

Wednesday 4th June Sunshine Coast to the Big Island, Hawaii Lyn Wrack

We say goodbye to the Sunshine Coast. What a great week we have had. New friendships made and sad goodbyes as we depart from Maroochydore Airport. I'm sure our paths will cross again. Managed to see the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera house in the afternoon sun as we landed. A quiet afternoon waiting for our next flight to Hawaii with Hawaiian Airlines. I'm chosen for the extra security check – no drugs found!! A very smooth takeoff at 9.30pm and within a few minutes we loose sight of the city lights. A very well presented meal is served and then hopefully, we will get some sleep before landing. We nearly missed the breakfast snack but got that sorted.



A very different climate on arrival at Honolulu then with customs cleared it's a short walk over to the Inter Island Terminal. What a zoo!! The area packed and hours wasted to get through the security check!! We did meet up with the rest of the group here which was great to put faces to names. Managed a quick snack before boarding our flight to the Big Island. Another very scenic flight and what a surprise when first seeing this land mass. Never realised the literal acres of lava flow

still bare of vegetation and we landed amongst it. So pleased we chose to come here. All baggage accounted for, then onto the shuttle and a long and interesting drive to our accommodation in Waikoloa.

A very comfortable unit to relax a while, then a short walk through the golf course, into the shopping area for a quick meal, then it was straight bed by 9pm, hoping we would wake by 5.30am to get a quick shower and snack before our 260 mile bus tour pick-up time of 6.30am. We did!!



Thursday 5th June

Hawaii (Big Island)

Jeanette Page

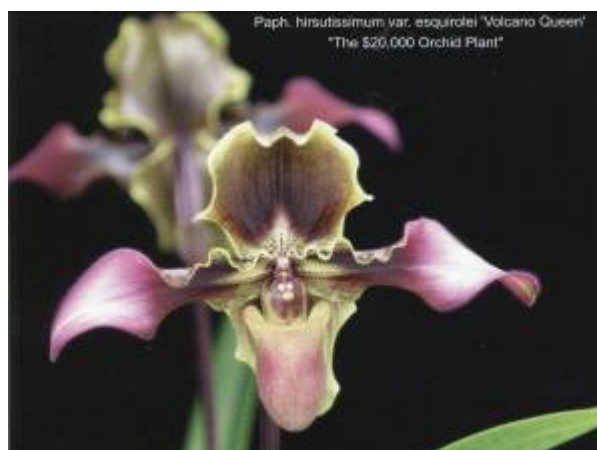
Today the group travelled by bus on the Circle Island /Volcano Excursion tour which lasted for 12 hours. We visited one of the world's most active volcanoes, Kilauea and saw another, Mauna Loa. These two volcanoes still add land to the island of Hawaii. We were pleasantly surprised to see a tree that looked similar to our own pohutukawa which had adapted itself to the local conditions.



At the Jagger museum, Herb Kane's paintings of Pelehonuamea, goddess of volcanoes & fire, were displayed. Also displayed and known as Pele's hair, were fragile strands of volcanic glass which forms when molten lava is ejected into the air during an eruption.



We passed by the second largest cattle ranch in the USA and stopped to admire beautiful orchards including one named "Sam", which, we were informed by our tour guide, was worth US\$20,000.00!



Friday 6th June

On The Big Island

Bob Walker

The Day dawned sunny, as most days do there, with the distant sound of surf and a rustling of the palm trees a promise of yet another day, without having to look forward to a never ending battering of wind and cold temperatures that we had experienced in Wellington a couple of days previously.

This was Hawaii or the Big Island, and the second day of our trip around the islands. There were nine of us on this trip, being the first comers to Hawaii before the others joined us from their exchange on Gold Coast.

This island is about two to three times bigger than any other island on the archipelago, measuring up to 150kms across and its area is roughly half the size of Wales in UK. Its distinguishing feature which really differentiates it from the other islands- are the huge fields of lava all over the island- both broken jagged pieces and smooth treacle like substance, though solid but little evidence of much soil cover. On the island there are two high peaks of up to 4500mtrs, which have dustings of snow during their winter months of January and February. The mountains are unspectacular and look like big rounded hills in the middle of the island. It is quite difficult to accept that their peaks –one of which is topped by an observatory – are higher than Mount Cook!



On that second day on the island we had a day off and we lounged around the resort – having a leisurely coffee break in the morning with the rest of the group basically getting to know each other and chewing the fat. Ross decided that a barbecue was in order for the evening as a few of them were scattered around the resort for residential use. So some of us tramped over the golf course to the small shopping centre about 15 -20 minutes away to get the essentials... Sausages, hamburgers steaks bread and salad.

