice but we did not stop for long enough as we caught back up to them 6km down the road, but they let us pass. We stopped at a couple more lookouts with spectacular untouched coastline and majestic cliff vistas. Awesome. After half a dozen stops we finally got to the lighthouse. As usual it was just for show as the real one is now just a 6 foot structure with a solar panel. Some times it seems wrong to have technology advancing. But the views from this grand old beast were indeed just as grand. We had a chat to the lighthouse keeper and was saying it was the best day they had had in 2 weeks. Lucky us.

Then it was time to do a little walk and we headed for the national park. The Peninsula walk was 17km so we opted for the smaller circuit of a 2 hour walk. Nice mountain scenery and on the way back there were some wonderful little beaches. The water almost felt a bit warm. Next stop was the neck lookout, where we saw the penguins the night before. We decided to climb up the steps and away we went, sucking in the big ones as we went. The windpipe was burning as we caught our breaths at the top admiring the views. We counted the steps on the way down. 236 of

the mothers. 176 in one flight. It was then that we realised the ferry left at 3:15, not 3:30 as we thought. Oh well, guess we missed that one.

As we now had a bit of time to fill we read one of the leaflets from the caravan park about one of Australia's rarest and most endangered bird the 40 spotted pardalote. It showed us where to go on North Bruny so off to this wooden bridge to try our luck. Out with the binoculars and our eagle eyes trying to spot a 10cm bird in a bank of eucalyptus trees. But patience finally paid off and there he was, a 40 spotted pardalote. He kept coming back to the same branch so we managed to get a good look at him.

Then we realise it was time to head to the ferry with the knowledge of being one of the privileged few to see a 40 spotted pardalote. So across on the ferry, back to the mainland. We made a bee line for Hobart and the treasure Island van park on the Derwent. Pitched the tent, cooked the dinner, showered and off to bed after some diary updates.

Fri 14<sup>th</sup> Nov

Up for a cuppa and then a busy day ahead. Firstly needing to get some washing done. Doh!! One 20c piece short and the office was still closed. We then bumped into the cyclist that we crossed the pieman river on the 'FATMAN' with who came to the rescue and gave us some change. It was a relaxing early morning waiting for the washing to wash and dry. But by 9:00 we were off to visit Hobart. We came across some smoked almonds on the way through a shopping centre. Walked down to battery point where we seemed to be the only people around. Passed a lolly shop with all types of lollies known to man in jars in the window cause much watering of the mouths. Then we continued around the little old style community around the foreshore to the old semifor station at Princess Park. We found ourselves walking down to Salamanca St looking in galleries here and there. We climbed Kelly steps to check out the menu at the pow Hotel, but then decide to go back down the steps to the Irish pub on Salamanca for a bit of Guinness Pie and a pint of the good old black stuff.

By this time it we time to go on a pilgrimage of sorts and head to the Cadbury factory. As we turned up, my excitement levels were getting higher. The tour itself was great. The smell was heavenly. Today they were making caramello blocks, Turkish delight, cherry rioe roses and fruit and nut blocks. We were given several samples along the way. Does not get any fresher than that. The cool room held 600kg of brown gold. The silos outside held 600 tonnes of chocolate paste and they used that up every 2 days. WOW!! Production for an 8 hour shift was 27000 boxes of roses. After being amazed at the production line process, it was time to head to the shop. The bargains were the seconds in the white bags. I used restraint and picked up 2 x 600g bags. Vanilla caramels and orange creams for \$5 each plus a 3 pack of 250g top deck for \$4. What a bargain.

Then we headed back to the campground to relax, play some uno where Zuz whipped me. Went shopping...twice. A bottle of cider to wash down some perfect golden brown perfectly spherical pancakes that zuz made for dinner. Yummy : )

Sat 15<sup>th</sup> Nov

This morning after a shower I packed up. Zuz managed to get back from her shower just as all the work was done. We drove back down to Hobart to look at the

Salamanca markets and wow, they were huge. You name it, they had it somewhere. Fruits, arts and crafts. There were lots of wood work stores selling Tassie timber craft. The smells were beautiful. We managed to cruise around for 90 minutes easily. Then we parted company with fine Hobart, and Zuz wanted to look for Reggies (from Big Brother fame) fish and chip shop. We found it easily enough, but the hard part was getting back to the highway. We ended up the top of Mt Rumney, where 2 cars had collided on the dirt. Back down the mountain back past reggies and finally back on the highway to our destination. Port Aurthur.

We headed the straight route and missed the town of Richmond with Australia's oldest bridge. DOH! At least we have a legitimate excuse to come back. Arrived at Port Aurthur and paid our entrance fees. Also booked a ghost tour for the night and got the discount. Still cost \$66 though. The weather was a scorcher. Very hot and very windy as well. We did a small inclusive harbour cruise that went out past the island of the dead and the boys prison. It also had a good narrative and a good view of the penal settlement. As it was so hot, we headed to the café for a drink and then did the inside interactive stuff. Zuz was given a convict to follow that was a blacksmith. Mine was a good for nothing kid. The whole experience was very interesting. We joined a 16:00 walking tour where the guide gave us some more commentary, more interesting facts about the way of life in the settlement. We then took the time to look through the interior of some of the houses then another hour wandering around the ruins reading the information plaques.

