

Wednesday 28th May

Day one of exchange

Jeanette Page

Rosa, Stephen and I flew out from Wellington to Sydney on the early morning flight 6.45am arriving at 8.50am (2 hours time difference). Our lay over was for about 5 hours. We met up with Glenys and Brian before boarding another flight to Sunshine Coast airport, Maroochydore.

We were met by 3 members of FF Sunshine Coast. Maureen was waiting at the airport having flown over before hand. Our welcome of Devonshire scones afternoon tea was held at Yandina Historic House which was the marital home of the Exchange Director, Margaret.

At the House we met up with Lyn and Brian Wrack and Lynnda and Tony Bouzaid. Our small group of 10 ambassadors was ready for the 1st exchange.



Following the welcome and photo shoot we were taken home by our hosts.



Photos of the view from my host's lounge

Thursday 29th May 2014

A lovely sunny day on Sunshine Coast saw us visit Simply Pies, a family business that makes 3,000 pies and 2,000 sausage rolls a day



They had us dress up with hair nets that made some look like Minnie Caldwell from *Coronation Street*.

The cooking room was very small. They asked the Kiwi contingent to go in first. When the alarm went off, I thought they had ideas of shutting the door for a new pie – “Kiwi Pie”.

We all sat outside and ate our pie choice. I had a very nice Chicken and Veg pie. The coffee guy did a great trade.



Then it was off to *the Maroochy Bushland Botanic Garden* in the rain forest. This is amazing. It is like a top course with sloping lawns, trees and shrubs. It is

managed by volunteers who have done a fantastic job.



It was hard to believe we were in a forest. The place was adorned with large ornaments from a 2005 contest.



A kookaburra awaited our departure to eat the scraps from our lunch table. It was a lovely day. At night we were hosted to a fantastic dinner.

Friday 30th May 2014

Our hosts, Brian & Madeline, took us to the Mooloolaba River wharf. We assembled with our NZ ambassadors and about 10 of the Sunshine Coast club. We were met by a friendly skipper who introduced himself and took a group photo.



We set off on a lovely river cruise – there are man-made canals. We slowly cruised the river feeling like spies looking into people's houses and properties. Many were palatial. Most have river access with incredible launches. We passed houses of the rich and famous of Australia. The Crocodile Hunter massive launch was there - apparently so were some of the Irwin family.

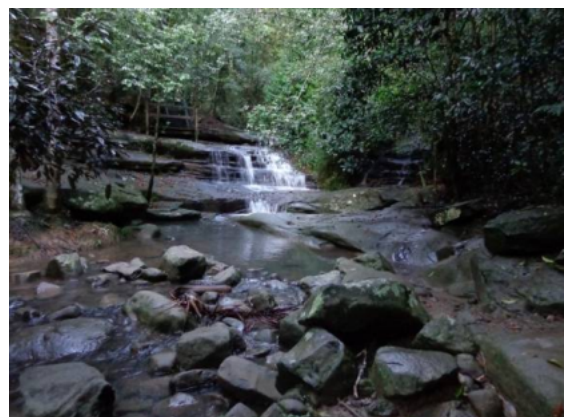


Our Kiwi mascot was impressed.

Our lunch was a treat – they took our order at the start and then we called in at the famous river “fish and chip” shop – I think they just wanted to hear our accent. Lynnnda loved her plate of local prawns.



Back on land we were met by our co-hosts, Chris & Phil who took us to see the local rain forest with lovely waterfalls in their suburb.



That night we dined at another member's house. It was a lovely a day full of friendship.

Saturday 31st May

Sunshine Coast

Rosa Douglas

Today was set aside as a “leisure day”. The day was as also planned for a group lunch or evening meal. Our group had a lunch at Ray and Nola’s home. We had a delicious meal shared with our hosts, Ian and Anne, together with Jack and Pat from the Sunshine Coast. There was lots of laughs and chatter.

In the evening our hosts took us to a local concert. We heard top class chamber music with guest singer Katie Noonan. It was at the Eudlo Hall and well supported by the locals. We thoroughly enjoyed the day and are grateful for the warm hospitality shown to us by the Sunshine Coast Friendship Force.



Sunday 1st June

Sunshine Coast

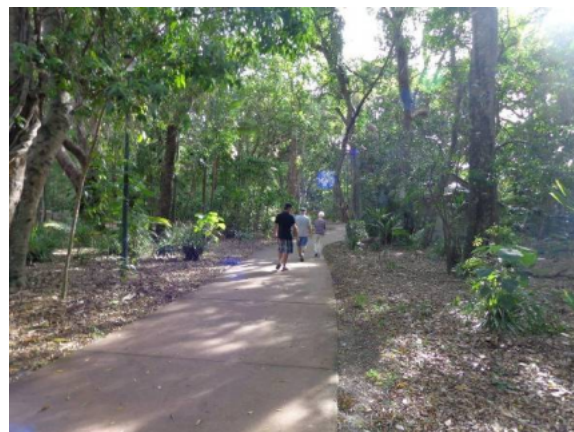
Stephen Douglas

Today is set aside as another 'leisure day' with host. Our day started with breakfast on the deck and talk about New Zealand (was able to use statistic pamphlets). It was decided we take a look at the north end of Sunshine Coast, leaving Flaxton in the hinterland about 10am for a drive to Noosa. On our way we stopped at Peregian Beach for their market day, being the first Sunday of the month.



Browsed the market and I was amused by the items people have for sale; brought some soap. Used the break to give Zeuss the dog, and us a beach walk.

Back on the road again for lunch at Noosa Heads; found a picnic spot at Laguna Bay carpark. After this, we walked the beach towards the surf club to find the walkway around the heads. We got as far as Granite Bay and decided to return (near 4pm; cloudy and possible rain).