The most notable event that evening for me was getting round the Barbie with John while Ross cooked and we gave moral support as usual, while listening to this local guy pushing the yarn of the ‘night-time fishermen’ who often came ashore during full moon to snatch away women etc. We later heard this story from quite a few others on different islands- all with their own interpretations!



It was a good day for getting to know each other and having time out from the travel.



Saturday 7th June

Kona to Maui

Kathy Clarke

Our shuttle arrived to take us to the airport three hours before our flight. We had to squash in as we were one seat short. Bob nearly had to sit on Ross' knee.



Check in was very quick after our last experience. Several members had metal parts investigated at security. We then sat waiting after check in for two hours.



Our esteemed leader was so busy looking after the group she left her glasses back at the resort. Just as well she wasn't driving us anywhere!!! Lyn and Brian had their bag replaced after theirs was ripped in transit. Well done Hawaiian Airways.

On our ride from the airport we passed sugar cane fields and the factory. They have more than 30,000 acres of sugar cane which has been planted in the same place for over 100 years. Maui has very different landscape to Hawaii. It is much greener with lovely sandy beaches. A smaller island but more highly populated.

Our accommodation was at Maui Banyan, a resort right across the road from the beach and a very short walk to the restaurants. A great location. A few of us had lunch at a Bistro which is close to our apartments. Great sandwiches and salads. The weather was fabulous. The afternoon was spent either swimming in the pool or at the beach, walking along the beach or reading by the pool.



We all went to a Mexican restaurant for dinner. The Margaritas were great. Most had a normal sized one but a couple of people ordered the Grande!! It was almost a bucket full! A very good meal.

Sunday 8th June

Lay Day on Maui

John Clarke

Another fabulous day in paradise - temperatures up around the high 20s at 7:00am. Anything more than a 5 minute spell out on the balcony absolutely unbearable. 8:00 am the group gathered down at the swimming pool for a sponsored breakfast, courtesy of the hotel and to hear a presentation on what attractions are offered to visitors on Maui. The presentation outlined a kaleidoscope of tourist activities and experiences - it was well presented with a touch of humour. Unfortunately, the sponsored breakfast fell well short of our expectations.

The rest of the day gave the group the chance to follow up on some of the opportunities. Some caught an all day bus to visit other parts of the west and south coasts while others blobbed out back at the hotel taking advantage of the swimming pool and taking meals at the nearby restaurant and food bars.

In the evening eleven members decided to do the Sunset Dinner Cruise aboard a trimaran. We left the hotel by shuttle van and after committing our lives to the captain and his crew by way of signed waiver forms we headed out to the nearby sheltered bay aboard Quicksilver. The service was great and the food and beverages were spot on. We were entertained by a couple of local musicians and some of us even managed a do a few twirls on the dance floor. All in all an excellent evening enjoyed by all.



Then it was back to the Maui Banyan for an early evening and to prepare ourselves for the ascent of mount Haleakala departing at 7:00 am the next day.

Mon 9th June. Haleakala, Central Maui & Lao Valley Tour. Jenny Stevens.

We had an early start, leaving at 7:15am on a shuttle to the airport. Our coach left there at 8:30ish travelling past the sugar cane fields, these have 12-14mths to maturity and 3 weeks drying out before harvesting. Only a few pineapples are grown in this area, as the cannery has shut down. Maui pineapples are known as 'Maui gold'. Along the way there were many Jacarandas in bloom.

As we climbed up there was a great view point to see the lovely landscape down to the coast. We turned off near White Star Ranch. (22 miles from turn off to top of the mountain) and proceeded through the cattle ranch. Haleakala National Park is one of the few places in the world where it is possible to see the 'Nene', or Hawaiian goose, the rarest goose, also plants not found anywhere else in the world. Winding our way up to almost 10,000 ft. stopping on the way at Haleakala National Park Headquarters for a comfort stop and look in the gift shop etc. before proceeding up a further 35mins through misty cloud to the visitors centre to view the mountains dormant crater. Although the last eruption of Haleakala was thought to be in



1790, it is considered an active volcano, and future eruptions are possible. We were able to view some spectacular sights between the mist and cloud which we were almost above.

On descending through some quite wetting drizzle we were taken to Makawao (Historical town) for lunch at Casanovas Italian restaurant. We had some time after a very nice meal to have a look at some of the stores for some 'retail therapy'.



