

## PREFACE

Members of the Clifton Riding Club Inc rode the Tasmanian Trail in 2008. Spanning three weeks in January the trip was planned for over a year.

The trip was largely made possible by Bev and John Park, the mother and stepfather of one of the riders who agreed to come along as 'back up', which included them shuffling cars and floats between campsites, Bev cooking the evening meal for sometimes up to 15 people, and John packing and unpacking the riders' gear.

The following is an excerpt of Bev's story of their 'holiday' which she presented to Probus, a club that encourages public speaking.

Bev turned 70 in 2008, the year the Clifton riders rode the Tasmanian Trail. The club are planning to ride the trail again almost 10 years later in 2017 when Bev will be nearly 80 years old.

What is remarkable about Bev's story is that she has agreed, along with John, to do it all again.

## BEV'S STORY

I was approached about a story to tell about our trip to NZ but I thought that even though very enjoyable to us it may not be very interesting to others so instead I thought I would tell you about the beginning of my 70<sup>th</sup> year.

But first a little about my background. I was born in Hobart and lived there for 36 years, married for sixteen of those years, until my then husband traded me in for a newer model. I thought after a year that Hobart was too small for the three of us so I decided in 1975 to leave Tasmania for South Australia. Not an easy decision - my entire family was in Hobart, I had never lived anywhere else and I only knew one married couple in Adelaide. My two daughters stayed with their father until I found somewhere to live and a job and they joined me about a month later.

I met my now husband in 1980 on the Overlander Train to Melbourne where I went to visit some friends and after we had known each other for a couple of years we decided that we both might like camping and travelling so decided to pool what money we had - which wasn't much I might add - leave our jobs and travel around Australia. I was 44 and had never been in a tent in my life.

By this time my eldest daughter had moved back to Tassie and was working and my youngest was in her last year at university and sharing a house with some other uni friends so off we went. We set off with just a car and a tent and spent eight months travelling from Melbourne (where we spent a year due to unforeseen circumstances - which is part of the tent adventures) to Cairns in North Queensland where we ran out of money so decided to try for some work to get some more money together to travel on, but we ended up living there for 8 years until I began to get homesick (by this time I had been away from Tassie for

about 18 years) and wanted to come home so we arrived back here in 1993. All in all except for 10 years when my girls were small and were in primary school I worked all my life from 16 until I turned 65. I have lived in 4 states in Australia, lived on an island for two years had 17 different jobs over the years having worked in a bank, for a doctor, a dentist, builders, accountants, a real estate agent, Australian Red Cross, you name it and I think I've been there and I have literally moved house 28 times. That of course doesn't include the hundreds of times I have helped put up and take down a tent and we are still doing that after 30 years.

My eldest daughter is a police officer and has two sons. My youngest daughter is a registered nurse and lives in San Francisco with her daughter.

Which brings me to my 70<sup>th</sup> year in 2008. Sometime late in 2007 I had a phone call from my daughter who still lives in Hobart and has been involved with horses since she was about 10 years old. Her riding club decided they would ride the Tasmanian Trail in January of 2008 and would John and myself be willing to come as their back up team. Us and who else was my question. Just you two was the answer. What do we have to do? Just the cooking and transporting all the gear. How long will this be for. About 3 weeks. Could this be fun, John and myself thought, or just damn hard work. Well it turned out to be both.

Six spouses transported the riders to Latrobe and then took the floats back home except for two - one of which took all our camping gear and the other had all the horse supplies and food which was supplemented along the way from various farm folk. Plus of course two 4WDs packed to the rafters with gear. We don't have a 4WD just a car so we had to make two trips to Latrobe - one to take all our camping gear and the second to take all the cooking gear. The boot of the car was my pantry and the back seat took all the cooking utensils.

A number of times during the trip John had to drive a float to the next stop and I would follow in the car and then we would have to go back and get the other float and take that on. All in all we drove over a 1000 kilometers. A few times we had help with this as extra folk with maybe a family member turned up who would transport a float for us saving us a second trip.

The riding club arranged all the accommodation along the way- some was on private property and it was great to meet those folk who in all cases were very obliging in allowing all these horses and tents on their properties and quite a few joined us for happy hour when all horses were tended to after their long rides. These were the fun times - everyone tired, relating all their versions of the days ride and lots of photos to be seen. We did on three occasions stay in rented accommodation where we had access to showers. Bliss!!!! I could wash my

hair!!! Other times we were at the town recreation area where there were at least toilets - a couple of times we didn't even have that. The mind boggles doesn't it? I believe that the club spent a whole year planning and booking this ride and I was very proud of them all - wherever we stayed whenever we left they made sure that they left the area exactly as they found it. All horse manure raked up into one pile and all rubbish removed. John and myself were always the last to leave and we always toured the site and we never had to pick up even a lolly paper.

