

THE CHENRY CHRONICLE

By Christopher and Heather Henry

Heard it through the Grapevine....

We received a call from the Toowoomba Estate Hills winery about helping pick grapes. So we got up at 5 am to go help pick grapes at 5:30. The vines are covered with a big netting to keep the birds out. We picked cabernet grapes for 3 hours. You use clippers to snip the grape bunches at the base of the vine. Watch out for lizards and redback spiders as they tend to hide in the vines, both are poisonous. Then place them in a bucket where they dump the grapes through a machine that spits out the stems and crushes the grapes. The husband and wife are the only ones that are trained as licensed winery makers in the region. They do a lot of the labor by hand, including corking the bottle. The owners gave us 2 bottles of wine to take home with us as appreciation of our help. It was fun to experience something new.

Dive DIVE DIVE!!



The Venus II boat we spent 3 days scuba diving on.

Scuba diving the Great Barrier was very beautiful. It is amazing that there is a whole other world under water that most people never see. We rode with our diving group to Bundaberg, five hours Northeast of Toowoomba. We got to Bundaberg port at 11pm where we boarded and motored out to the

Reef during the night. It was a rough ride and trying to sleep wasn't easy. You thought you were asleep and then boom, the boat hit another wave. Thank goodness for Dramamine to ease the sea sickness! We took in about 10 dives the whole trip, getting better the more dives we did.



Ready, set...giant stride in!!



Chris and Heather getting ready to view below the surface.

Below is what our dive buddy, Ken Jones had to say about the dive:

There's nothing more satisfying then packing your dive gear, heading off on a live a board for three days and the weather turns out perfect. Each day on the Great Barrier Reef the weather just got

better and better, the sea couldn't have been any more calm. Just have a look at the Manta Ray photos that were taken on the second last dive on day three



Manta Rays are so docile to swim with.

The first dive on day one was at Hoskins Reef. It was good to get off the boat as the trip out from Bundaberg had been a bit lumpy however all of that was behind us now. We dived on a shallow, flat coral garden base with mainly small fish life. The rest of the day and the next morning we spent further north at Llewellyn Reef on what can only be described as world class dive sites. The dive that stood out from all the rest at Llewellyn reef was on a wall that commenced with a swim-through filled with millions of small fish. After coming out of the swim though we were met by a very large potato cod eyeballing and following us up the wall as we swam through his territory. The Gorgonian Fans on the wall were captivating as they swayed slowly back and forth with the mild current. Then out of the blue a school of GT's hurried past us with obviously some place to go.

Our other dives were at Jackson Bombie (large reef structures), near Fairfax Island, Camping Ground at Lady Musgrave, a night dive at a big Bombie in Lady Musgrave Lagoon and the dive of all dives was at Manta Ray Bombie. We were greeted with a festival of Manta Rays dancing and feeding their way around the Venus II for hours. There we were, with no current, clear water visibility, flat seas, Manta Rays everywhere and the most perfect sunny day you could hope for. To top off three wonderful days of diving and friendship we had about 15 pygmy dolphins play in the bow wave and escort us part of the way home. This is what Diving the Great Barrier Reef all is about.



Going for a Night Dive with our mates. Where's my torch?



Diving the Great Barrier Reef, Heather and Chris, "diving isn't that hard."

Bunya Mountains

We spent the day in the Bunya Mountains with Peter and Shelly. Peter is a native Aussie and is a colleague of Chris's and Shelly is an American. We have a great time talking about the differences between the two countries and learning about Aussies.

The Bunya Mountains are about a two hour drive from Toowoomba. There are special pines that are only in the Bunya Mountains called the Bunya Pines. Big nuts fall from the trees which the aborigines would crush the nut and use the paste as a glue.

We went for a short hike in the rainforest at the bottom of the mountain before lunch. It was cooler at the base of the mountain. We saw the Bowerbird that collects blue objects for his nest to attract a mate. With all of the nice blue objects we now toss into the rubbish bin, they have a lot of new things to use (i.e. plastic, paper, etc).



A nut from a Bunya Pine tree.



The Bowerbird's nest with bright blue objects he has collected.

We tried to take our picture with the wild wallabys but didn't have much luck. It was a great time in the afternoon feeding the parrots birdseed. They fly down and just eat out of your hand although some are pretty picky just wanting the sunflower seeds. Obviously, they are over fed since there is so much birdseed on the ground.



Feeding the male Australian King Parrot birdseed we bought at the General store.

Lunch was a typical Barbie on the grill, beef and bacon sausages and steak. Sides included

macaroni, potato and couscous salads. Since it is a natural park the trash must be taken out of the park.

After lunch we hiked up at the top of the mountain which was a lot drier and hotter. We were told not to touch the stinging nettle so Heather was careful not to touch anything. The view was great at the top.