We were taken down past the Kahului Airport through Wailuku Historic town to Iao Valley State Park to the lush green as it has a high rain fall in this area. We did have some light rain on this leg of the journey, but very much warmer. This was the scene of many past Hawaiian battles. We walked up a lovely track to view Ioa Needle, (as it is commonly called) rising 2,250 ft. Kaka'emoka a 'Hawaiian god of the ocean' used as a lookout by warriors years ago. The streams and valleys are known as the four waters, fertile lands, largest irrigated agricultural system in Hawaii.

At the end of another very full day the majority of us had a light meal at Denny's very close to our apartments before having an early night!! This was a great day's outing enjoyed by all.

Tuesday 10th June

Maui Hawaii

Ross Stevens

Today our group of 12 have gone in three different directions. Eight went snorkelling, two went out to Hana and two went to Moloka'i Island.

It was Jenny and my first time ever snorkelling and we thoroughly enjoyed and had no difficult. We went with Pride of Maui and were picked up at our accommodation at 6.45am.

Once on board at 8am we had breakfast while we cruised out to Molokini Island for our first snorkel. Molokini Island is the shape of a boomerang, a reserve with a crater with lots of beautiful coloured fish, Kina and corral growing naturally every where. We were there for about 2hrs. On our way to Turtle town, our second swim, we were treated to lunch, a variety of burgers, fresh fruit, coffee or cold drinks. Swimming with the Turtles was a highlight for Jenny and I. They are so graceful in natural conditions in the reef and amongst corral.



On our cruise back to Ma'alaea harbour we were shouted drinks, and time to reminisce about the day and its highlights. Speaking with some of the other people on board, everyone's opinions were the same about the Turtles. There were about 140 of us on board from around the globe with lots of Americans and Asians.

This is our last night together before we were being hosted, so we have decided to all go out for dinner together and celebrate new made friends. We went to a bistro and had lovely meals (steaks which were to die for) with drinks first on our terrace.

Over the past week we have had a lot of fun together and it has been great getting to know every one prior to the exchange.

Tomorrow we fly over to Oahu Island to join our Hosts from Honolulu so we are doing the washing and packing as we depart our Maui Banyan accommodation at 7.15am.

Wednesday June 11th

Anne Dougherty

This is the day that our group of 12 flew from Maui to meet the other 3 of our group and begin our Exchange with Honolulu Club



At Maui airport

We then travelled to the navy Golf Course Bar and Restaurant for lunch. We all met and had a lovely lunch together. The speaker for the day was a councillor who spoke of the importance of tourism to Hawaii.



We then travelled with our hosts to varying places. I went with my host to the building where Sunny and Maureen and Edith and her host were staying in the city of Honolulu.

They were on the 32nd story of a city apartment building with great views out over the city and the sea.



Later that afternoon we all went to the laying of the Leis on King Kamehameha Statue. He was the first king who united all the indigenous tribes of the Hawaiian Islands. There was a great concert with singing and dancing while the Leis were being placed on the statue. After the concert we all left with our hosts.



I was to be living in the town of Kailua on the western side of the island of Oahu. We travelled through a tunnel in the mountain to get to our town. On the way we stopped at the Pali lookout for a view over the western side of the island.

My day ended meeting the family and with an evening meal.

Thursday 12th June

Edith Royds

Marion Abe and Edith Royds had a wonderful day touring the south east coast of the island of Hawaii. Our first spot was the military cemetery at punch bowl. We drove around the scenic coast through Waimanola stopping many times to enjoy the sea views with the dozens of other tourists. Through the Koko heads Regional Park to the popular beach reserve of Kailua. There were many spots to swim, some with warnings of jelly fish and



undertows.

We passed rabbit island (over run with rabbits) turtle island (shaped like a turtle) and many smaller islands. We attempted to take a walk along the beach but the tide was so high it was impossible to get to the sand. Thanks to thick heavy concrete walls the houses were protected for the time. We enjoyed the relaxed holiday atmosphere.

We returned to Honolulu via the Pali highway. It climbed the spectacular mountains, through rain forest and two tunnels and back to the city.



We enjoyed a light tea and shared experiences through the evening. Living in Honolulu with my lovely hostess has been a surprise for me. We lift up to the 32nd floor of a 43 floor sky scraper and have the view of the city, parks and mountains. The nights are like fairy land.

I have labelled my host Mrs Google; her lap top knows it all!!

Friday 13th June

Visit to Iolani Palace

Bernie McLean

Today we had expected to meet the group for a tour at Iolani Palace but unfortunately our Host seemed unaware of this. However she did kindly offer to take us later in the day for an audio tour. The palace is an elegant reminder of the grandeur of the Hawaiian Monarchy. It tells of a time when their Majesties King Kalalaua and his sister and successor Lili'uokalani reigned.