There were 5 females and one male full time riders John and myself and at all stops along the way we were joined by usually two or three riders who were just doing short legs of the journey. So on any given day I had to cook for up to 10 or 12 folk. On one particular day I had 15 for tea because the farrier and his assistant came and two extra spouses but that fortunately was the one night that I had a stove and fridge and all the mod cons in one of the places we stayed at up at the lakes.

What did I have to cook on - well John took off the top of our home barbecue with a gas bottle and I had two extra gas bottles each with a burner on top that would take a pot or pan. I did not have running water, a fridge, a sink, a micro wave and of course no electricity and all of these days were in an open paddock except three. Out of the 22 days we were away I had to cook tea for 11 of those days and breakfast for 5 of those days. I am happy to say that I had a different meal for them for each of night and always meat and vegies or casserole. Only once did we have a bbq but then I made quite a lot of salads. The other eleven we ate out.

We have to remember that this trip was the annual holiday for most of the riders and also John so it had to be fun as well as hard work.

On the days they were in the saddle early they all got their own breakfast but on the 5 rest days breakfast was - eggs, tomatoes, bacon, mushrooms and toast and loads of it but no toaster of course. I was glad that I took along 3 large jars of raspberry jam. With all this cooking I never washed a dish or a pot. All the riders took turns with that. We never paid for any accommodation or petrol along the way. We were provided with those the whole trip by the riding club.

The planning of this cooking took me quite some time. How to carry meat without a fridge in the middle of summer? We did have one small gas fridge that was for butter, milk etc. there just wasn't the room for more fridges. How would we keep the meat and vegetables? What could I cook? What ingredients would I need? What could I take and what could I buy along the way? Even though we were near a town on a lot of occasions sometimes we were late and shops were shut or were just not open on a Sat or Sun or they just didn't have a

butcher or grocer. So I planned exactly what we would eat on every day that I had to cook, listed all the ingredients that I might need and packed accordingly.

When we came down from the Gog Range and onto Bracknell we stocked up at Deloraine with fruit and vegies and the local butcher vacuumed packed all the meat and packed it in ice packs for me - they were wonderful. I had phoned around and found a supplier at the Lakes and pre ordered all the meat I would need there and asked him to freeze the bulk of it in day lots and leave some for immediate use which he did very obligingly. So with the use of a tray packed with ice when we could get it we made do. Our tent was a large stand up in one and on two occasions we had to use it for a kitchen. Up in the Gog Range it rained and in the cow paddock at Arthurs Lake the blowflies were so bad we had to use it again. Other than that it was just in the open.

Johns role in all of this was to load and unload the floats every day they were riding and to fill all the water carriers ready for the horses when they stopped for the day. Each day everyone would pack up their own tent etc leave it by the float and John would then stow it all away. When we arrived at the next stop he would then unload it again ready for them to pick up and put up their tents again, put up our tent, set up the bbq for cooking, set up the tables and chairs for eating and generally be the handy man for repairs etc. He also got stuck a lot of the time with peeling potatoes.

A bit farther than the halfway mark which was Jones River we had a rest day and every ones families and other riding club members, about 40 in all, came up from Hobart for the day for a huge bbq (thankfully I didn't have to cater that day - they all brought it with them) and it was a fun day with lots of horse stories floating around. Once again our tent was put to good use this time for a massage parlour as the club had arranged for a masseur to come from Hobart for the day.

The last day arriving at Dover was very emotional for the 5 full time riders who completed the whole journey. Six other riders joined them for the last leg. We of course arrived first along with other spouses and were anxiously waiting for them to come over the hill into view. John had bought bottles of bubbly and whistles and streamers for when they arrived at the end of the trail and that night at the Dover Hotel it was party night.

So that was the start of my 70<sup>th</sup> year - a lot hard work yes, a lot of fun yes but lots of great memories. At a later date John and I went down to Hobart for a reunion dinner and were presented with a record of the ride and a plaque in the shape of the trail markers with a horse shoe mounted on it. The shoe was actually from my daughters horse that had been saved especially for this plaque.