We regrouped at carpark near the surf club to travel back through Noosa via Hastings Street, and hosts saying, 'you can't come to Noosa and not drive down Hastings St'. We decided on fish and chips for dinner and spotted the best 'fish and chips' we ordered and dined at the river bank. The chips we couldn't finish we offered to two daughters of an obvious camper van holiday maker family, because it looked like Dad's camping dinner cooking would be a long

time coming. We spoke with them, learning they're visitors from Germany, here for eight weeks touring. We talked about ourselves explaining FF exchanges, wished them the best for their remaining time and headed to the car for our ride home. The route taken was highway #12, onto Phillips Rd through Mapleton then to Flaxton, home for a cuppa 7.30pm.

Monday 2nd June

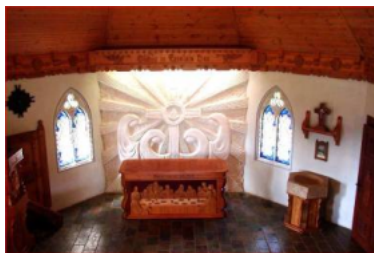
Glenys Currie

The Hinterlands beckoned us today. A lovely drive in the countryside to the Maleny area to visit the Solothurn Rural Resort, with breath-taking views of the Blackall Ranges. A great country setting for the day, and I am sure many of us would have liked to be booked in to stay for the night.



For many, it renewed childhood memories of living on a farm or farm visits. Some tried milking a cow by hand, feeding chooks, ducks, and emus and watching the antics of feeding time in a pig pen. We travelled 'Cattle Class' on a trailer towed by a tractor as we visited the back paddocks (a new meaning for the

word 'Friendship' as we all squeezed in) Once in the paddock, we were 'herded' into a pen to feed and watch cattle being fed. It felt safe inside the pen, especially when the bulls made their appearance, as they were Big Boys. We enjoyed hand feeding some very good looking specimens of cattle.



Back to the homestead and its surroundings, we admired the amazing Chapel of St Albertus, with its hand carved communion table and stained glass windows.

We took time to notice the beauty of the different trees and the Leopard Tree was an eye catcher.



As we waited for the BBQ lunch, the feeling of being among friends was very apparent. The setting on a grassy slope with a beautiful rural view, happy laughter and chatter added to the setting. Lynda from Wellington tried to teach some Tai Chi exercises and also tried a kid's slide, only to find it was quite wet. Tony Bouzaid had prepared a general knowledge quiz.... A great way to fill in time and test the old grey matter, lots of Kiwi and Australian banter and we renewed some ANZAC bonds.....All very entertaining and good fun.

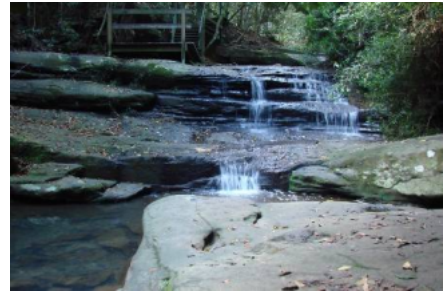


After lunch, it was coffee and cake and photos, friendly farewells, then on to 'Howells Knob' and 'McCarthy's' Lookout, to admire panoramic views of the Glass House Mountains. A great day out with our 'Australian neighbours'

Tuesday 3rd June

Brian Currie.

Yet another fine day with temperatures forecast at 26 degrees C. A walk in Buderim Forest Park was a pleasant stroll on a wide boardwalk through open bush land, slightly elevated above the ground and following the course of Martins Creek. Two small waterfalls provided picture opportunities. We returned by the same route, not realising there was a bridge over the waterfall and that the track extended to the other side of the park. Then back home for a cuppa, before our farewell lunch at Sands Tavern in Maroochydore.

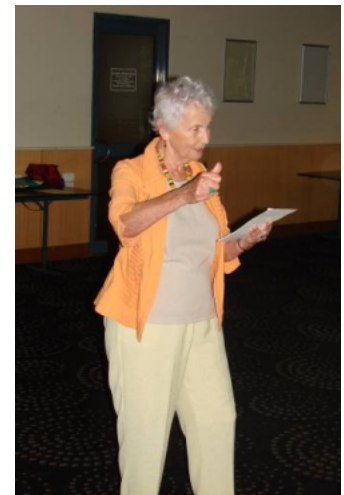


Yesterday we made contact with Dave and Barbara Callan, a couple who used to belong to the Whangarei FF, but moved to Melbourne two years ago. They are currently house sitting at Noosa and recognised Jeanette Page whom they had travelled with to South Africa several years ago. Jeanette brought them up to speed with Whangarei and Wellington having a joint Exchange at Sunshine Coast, so

they arranged to join us at our farewell luncheon today. That made six members from Whangarei and six from Wellington, and thus we were able to claim that we were "Well Balanced"



Margaret Williams and Jeanette Page both gave speeches, while Stephen Douglas entertained us with poetry and the NZ contingent sang Po Karekare Ana and the National Anthem, in both Maori and English. Pat Richardson from Sunshine Coast read a poem which raised a few laughs. Group photos were taken of the ambassadors, and Whangarei folk had our own separate photos too.



Margaret Williams

Pat Richardson

After lunch we enjoyed coffee at the Maroochydore Plaza with Dave and Barbara, who then drove us home and were kindly invited by our hosts Tony and Maris Sayer to join us for tea. We reminisced about old times as we had children of the same age and had lived nearby in Whangarei for many years. So ended the last full day of our Exchange, enveloped in the warmth of both the weather and local hospitality.