The King, who built the palace in 1882, returned from an extensive tour overseas with new ideas including electricity and telephones which amazed the locals and it amused us to see that he had an ensuite bathroom off his bedroom. King Kalalaua's coronation took place at the palace in 1883. Then in 1891 he died overseas and was brought back to lie in state at the palace.



King Kalakaua



Queen Lili'uokalani

After Hawaii was annexed by the States the palace went into ruins and all the furniture was sold off by auction. An amazing renovation has been undertaken and searches to find original items of furniture. In 1978 the palace was once again flying the Hawaiian flag and open to the public. It was very interesting to read of how carefully the restoration work was carried out to imitate the original furniture and furnishings.

After the tour we called at our host's favourite cafe "Zippys" for lunch where the extent of the menu made choosing what to eat very difficult. This evening we were invited to hosts Linda & Dayton in Kailua for a Hawaiian meal where we were joined by some others from both clubs for an enjoyable evening tasting local food such as laulau (pork in leaves), poi (taro), lomi lomi (raw fish/tomato/onion), lychees and haupia (coconut cake).

Saturday 14th June

King Kamehameha's Parade

Kathryn McLean

Up early this morning and after loading the folding chairs we were off to secure our spot in the shade for viewing the Parade to honour King Kamehameha I who united the Hawaiian Islands under his rule in 1810. When asked if this was a peaceful takeover our host Robbie's answer was a raised eyebrow (see write up below).

The procession was an amazing display featuring decorated floats, marching bands, descendants of Hawaiian nobility, beautiful Miss, Mrs and even Mr Hawaii in shiny vehicles. We were excited to catch sight of the New Zealanders in Maori costume as they danced along with a group from the Pacific, which gave us a preview of what to expect when we visit the Polynesian Cultural Centre.

But the most impressive were the traditional Pa'u riders on horseback representing their respective Islands and who were dressed in an array of differing vibrant colours with flowers in their hair and leis and decorations on the horses. We had to laugh at the camouflaged buckets of the "pooper scoopers" travelling behind with shovels to keep the streets clean.



After the last of the parade had passed then it was off up the scenic Pali Highway with a stop at the lookout perched 1,000 feet above the Ko'olau Mountain Range giving a spectacular view of the windward side of the island and out to sea. However, the winds were extremely strong so we didn't stay long, just long enough to find out the gruesome story of the battle when King Kamehameha I pushed thousands of warriors to their death off the cliff, thus becoming the first King of the Hawaiian Islands.



A wrong turn when leaving the lookout took us further on to revisit Kailua and then Lanikai, one of the island's idyllic beaches, which stretches along a mile of golden sand. Sadly, no swimming togs with us. Home for tea with Bernie cooking scrambled egg and bacon for the three of us.

Sunday 15th June

Pearl Harbour

Bryan Chubb

The Irish oats have been soaking in the fridge overnight to start the day off. The house, some 4,000 sq ft, is quiet except for a gecko walking down the wall to keep me company. Dayton, my host, is getting ready to go to flag football with his 8 year old grandson that lives upstairs with his sister, mum and dad. They are going to the Aloha Stadium which holds 50,000 and he wonders if there will even be 50! I start the local dogs barking as I walk around the corner on a beautiful morning to where Anne is having a wonderful time being hosted.



Kathy, who lives here at Kailua Beach, picks us up in her very silent Toyota Prius to take us over the Pali Highway to Pearl Harbour. We arrive very early and no promised guide turns up so we continue to the cinema to see a very good film about the destruction of



Pearl Harbour by the Japanese. We then take a boat to the Arizona where a wreath is front and centre, placed by the Australian Prime Minister. We scattered flowers from our arrival lunch in memory of those that lost their lives.



Kathy (ex Military), Anne and myself drive over the Causeway to Ford Island, having to show ID to Military Security to gain access. There is a part of the harbour that now has mothballed ships, one of which is a large aircraft carrier. We see a hanger full of vintage military aircraft being restored, also the restored control tower for the port and airstrip.

Our next stop is the Missouri battleship (lovingly restored) where we join a very informative and personable lady in military uniform to see where the Armistice was signed in Tokyo Harbour at the end of the war with Japan. A copy of the document was on display. We then continued into the ship to visit all the departments that make a ship tick.



Onward to Anna Miller's bakery, famous for the variety of pies, for a very late lunch. I had Portuguese soup that was so full of vegetables that you could stand your spoon up in it. This was followed by a single slice of fresh Strawberry Cream Pie, more than enough for the three of us to eat in comfort.

