

Tassie in Ten

John Bartlett

My commitment is complete—I have now taken my three Hamam grandsons to Tasmania on introductory visits at the age of 16 to that wonderful place that I learnt to love in my youth.

First, Matthew in 2002, then Alexander in 2004, and just recently in 2010, Sean—all in January because of school.

In 2002 and 2004, I took the boys on the Tasmania trips with two of my ABW companions prior to them staying on with me to continue on my extended walks to the Traveller Range and Frankland Range.

This year, there were just three of us—Lester Ball, Sean and myself—and it so happens that Lester has been on all three trips with my grandsons.

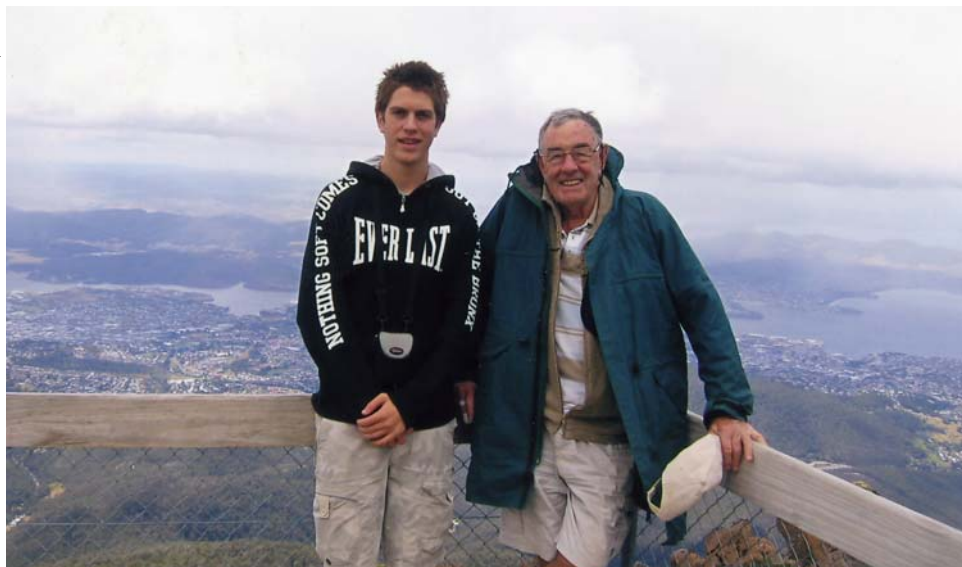
It was an 11 day trip for Sean whereas I stayed on for three more days, and Lester stayed on doing solo walking before joining Trevor May's South Coast Track walk commencing on February 8.

We left Adelaide in my car on February 14, took the Bass Strait ferry to Devonport, and after the customary purchase of metho and perishable food at Woolies, drove south to visit Liffey Falls at the base of the Western Tiers, and then across the island to Triabunna in time to take the 4pm ferry to Darlington on Maria Island.

We camped near the barbecue shelter for two nights, and went on walks to the Bishop and Clerk (top shrouded in low cloud), and Painted Cliffs.

Maria Island is both interesting and very beautiful. It is its history that makes it so interesting:

- twice a penal colony: 1825–1832 and 1842–1850;
- In the 1880s, the venue of the Italian entrepreneur Diego Bernacchi, whose wine and silk ventures failed;
- cement making in the early 20th century—this also become nonviable;
- pastoral in the mid 20th century;
- the whole island became a national park in 1972; and
- successive demolition and rebuilding of buildings and re-using bricks and stone as accommodation needs changed.



Sean and John on Mt Wellington

Then on to visit historic Port Arthur including a short harbour cruise, and finally reaching Hobart late afternoon on Sunday 17 January.

On our stops in Hobart, we stayed at the backpackers called Hobart Hostel in Barrack Street—a little rough around the edges, but well run, convenient for parking if you have a car, and not far to walk to Hobart's hub.

After showing Sean the sights in and around Hobart, Mt Wellington and Mt Nelson in particular, we headed off to Lake St Clair and took the ferry *Ida Clair* to Narcissus, camping that night on a delightful grassy spot by the river. Pine Valley Hut was reached the next day in drizzly conditions, and Sean and I stayed in the hut for the two nights there, while Lester put up his tent.

En route to Pine Valley, the Narcissus River is crossed using a narrow suspension bridge, a historic crossing for me—the first time in December 1952, and now three times since—see photos.

The next day was one of those glorious days in the Tasmanian Highlands—no wind and not a cloud in the sky—what a day to take Sean up to The Labyrinth. It was a superb day.

Returning down the hill from The Labyrinth back to Pine Valley Hut, we witnessed four visits by a helicopter to the helipad near the hut. The reason for the visits: to service the toilet, an annual event I believe.

The two nights in the hut were enjoyable with lots of interesting people from numerous parts of the world, and an age range of 9 to 75 (guess who). The second night was special. A Victorian

bushwalker gave a very competent recitation of about eight of Banjo Paterson's popular poems, and some other nonsense verse.

After the short trip to Pine Valley and The Labyrinth, we returned to Hobart after a camping stop in New Norfolk. On his last day in Hobart, I took Sean to several more interesting places including the Botanical Gardens to see the Macquarie Island simulation, the Museum, Battery Point, his great grandfather's grave and so on.

Sean flew home on Monday, 25 January, and on the way to the airport we visited the historic town of Richmond and took the opportunity to shut Sean in a pitch black solitary confinement cell in the old Richmond Gaol briefly.

That day, Lester and I headed off to Geeveston and the Hartz Mountains, an area where I started

Lester and Sean inspecting the Painted Cliffs on Maria Island



Narcissus River crossing: 2010 and (below) 1952



real Tasmanian Highland hiking when I was about 13 or 14 on a Scout trip. On that trip, we reached the summit of Hartz Peak, but on this trip, it was not to be. After camping a night at the beautiful Arve River Picnic ground, we drove up to the new Refuge and Information Centre at the start of the walking track. As Lester and I approached the peak past several small lakes, really bad, wet weather with low cloud came in, so we turned back, having reached Hartz Pass.

Lester and I had one last night together in Hobart before I headed for home via the Bass Strait ferry, while Lester returned to Lake St Clair.

In the last edition of *Tandanya*, there was an article of mine entitled 'A Tour of Tasty Tassie Tucker'. On this trip, we visited four of the places listed in that article, with the Fish Frenzy visited twice! Also worthy of mention are the Banjo chain of bakery/cafés around Tasmania.

I am quite sure Sean enjoyed his trip. He went to many, many new and interesting places, and had some novel and memorable experiences, as did his two older brothers on their trips with Granpa John.