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HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER - June 2006

Welcome

Welcome to our June newsletter. As usual, we have had a busy month, with lots of news to share with you all.

Happy Belated Birthday...

We would like to wish our twin JD fans, Glenys and Tegan a very happy [belated] birthday for May. I have it on good authority that the girls were given special DVD presentations made especially for them of family photos from the past twelve months, set mostly to John Denver music. They have such great taste! May your year be happy and bright and thank you for keeping me up to date with everything that happens at your home.

Happy Birthday Netty

All of us at HGA wish you a very happy birthday. Netty is from the Netherlands and she and her fellow John Denver fans work hard to raise money for a number of causes, one of which is the Bearforest at the zoo in Rhenen. Here is what Netty did on her birthday.

Every year on my birthday I visit animals :-)
We went to the Bearforest finally and made some pictures of the new parcel of land we "bought" in memory of JD. The new parcel has the name on the billboard "A wild heart looking for a home" Michiel ten Brug has put some new photos on his website



This is the second parcel of land purchased for the bears in John's name. For pictures of the bears and the wonderful group involved in raising money for this wonderful cause, please go to this website:

<http://www.higherground.nl/BerenbosKavelVoorJohnDenver/index-EN.htm>

Condolences

On behalf of the team at HGA, we would like to pass on our deepest condolences to Eve on the sad loss of her father a couple of weeks ago. Eve is one of the dedicated people involved with the John Denver Memorial Peace Cloth.



Bon Voyage

We would like to extend our best wishes to Melanie who is taking her first ever overseas trip on 22nd June. She will be touring North America, starting in New York and finishing her trip in Los Angeles, visiting many famous sites in between. We are all looking forward to seeing Melanie's photos in October when we see her.

Back Home Again

Jan is 'Back Home Again' after spending the last five months in New York City. She has had a wonderful time and was fortunate enough to catch up with some John Denver friends during her stay. Welcome home and don't forget your photos when you come to our JD weekend in October. I guess life in Newcastle may be a little quieter than your time in New York!

John Denver Weekend Oct 2006

The John Denver weekend will be held from Friday 13th – Sunday 15th October, 2006. It will be held at Boonah in SE Queensland, just one hour from Brisbane.

The accommodation has been booked and a deposit paid. Because we are not asking for a deposit for the accommodation (you will pay the full amount on arrival in Boonah), we will ask that all numbers are finalised by the 29th September.

Margaret and Maureen have been busy starting the organisation of the catering for the weekend. Now is the time to pop your **NON-REFUNDABLE** \$15 deposit into an envelope and send to Margaret.

For those who have not yet joined us for the annual JD weekend, volunteers agree to organise the food requirements for the weekend. This involves working out what we need to feed a hungry army of people and purchasing those items before the weekend. For your \$30 per person fee, you will be fed for the entire weekend – Friday night until Sunday lunch. Not bad value and we get plenty to eat. Please email Margaret on mario@powerup.com.au to get mailing details or email me jfrawley@telstra.com for any further information. (Drinks such as alcohol and soft drinks are not included)

Costs for the weekend are as follows:

Accommodation: \$36.00 per person per night

Food: \$30.00 per person for the weekend (\$15.00 deposit, plus \$15.00 paid at the beginning of the weekend)

The total cost for food and accommodation for the weekend is **\$102.00 per person**

We will make sure that everyone has adequate directions to Boonah well before the weekend. Our accommodation is close just off the main road so it is very easy to find.

We are still in the process of finalising the location of the tree planting.

Annual Silent Auction Donation

We are delighted to announce that we have selected a raptor facility to donate the proceeds from our annual silent auction. Over the past few years we have donated the entire proceeds from the silent auction to The Taronga Park Zoo, The Healesville Sanctuary, Australian Native Animal Care (in Brisbane), Birdland in Bateman's Bay (NSW) and this year, we will be giving our donated funds to **Broadwings Raptor Training and Conservation Centre**. Broadwings is situated in Nerang, Queensland.

As far as possible, we try to donate to a facility that is situated in the same state as our gathering. We also like to visit the centre prior to making a decision as our main focus is the conservation and rehabilitation (where possible) of the birds. After reading the biography of Morley Nelson, it became very clear to me that the work of the people involved in raptors not only includes the rehabilitation of injured birds, but the conservation of the different species and the education of people. We also need to maintain or redevelop the natural environments of the birds to encourage breeding in the wild.