Chris and Heather on top the Bunya Mountains.

Fraser Island History

Fraser Island is the biggest sand island in the world which is 124 km long (77.5 miles) and up to 25 km wide (15.6 miles). It became a world heritage listing in 1992.

There are 4 islands of the coast of Australia that were created by the sand being washed from the northern New South Wales river systems. During the ice ages the strong wind blew sand into massive dunes. The dunes were vegetated and gained fertility by shrubs and trees. These sand deposits stored immense volumes of rain and slowly released the water like a giant sponge. Fresh water lakes and swamps formed on the island.

Fraser Island Experience

Our first visitors came with us to Fraser Island, Chris's sister, Janelle and her husband, Zac. We drove up to Rainbow Beach which was a five hour drive from Toowoomba. We had our first experience staying in an YHA hostel. Young tourist stay in hostels since it is very inexpensive and they share bunk beds usually in a room of eight people. These hostels cater to the backpackers as they tour all over Australia and can go on trips with others to sightsee at a reduced cost.

It was noisy that evening with blaring music at 10 pm and you could hear chanting from the backpackers at the other hostel next door after 11pm. Zac and Janelle had ear plugs to shut out the sound but Chris and Heather tossed and turned most of the night wishing they had ear plugs. So it wasn't the best night of sleep. The next morning Chris and Zac went to the Safari 4WD to hire the vehicle and camping kit. They watched a video to learn how to drive on sand that the government created. We had to purchase permits to be on the island. Since the government only allows so many people on the island at a time, you must reserve your space. Zac got to experience driving on the wrong side of the road while he was here in addition to driving on the inland roads and beach. We took a 10 minute ferry to the island.



The ferry ride



Our 4WD we hired from Rainbow Beach Safari (300,000 km on the odometer).

Then we had to drive on the inland roads since it was high tide when we first arrived. Fraser Island contained some of the most sought after

timber earlier in the last century, and so several timber companies had constructed a camp and roads to harvest and transport the timber back to the mainland. These roads are now used by the public to traverse the island. They are however un-maintained and incredibly rough. It is difficult to drive faster than 10 mph. Zac was enjoying a game called see how much of a splash we can make going through the puddles. The girls were not amused.



Our first encounter with a Dingo who was on a stroll looking for food.

You can only drive on the sandy beach during low tide on the wet sand. We would all agree that the sandy beach was a much smoother ride. You can drive up to 80 kph on the sand, except you have to keep a keen eye out for washouts. Washouts are streams of freshwater draining out to sea across the beach, some are only a few inches deep, others are several feet. Crossing a deep washout at high speed could flip a vehicle end to end.



It had just rained the night before that is why there is so much standing water.



Bumpy Inland Tracks from the Landcruiser

The first day we spent taking an inland track to several fresh water lakes on Fraser Island. The first one was Lake Boomanjin. It's the largest perched dune lake in the world. It is famous for its blue and red hues.



Chris and Heather wading in Lake Boomanjin.



We then came to another lake, Lake Birrabeen....

We finally came to Central Station which used to be the central station for the timber companies and is not a large campground. It was getting late in the day so we decided to bounce our way on up to the campground at Dundubara, where we had a reservation. Upon arrival, we were very disappointed, it was very crowded, we had a difficult time finding a place to put our tents, and it was impossible to find a fire ring to have a campfire. The nice thing about the campsites is they have toilets, sinks for doing dishes, hot showers, campfire rings, and a fence to keep out the dingos. Dingos have been known to attack small children. Because of Heather's small stature, we decided that we had better stay in the fenced in campgrounds.

To travel across much of the island one has to travel on the beach, which can only be done safely during low tide, about 8 hours in a 24 hour period. The second day we took a hike in the Wungul Sandblow, a very large deposit of sand surrounded by rainforest. We hiked for about 5 km (2 hours) before returning to camp to eat lunch. The sandblow was remarkable with rocks as thin a paper and large dunes of sand, some different colors. Once on top of the blow we stood back and gazed out across the sandblow to the ocean, with the rainforest sandwiched between.



Zac had so much fun going down the dune he climbed back up so he could do it again. Note how steep it is.



Heather, Janelle and Zac Bailey hiking in the sandblows.



What a view to look at the ocean behind us.



Note: the different colors of sand.

We continued on to Waddy Point the most northern campground, we stopped by early and set up our tent so we were sure to get a fire ring (fires are only allowed in the designated fire rings). We went to the champagne pools a rock structure carved by the waves which during the tides collects water which foams through the walls, resembling champagne. We decided to swim in the pools even though there were signs everywhere that said no swimming. There were many people swimming. Later we heard

the government was in a lawsuit and lost since someone slipped and fell climbing up the rocks.