By 18:00 we had had enough and it was time to find a campsite. Got back to the car and realised that a 35 degree day and supplies in the car from the previous days chocolate factory tour was not such a good combination. Our 3 blocks had turned into one. We decided on the caravan park as it was a longer drive to the national park just to come back for the ghost tour. We were given a well protected site as the wind had sprung up and the wind in Tassie is like nowhere else I'd been to.

With the tent pitched it was time for me to do some fishing finally. Down to the ramp to wet a line in increasing winds. A few bites, nearly hooked one but that was all. Back to cook dinner whilst listening to 30 cub scouts. Yummy salmon and mash. We got dressed and headed for our ghost tour at 9:15. We arrived and the weather had really turned. The skies were very black before sunset and the wind was now howling. The power was out in the visitors centre (no it was not part of the tour to get you in the spirit of things) and dressed in our wet weather gear. So here we were heading into a ghost tour on a cold and windy night. How cool. It was awesome. No ghosts though. But as the guide started to tell one story a blind on the building slammed shut. On another a huge gust of wind blew through. That was real freaky. Some of the stories were pretty scary and totally believable. As we were walking along, we even heard a tree fall. An incredible atmosphere for a ghost tour. You would even pay extra for it. All in all it lasted for 90 minutes and was well worth it. I highly recommend it to anyone that comes here. It gives a totally different light on the buildings mood and soul of the place. Now it was time to head for the tent with a short drive to look forwards to some nightmares.

Sun 16<sup>th</sup> Nov

Well, no nightmares, but a bit of a sleep in. It had also rained a lot during the night and the weather was not the greatest. Cold and windy. So after the obligatory pineapple for breakfast we were off to see the area. Our first stop was down to remarkable cave. Went to the lookout and were nearly blown away by a Antarctic

winds. The view was spectacular, but it was just too dam cold. Then we marched down to the cave. It was quite long and the surf just ripped through it. There was actually one small spot down there (half a square meter) out of the wind and it was quite pleasant. We braved it back up to the car and headed off to the northwest through some very nice scenery. We stopped at a historical coal mine site where convicts were used to mine the coal. This was very educational and very much news to me. We walked around the ruins and relics of an age gone by for a couple of hours. The backdrop was beautiful, but the work ans conditions would have been tough. But it showed the working ingenuity of the people back then with what they achieved with what they had. And we were the ones that needed a powernap in the car before the walk.

After our history lesson, we took a look up at lime bay. One of the campsites we had considered. It was beautiful. White beach with crystal clear water, nice and aqua in colour. A scene you would expect from the Bahamas. But it was still very windy even though the blue sky had started to come through. Took a few photos and decided to go on out merry way. Back to Eaglehawk neck to see some of the areas natural wonders. On the way to the blowhole we passed Doo town, where every house had a name with 'do' in it. Much a do, do little, do us, do f\*\*k all. You get the picture. We looked at the blowhole. Not much when we have Kiama blowhole not far from home. But we had some strawberries and ice cream from the doolicious ice cream van. It was delicious. Next we went to look as Tasman Arch ( a big arch of rock) and devils kitchen. (no idea where that name came from). Then another short walk to waterfall bay past patersons arch and some rugged cliff lined coastal views. Waterfall bay was huge and you could see the stain where the waterfall fell some 100m into the ocean. Now that would be a spectacular sight. Another reason to come back.

We walked back and by this time it was well past dinner time. Tried to stay warm whilst cooking dinner. As I was coming out of the loo I was nearly bowled over by a little animal going past at mach 3. After some deliberation we identified the lil sucker as a long nosed potoroo. First time I had ever seen one of them. One thing about Tassie. There is a heap of wildlife. After all that excitement we cooked spag bol in the kitchen and it was to go for a well-earned sleep.

Mon 17<sup>th</sup> Nov

Got up and we both went off for a shower together . I came back, made breaky, packed up the tent etc. Then Zuz made it back. We then headed for the Tassie Devil park. Mainly to see the free flight bird show. But we looked around, watched the devils getting fed. Gimme, gimme, gimme, crunch snap of the bones. They were dinning on wallaby today. I tell you what. You would not want to get your hands in the way. We even got to see some baby devils as well. Along with roos, potaroos, wallabies, pademelons etc.

Then it was time for the free flight show. First a galah flew around and took peoples \$1 coins off them. Then someone stood up when it was time to get them back. Then a brown falcon flew through someone's legs. Saw a frogmouth and a very wounded peregrine falcon. Not too bad

Now it was time to head to Fortescue Bay. It was a rough ride down but when we got there it was pretty amazing. A beautiful white sandy beach in a nice protected bay. Even though the wind had put the white caps up out in the bay. We walked along to the walking tracks. We were going to Biviac bay. It was only an 8 hr walk back to waterfall bay. There were a lot of trees over the track. One huge one stopped our

progress, as the track could not be followed. But before that we had made it to canoe bay where a steam ship was scuttled and still remains to this day. Very nice bay. We even walked through a penguin rookery. How could we tell? All the penguin shit on the ground. We also passed some track workers on the way out. Boy, did they have some work to do. Our next stop was the stencilled rocks or tessellated pavement that was just a pretty pattern of erosion in the rock. It was cool looking but the wind was frigid so we did not stay for long.

So off to our next campground. The only distraction was being stopped due to a bushfire and a bit of shopping at sorrel on the way up north. We arrived at Mayfield bay conservation area. It was a \$2 donation for a campsite. The ground was rock hard, it was blowing a gale and the pit toilet had a real bad odour. But we cooked king sized burritos for dinner so all was well.