We are looking forward to a happy association with Paul and his staff from Broadwings and we hope to tell you about some exciting events that we may be able to organise to coincide with the weekend in October.



Silent Auction Donations

The goods for the silent auction are donated by individuals – friends and family of Higher Ground Australia. These items are 'John Denver' related. Now is the time to go through your cupboards, local op shops and markets for those perfect items for the silent auction.

Your donations will be gladly accepted. If you have something to donate, please let me know. If you are coming to the annual weekend, you can bring your items with you, but please let me know what it is, so I can give it a lot number and include it in the catalogue. This greatly reduces the amount of work involved in getting these items prepared for the auction. I would like to remind you that we donate 100% of the proceeds from this auction to our selected Raptor facility – this year's recipient will be Broadwings as mentioned.

If you would like to donate something, but cannot attend the weekend please let me know, so we can organise collection of the goods. Our silent auction has been very successful in the past and we look forward to another 'good' result this year. I have already got a number of CDs and books that have been pledged for our auction.

Annual Raffle

We also conduct a raffle each year. The proceeds of the raffle are used to pay for the plaque and stone for John's trees, the trees and the wire enclosures we now provide for the trees and any other incidental expenses that may occur. Any funds left over are added to the silent auction donation.

The prizes are donated and we have been promised something really special for this year's raffle – details will be posted later in the year, when the donation has been confirmed.

Book Raffle

For the past three years, we have donated picture story books to schools. These books, illustrated by Christopher Canyon, feature the lyrics of songs that John has either written or co-written. To date, Christopher has illustrated three 'JD' books, Sunshine on my Shoulders (2003), Ancient Rhymes (2004) and Take me Home Country Roads (2005).

Christopher Canyon shares some thoughts on the project: *"To have this opportunity to share John Denver's music and message with the children of today is truly a dream. John gave the world so many thoughtful songs about relationships; our global need to live together in peace and the importance of caring for our environment. These messages, as relevant today as ever, and John's music and voice continue to touch our lives and lift our spirits."*

As for last year, the three books will be donated to HGA. We will be collecting the names and addresses of schools and kindergartens from you later in the year. These will be placed in a 'hat' and Max will draw out the three winning schools. Over the years we have had such a warm and wonderful response from the schools that have 'won' a JD/Christopher Canyon picture book. It is just one small way in which we can present the songs of John Denver to our younger generations.

If anyone would like any further information about these books, they can go to the Dawn Publications website at this link:
http://www.dawnpub.com/shopping_cart/index.cfm?do=AuthorIllustrator&id=9

All books are available from www.amazon.com (type John Denver Christopher Canyon into the search field for quick access). The books are now down to USD\$12.97 + approximately USD\$9.00 in postage to Australia.

The Travelling Wilsons

Carmel and Alistair have reached Darwin and are taking a well-earned break before resuming their epic journey around Australia.

Alistair has sent me the latest verses to his Epic poem, which can be found at the end of this newsletter.

International Whaling Commission

The International Whaling Commission meetings are taking place at the moment on the Caribbean island of St Kitts. Due to aggressive lobbying and the offer of much-needed funds to some small nations, the 20 year conservation ban on whaling may soon be lifted.

As I lived on the Pacific coast in Queensland for much of my childhood the annual migration of the whales each winter was a highlight.

Last year's struggle to keep the ban in place, then fight to prevent the Japanese from poaching whales in the Great Southern Ocean in Australian waters was difficult to watch. If legitimate scientific 'research' was taking place, I believe that only one whale should be sufficient to fulfil those research requirements – not the hundreds that are being killed each year.



This is a link to the Greenpeace site for those interested in reading more about the IWC meeting and for those who wish to express their concern with a decision to return to whaling.