We arrived home after stopping at the top of the Pali Highway where the car park had cats running all over the place. The Animal Welfare Officer who was trying to catch them had immigrated from Vancouver. I was quite worn out so Linda said to have a snooze before having a BBQ with a family who had been in Honolulu for 10 years. They are returning to California and saying a very sad farewell. They say that it is expensive to live here and there are better and cheaper schools for their 8 year old daughter over there.

Monday 16th June Polynesian Cultural Centre Maureen Herlihy Moloney

I was transported to the Ala Moana Hotel in Waikiki to meet up with the other Friendship Force members. Our destination was the Polynesian Cultural Centre which is run by the Mormon Church. When we arrived at 11.50 am, light rain was falling but fortunately it quickly disappeared. The Centre was crowded with tourists and I counted 20 buses in the bus park. With so many people around the car park must have been full to capacity!



The first call was to lunch. We were seated in an enormous dining area which quickly filled to capacity. We were soon in line and able to serve ourselves buffet style with food prepared by students from the Mormon University. Here the students work at the Polynesian Centre to help pay their tuition fees.

After lunch we viewed a Samoan chief's house and then went to sit in an outdoor theatre to be entertained by people from the Samoan village. This included climbing a coconut tree and fire dancing. We then went to enjoy a canoe ride. The next item was a parade of floats carrying students from the different island cultural groups who performed songs and dances from their islands. Of course the highlight was to see the young Maori group perform.



Later we walked through the different villages of the Pacific. Eventually we came to the New Zealand Marae. Here we were fortunate to have John Clarke to lead us onto the Marae and to respond to the challenge in Maori. We enjoyed a Maori cultural presentation in the meeting house and then stayed on as the other tourists left. John then addresses the Maori group and we sang to them in Maori about how the most important thing in life is love. This was led by Jeanette in her lovely clear voice. We had a Filipino guide who said that he had never seen tourists reply to one of the ethnic groups before.

A big shake up for us came in the IMAX theatre. On the large screen we were taken over Hawaii from a height and when over the volcanoes our seats started to shake and tip and when over large waves smashing onto rocks we were sprinkled with water. Very well done, I certainly was 'all shook up'!

Later, another meal and entertainment. The event of the evening was a magnificent show which I would mark as world class. This was held in a huge amphitheatre with the stage open to the elements. The stage was set with a mountain tip showing above beautiful lush, green trees with a green, grassed area in front. A truly beautiful setting for a great show by the young people of many Pacific nations. At the end of the show we all moved out to our transport – so many people crowding out at once! My only criticism is that I felt that the exits would not pass New Zealand safety standards. There were too many people exiting out of one exit at the same time. I felt that the centre was very well run, obviously a multi million dollar venture. The managers were obviously very skilled in business to be able to run such a large centre so smoothly.

Tuesday 17th June

Farewell Lunch

Sue Walker

Like so many exchanges I have been on, before you know it you are coming to the end! It has been a very enjoyable couple of weeks and Hawaii is somewhere that I would like to come back to one day.

We were picked up by our day hosts, Allan and Terry, and driven to the far side of the island. After a couple of wrong turns, we eventually found the Marriot Hotel. The confusion arose because there are two Marriot Hotels in the same area! It was a lovely hotel, complete with sting rays and hammer head sharks swimming in a pool.



We were shown where to go by Jeanette and her helper.



Over lunch we were entertained by Allan singing and by Judy, one of their members, doing a hula.



Everyone enjoyed a nice time together and then it was time to say goodbyes.

As it was still early afternoon we got Alan and Terri to drop us at the beach in Waikiki for a last swim and the chance to soak up a final bit of Hawaiian sunshine.

Wednesday 18th June

Final Day

Jeanette Page

Today, Leta, my hostess woke me at 6 am and said “the sun is shining so let’s go up the mountain to take photos of Waikiki”. The early awakening was worth it. From the mountain top we viewed Diamond Head, Top of Waikiki restaurant, Royal Hawaiian Hotel, Sheraton Hotel, Pearl Harbour, the airport and Lagoon Drive from where I took my helicopter ride.



We had a leisurely two hour breakfast on the beach front at the Shore Bird, Waikiki, where Leta worked for many years. I took many photos of the beach, people on the beach, surfers, catamarans, submarines etc.



Leta dropped me off at the airport where the check in process was so easy, through security, no hiccups, onto the shuttle bus to gate 32. Left Hawaii at 2.40 pm 18th June, arrived Auckland 10 pm 19th June, having crossed the International Date Line. For me, the exchange was great – wonderful fellow travellers and lovely hosts.

Kia ora, tatou katoa!

