



ICS Aust Tribe - Shipwreck Coast

Warrnambool / Port Fairy Fly-in

14th.15th &16th March 2008

Friday 14th March 2008

The weekend began in the company of fellow Comanche flyers as we assembled at Warrnambool Airfield. The noise level was as always when good buddies catch up very loud and jovial. It didn't take long before we were on the bus which meandered its way to Port Fairy and our beds for the next few nights at Seacombe House.

Picturesque Port Fairy lies on the Shipwreck coast between Melb. and Adelaide A great escape from the cities, many of the cottages built over a century ago for the fishing and whaling community have been restored and today present themselves as B&B's.

Seacombe House was built in 1847 by Captain John Saunders from the schooner Dusty Miller which ran aground on the rocks off Rabbit Island. Cpt. Saunders decided to stay in the fast growing town of whalers and pastoralists and built the house then called The Stag Inn. After about half a dozen owners and numerous add-ons we were lucky to have a portion left we see now as heritage listed.

A late dinner that evening was of local seasonal produce washed down with well seasoned wine and it wasn't long before our beds beckoned us for the evening..



Saturday 15th March 2008

The morning presented itself as sunny and warm and it felt good to acquaint ourselves with the art of shopping in the township of Port Fairy. The words quaint and friendly sprung to mind as we took on shop after shop and gallery after gallery all with their charm and friendly warmth. Most of the pilots explored the wharf with many a yacht and fishing vessel. It's a boy thing! A quick lunch and back to the galleries before being

picked up for a late afternoon and evening tour. Brian Treney our tour guide drove us to Warrnambool past pastoral land which now supports small dairy and sheep farms but mainly vegetables are grown due to the fertile soil left from the volcano flows. Brian took us first to Tower Hill Reserve nestled in the crater of a dormant volcano. Shannon explained to us about the Aboriginal Worn Gundidj natural history centre and the thriving nature reserve bought back to life as it was for the indigenous people living then some 30,000 years previous on the on the crater rim. Many species of plants along with emus, kangaroos and birdlife thrive today in Tower Hill Reserve. After leaving the reserve we stopped and viewed the wild and beautiful seas of the shipwreck coast.

Dinner in Warrnambool was a delightful if not a little rushed due to our "Shipwrecked" sound & light spectacular at Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum. The mood was set when we all boarded small open trains which took us to our seats for the re-enactment of the disaster of The Loch Ard. In 1878 the ill fated Loch Ard set sail from England with 18 passengers and 36 crew. (Pretty good ratio not repeated in today's journeys) Within one day of reaching Melbourne and well off course, two kilometres off shore in mist and rain the Loch Ard ran onto rocks at Mutton Bird Island and sank within fifteen minutes. Its only survivors were 18 year old Eva Carmichael a passenger who was saved by Tom Pearce crew hand. The ships bell remains in the small colony town built at Flagstaff Hill along with a Minton porcelain peacock. The re-enactment was great and should be recommended to friends. Back to Seacombe House for the night.



Sunday 16th March 2008

Sunday morning and another clear sunny day if not a little hot. After breakfast and a short ICS meeting we were taken back to Warrnambool Airfield for quick farewells before once again taking to the skies and homeward bound. 15 Comanches and an Aerostar flew in while others drove for a get together for another delightful weekend.

We would like to thank both Tony and Angela Read for organising our few days.

Irene Lawson