Champagne Pools which we swam in. Waves crash over the sides.

We visited Indian Heads next, which is a large rock outcropping, called Indian heads by Captain Cook as he first sailed around Australia, and saw aboriginals watching him from this high point.



Survey Marker on Indian Heads. Chris thinks this is some sort of a joke, note the number of the monument (12345).



View of Beach from atop Indian Heads

We headed back and saw the Maheno Wreck, which was a Tasmania hospital ship being towed to Japan. Unfortunately a storm came up and broke the tow cable, beaching the ship on Fraser Island, where it is now a rusty tourist attraction.



Chris, Heather, Zac, and Janelle in front of the S.S. Maheno.

We drove on down the beach where we took the inland track to Central Station. Near Central Station, there is the Wanggoolba Creek nicknamed the “silent creek” a large stream in the sand geology, that is deceiving. At first look it seems to be an empty creek, but a close look one can see water flowing, a truly magnificent feat of nature.



Silent Creek at Central Station (There is about 12-18 inches of water in the stream, look closely, but don't give yourself a headache). Water is so clear it is hard to see.

We ventured on to Lake Mackenzie, no doubt the most popular lake on Fraser, with a blue hue, it is truly an amazing place. There is a

nice beach on this 40 hectare lake. We all had a great time going for a swim.

After that we headed to the ferry pickup, on the way Chris was stopped by the beach patrol and breathalyzed for drinking while intoxicated. To the disappointment of the officer, Chris blew a 0.00. Even in remote areas, the Aussies are serious about drink driving. (Driving drunk as we call it in the US.)



Our trail is highlighted in yellow.

The Gold Coast

We ferried home, had a nice meal at the hostel, and headed back to Toowoomba the next day. Once back we drove 2-1/2 hours to the Gold Coast for a two evening stay in the most popular Japanese tourist trap in Australia, where we shopped for Opals. The Gold Coast is a region; actually we were in a city called Surfer's Paradise. The store front signs have Japanese writing below the English.



Surfer's Paradise. Note: the benches look like surf boards.

ANZAC Day

ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) Day, April 25, is a national Holiday here that is probably the most important national occasion to Australia and New Zealand which was marked officially in 1916. On this day in 1915, Australian and New Zealand soldiers landed in Gallipoli and fought hard against the Turkish defenders. What began as a bold stroke ended up dragging on for 8 months, both sides suffered heavy casualties nearly 8,000 Australian soldiers were killed. Now ANZAC day is in commemoration for all the soldiers who lost their lives in all wars that Australia has been in conflict with. We woke up at 4:30 am to go to the dawn service in Toowoomba to see what this is all about. It was pitch black when we arrived at 5:00 am and there were many people already there. It gave you goose bumps to see the soldiers marching to the drums only really seeing shadows, with the full moon above us. The daylight eventually began to show and the birds sang in the background. The choir sang national anthems and hymns and prayers were

said. We all turned to the east as a salute. The wreaths were laid on the Mother's Memorial and the flag was lowered to half staff. Everyone clapped as the soldiers marched out, some with their metals and others in uniform. Grandchildren, wives, brothers, sisters of those who died also marched. We were home by 6:30 am. There are many marches and parades all day long. Mother's memorial is a war monument that lists all the names of the soldiers from Toowoomba who died in every war.



ANZAC day at the dawn service.

Mustering

Chris took a Saturday to help a colleague muster and work cattle. It was a long day, but Chris became proficient at cracking a stock whip. His mates use dogs and horses to round up cattle, a bit different to the ATV method that he is so familiar with.



Mustering Cattle on the Galvin Farm.

The Technical Corner

Progress is steady, but Chris has been working on finishing up a paper on regulatory differences and another on comparing the simple tools and odor modeling used for determining separation distances for livestock facilities. Chris has finished his work with the feedlot emissions model and will be writing a paper on this before his departure. He continues his conference calls and communications with colleagues back in the US. Chris recently met with the USQ Vice Chancellor of Research about the Fulbright Program. He was interviewed for an article in the USQ newspaper. Chris is spending some time investigating possible opportunities for collaboration between the research groups in the US and AU.



For those who think Chris is on a paid vacation for 8 months, this is where he works.

Australian vocabulary

Bullbar = A bar placed on the grill of a vehicle designed deflect vermin, and prevent the disabling of a vehicle

Fly wire = screen on windows

Kindie = kindergarden (what we call preschool)

Lamingtons = white cake with chocolate frosting and coconut

Mozzie = mosquito

Pommy = Of British Descent

Prawn = Shrimp

Pram = stroller or baby buggy

Rock Melon = cantaloupe

Saltana = golden raisin

Shire = county

Tasty = cheddar cheese, white colored

Togs = swimsuit

Torch = Flashlight

Yank = American