<http://oceans.greenpeace.org/en/the-expedition/news/2006-whale-meeting>

Dollywood Eagle Mountain Sanctuary

Dolly Parton, the well-known bluegrass and country star has a theme park called Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. As well as having a plaque in one of the gardens dedicated to John Denver, Dollywood is the home of the Eagle Mountain Sanctuary, which is an aviary that houses America's largest population of non-releasable bald eagles. Members of the American Eagle Foundation interact with the eagles in a Wings of Prey presentation. For more information about The Eagle Mountain Sanctuary follow this link to the Dollywood website. I am sure you will find the information on this site very interesting and it is also nice to see how a theme park such as Dollywood can be used to educate people about eagle conservation.

http://www.dollywood.com/company-info/american_eagle.aspx

Earthwatch

I pricked up my ears when I heard the words 'Where do you want to go to make a difference?' on an advertisement on TV this evening. The words were familiar to me and I decided to have a look at the advertised website for Earthwatch. Enter the following link, and select your location. www.earthwatch.org

World Environment Day 2006

World Environment Day is commemorated on June 5 each year. World Environment Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm conference on the Human Environment.

In keeping with the current water shortages being felt in many parts of the world and in particular countries like Africa and Australia, the theme for World Environment Day and for the coming year is **Deserts and Desertification**, the slogan being **Don't Desert Drylands**.

This day is designed to promote political attention and action. We can focus our attention on the environment and on the reduction of desertification by getting involved with the annual National Tree Day, which is organised by Planet Ark each year in Australia.

National Tree Planting Day – 30th July

The annual Planet Ark National Tree Planting Day will be held on Sunday 30th July, 2006. This initiative has been responsible for the planting of millions of trees in areas that need revegetation. The selection of vegetation is done according to the local area and native trees to that region are usually planted. Organised groups are involved in planting trees in your areas. The Planet Ark website is the best place to look for a group to join on the 30th July or for information about forming a tree-planting group in your area. Follow this link for more information:

<http://www.planetark.com/campaignspage.cfm/newsid/17/newsDate/3/story.htm>

If you cannot join a tree planting group on July 30th and you want to plant a tree for John in your own backyard, visit your local nursery and ask about the best type of tree for your backyard. Remember that if you have a small backyard, a large tree would not be suitable, but there are several native shrubs that could be used. If you want to attract birds to your yard, there are a huge number of suitable natives to plant.

If you have planted a tree to commemorate National Tree Day, please send in a photo to us and we will include it in future newsletters. And for extra motivation for those of you who drive a car....

Car owners need to plant 17 trees every year to counter the greenhouse emissions of their cars.

Recycling Mobile Phones

A campaign to recycle old mobile phones has been launched in Australia. Many people have old mobile phones lying in the bottom of drawers at home. These old phones can be recycled and Mobile Muster is the official recycler for the mobile phone industry. Mobile phone handsets, accessories and batteries can all be usefully recycled. The processes currently available to recycle mobile phones are highly efficient - close to 100% of their components are recycled. The program aims to ensure that potentially toxic parts from mobile phones and accessories are recycled, rather than ending up in landfill.

Phones, accessories and batteries can be deposited at **Telstra Shops, Optus World, and Vodafone**. This has been fully endorsed by Planet Ark, who asks people to deposit all old mobile phones at one of these locations. For the address of your local **Mobile Muster** drop off point, click the link to this site and enter your postcode. A list of authorised drop-off points will be displayed for your local area.

<http://www.amta.org.au/aoi.asp?ID=Recycling>

We would also like to know if there are similar recyclers in other countries. If so, email me the information and I will include it in future newsletters.

Recycling Old Computers

Purchasing a new computer should not mean dumping your old computer at the tip where it can cause environmental damage as the toxins contained within a computer are leached into the land fill.

There are a couple of things you can do. If your computer is in good working order, but no longer suits YOUR needs, there may be facilities near you that will recondition your donated computer and sent them to the needy in your country or other countries.

Or you can take them to a computer recycler. Computer recyclers will remove and separate all components and

Choice Magazine has published a list of computer recyclers for Australia at their site:

[http://www.choice.com.au/viewArticle.aspx?id=103807&catId=100408&tid=100008&p=2&title=Where+to+recycle+your+computer+\(archived\)](http://www.choice.com.au/viewArticle.aspx?id=103807&catId=100408&tid=100008&p=2&title=Where+to+recycle+your+computer+(archived))

What is wrong with sending old computers to the tip?

Large amounts of toxic chemicals and metals are required to produce the silicon chips, disk drives, circuit

boards and monitors that make up computers — see Chemical cocktail for a breakdown. The manufacture of one eight-inch silicon wafer (enough for about 250 Pentium CPUs) requires 12 kg of chemicals, 800 litres of hazardous gases and produces over 14,000 litres of waste water. A single computer monitor can contain up to 3.5 kilos of poisonous lead.

And sooner or later everything we buy will end up as millions of tonnes of metal, plastics, glass and composites on the scrapheap — or, more likely, in landfill.

It's only recently that sending electronic waste to landfill has been widely recognised as a problem. The main concerns are:

- **The sheer volume.** None of it is biodegradable. Potential landfill sites are becoming more and more scarce, and federal and state waste authorities have acknowledged the need to reduce the amount of solid waste we produce.
- **Wasted resources.** Once the goods are consigned to landfill, the component materials are essentially irrecoverable. However, many of them, such as gold, silver, platinum, palladium, copper, nickel and cadmium, are valuable or scarce. Others, like plastics and other metals, are potentially recyclable.
- **Hazardous materials.** Electronic waste contains some highly toxic and dangerous substances, such as lead oxide, PCBs, mercury, brominated flame retardants and cadmium. Leaching of these substances from landfill into surrounding ecosystems and water sources poses the greatest environmental threat from electronic waste.

Chemical cocktail

The following toxic materials are used during the manufacture of computer chips:

Arsenic: low levels of exposure can cause vomiting, diarrhoea, abnormal heart rhythm and blood vessel damage, while chronic exposure can result in cancer.

Antimony: breathing high levels for a long time can irritate the eyes and lungs, and cause problems with the lungs, heart, and stomach.

Barium: can cause convulsions, hallucinations, vomiting, cramps, prostration, paralysis.

Bismuth: can cause chest pain, fatigue, nausea, kidney damage, diarrhoea, skin irritation; large doses can be fatal.

Cadmium: can cause extreme restlessness & irritability, headache, chest pain, increased salivation, choking, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhoea.

Lead: damages kidneys and the immune system, can cause premature birth or spontaneous abortion. Chronic low level exposure causes brain damage in children.

Benzene: used as a solvent in semiconductor

manufacture — a known human carcinogen which can damage bone marrow and the immune system.

NOTE: BEFORE SENDING YOUR COMPUTER TO BE RECYCLED, UNINSTALL YOUR SOFTWARE AND PERMANENTLY DELETE ALL PERSONAL FILES AND DATA.

More information about computer recycling can be found on the Clean Up Australia site <http://www.cleanup.com.au/main.asp?RequestType=Doc&DocID=189&CatID=2>

Boston College Chronicle Toast of the Far East

Being a college administrator as well as a veteran, Associate Dean for Students D. Michael Ryan '67 has had his share of uncommon life experiences. But when he helped form a folk music group several years ago, he probably didn't expect he would some day be singing John Denver songs to an appreciative audience of Chinese fans.

Ryan and his group The Jolly Rogues spent 10 days in China during late April and early May. The band - which performs popular English and American songs from the 18th and 19th century, often in period dress - was the only American group invited to take part in a major arts and cultural festival held in Beijing.

"Our manager, Jim Murray, is a guy who likes challenges," said Ryan. "We had done summer trips to England and Germany and were wondering what to do next, so we said, 'Why not China?' Jim made contact with the Chinese embassy and somehow got a referral, and it led to an official invitation."

Prior to their festival appearance, the Rogues took a side trip to Shanghai, where they performed for, and spent time socializing with, college students. Their stay in China also included visits to Jesuit universities and churches, the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, and a number of impromptu concerts in addition to their scheduled gigs.

To say the Rogues were well-received is putting it mildly, says Ryan: "People couldn't get enough of us; they loved the music, loved our costumes. I was amazed at the response - tots, grandparents, young people, they would clap along and sing on a lot of the choruses. We actually wound up with some 'groupies' who followed us from concert to concert. At the festival, there were crowds showing up just to hear our sound check."

At the end of one performance, Ryan says, the crowd began calling out requests, and that's when he and his mates discovered how much of an icon the late John Denver is in China.

"They kept asking for his songs, so we sang 'Take Me Home Country Roads' as an encore," he said. "Before you knew it, the audience was yelling out things like 'Hotel California!'"

Ryan, incidentally, reports that he did his bit to help promote BC during the visit, wearing Eagle hockey and football jerseys on some of his outings.

A Poem for Reconciliation and Peace

A Wish Come True

Liz Seger Copyright May 20 2006

On a rainy Saturday morning
Where the skies are more gray than blue
Hoping for a warm reconciliation
Would be a wish come true.

The world is in a goblet of fire
With dark, smoky, dreary hues
Cooperation and trustworthiness gone haywire
No longer a dream of me and you.

Will we one day break the code?
Will we ever find the clue?
Can we walk in unity and peace's old road?
Together – a wish come true.

The bullies will think they've won
With their one world view
Misinterpreting the word of HIS son
Together me and you- a wish come true.

What is Happening in the JD World?

Mollie Weaver, Chris Nole, Pete Huttlinger

Mollie is giving three free concerts around Denver June 27, 28, and 29. Pete and Chris are joining her. They all start at 6:30.

June 27th City of Longmont in a Park The Roosevelt Pavilion 725 8th Ave, Longmont Co.

June 28th The Littleton Museum It is about 3 blocks south of Littleton Blvd on Datura

June 29th City of Engelwood 1000 Englewood Parkway at the civic center

I think they are all lawn seating so bring a blanket to sit on.

Last Days of Dead Celebrities

by Mitchell Fink 2006 NY: Hyperion/Miramax Books

The book "Last Days of Dead Celebrities" by Mitchell Fink covers little-known information on the last days of some famous people. It covers fifteen famous people giving detailed information on how they spent their last few days, and John Denver is one of the celebrities covered. John Lennon, Ted Williams, Lucille Ball, John Ritter and Warren Zevon are a few of the other celebrities included in the book. The portion of the book that talks about John Denver is from pages 166 to 186. It is very interesting since the author did a lot of research talking to people close to John, specifically those people who were with him in the last few days of his life. On September 6, 1997 John sent Annie some flowers for her 51st birthday. He always did this and 1997 was no exception. In September he also had concerts in San Antonio, Fort Worth, Houston, Austin and Corpus Christi where some lucky fans got to see him in concert for the last time. Interesting to note is the fact that John spent October 6th with his son, Zachary, who flew in from Durango, Colorado. They attended a Denver Broncos football game together and met the players during half time. Then on October 7th John had his daughter, Anna Kate, over for dinner at his house. On October 10th John talked in detail to Milt Okun about a record deal that was of interest and he had an appointment to meet executives of the record company on the 13th of October. So his career was on the upswing again. Several pages are devoted to John's last day where he lunched with friends and played golf. He had a lemonade/iced tea at lunch and apparently he had not been drinking for some time. When John died the media talked a lot about his DUI's as though there was some relationship between his former drinking problems and his untimely accident. But this was not the truth. The final report from the NTSB showed that there was no alcohol in his system at the time of his death. Mitchell Fink is an internationally recognised journalist and has had columns in the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, People Magazine and the New York Daily News. He has appeared regularly on Fox News, CNN and CBS. The book has 288 pages and is a hardback. The ISBN is 1401351980 and it is published by Miramax (May 17, 2006).

New CD to be Released

This message arrived in my email today from VH-1 about a "new" JD release, and although the songs are not at all 'new', this compilation is certainly a 'different' one of re-releases! The albums covered seem to include the '69 "Rhymes and Reasons," '71 "Poems, Prayers, and Promises," and the '72 "Rocky Mountain High"

albums. Check out this url to see the info. from VH1: **(From Linda)**

http://www.vh1.com/artists/az/denver_john/1288521/album.jhtml

Dancing with Mountains

August 25-27, 2006 "Dancing with the Mountains" Celebrating the music of John Denver
Featured Performers...CHRIS COLLINS & MARK CORMICAN Activities/ Concerts / Movies / Camping / Food & Fun.

Tahoe Valley Campground 1175 Melba Drive South Lake Tahoe, CA For Reservations Call (530) 541-2222 For more info email **Laurie Kern** lkern@sbcglobal.net
<http://groups.msn.com/CAWindstarConnection/dancingwiththemountains2006.msnw>

Chris Collins Radio Show

Our wonderful friend, Chris Collins, has a radio show in Houston, Texas on KPFT 90.1 FM "Radio for Peace"... It's called "Traffic Jam" and it is on Monday from 3:00-5:00 Central time. Well, their station donated some PSA time to Windstar, and so there will be public service announcements made by Hollie Carter at Windstar playing during his show! I have heard a couple of them, and they are really good - JD singing at the beginning and end and a great environmental message. Who knows - maybe other public radio stations will pick them up as well! So, if you want to check it out - you can tune in to KPFT on the internet at www.kpft.org and hear something really worth while! Thanks Chris, for making it possible for Windstar to be back out there! Speaking of Windstar - if any of you want to get out to the land, the Connections Summer Retreat is June 24 & 25. More information and a registration form can be found at www.windstarcoloradoconnection.org.

Oh God! They're Back!

Peter Salzer and Steve Kern do a Tribute to George Burns and John Denver in a show called "Oh, God! They're Back!" For booking information call 610-666-5755 or 610-329-8306 or email Peter at peter@peter-salzer.com
<http://www.peter-salzer.com/>
<http://www.JohnDenverTribute.com>

June 29, 2006 - Osceola, Wisconsin * The KC Band presents "Take Me Home", a tribute to the life and music of John Denver. Free outdoor concert at Oakey Park. Bring lawn chairs. Concessions will be available. Alternative rain location. Info: Kevin Carlson
xram1958@yahoo.com

July 7-8, 2006 - Steamboat Springs, CO - Brad Fitch and the Yampa Valley Boys performing the songs of John Denver. (970) 846-0578
<http://www.steamboattheater.com>

www.cowboybrad.com *
www.yampavalleyboys.com

July 14-15, 2006 - UK John Denver Tribute nights featuring Mack Bailey, Pete Huttlinger and Chris Nole in Kirby, North Yorkshire 7:30pm / Kirkby Village Hall / Kirby-in-Cleveland, North Yorkshire, England <http://www.fojd.org.uk> / Look under Events Telephone: 01642 714061 or 01642 713575

July 15-22, 2006 Princess Cruise to Alaska with Christopher Westfall
<http://www.newbeginningtour.com> It will feature a lot of sing-a-longs, including many favourites sung by John Denver. 732-282-3108
<http://www.chriswestfall.com>

Spanish JD Fan Club

New videos have been included in the Spanish JD Club. Click here to watch

<http://www.johndenverclub.com/Paginas/videos.htm>

Aspen 2007 – (UK)

We are pleased to announce plans for a trip to Aspen in October 2007, for the 10th annual celebration of the life of John Denver.

Please visit our website www.fojd.org.uk
<http://www.fojd.org.uk/> (link on Home page or Events page) for details of the proposed itinerary. If you are interested, please register your name and contact details at aspen2007@fojd.org.uk as stated on the website.

Those of you coming from outside the UK may be able to arrange to meet the group in Denver at the start of the bus tour.

Some material included in this newsletter has been derived from the public domain, such as the internet and printed media. Articles and reviews are the opinion of the individual writer and as long as the content is of a reasonable nature and it is appropriate, it will be included. Organisations mentioned or featured in this newsletter are included to educate and inform people of their role and purpose. HGA does not profit from including the names of any organisation in this newsletter.

This newsletter is only emailed to those people who have individually contacted HGA and expressed a wish to receive it. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you no longer wish to receive the HGA newsletter.

I have selected Whalebones and Crosses as a reminder of the devastation of whaling. With hope that a 'good result' can come from the IWC meetings in the beautiful setting of St Kitts.

Whalebones And Crosses

Whalebones and crosses
Stand against the Arctic sky.
The wind blows through the graveyard,
Where our fallen fathers lie.
Eternal snow that covers them.
The shadows of the sun.
The mighty struggle on the seas.
A way of life is run.
I'll sing for you my father.
For the ancient sacred ways
How the hunter loved the hunted.
How the night becomes the day
The circle of the mighty spirit
Keeps us in its fold.
The warmth of understanding like
A light shot through the cold
Then bring to me my people.
Touch them with your loving hands
Lead them from confusion.
Lead them back unto the land.
For sickness seems to block their path.
It clouds my people's eyes.
The promise that an idle truth
Will reap a golden lie.
Whalebones and crosses
Stand against the Arctic sky.
The wind blows through the graveyard,
Where our fallen fathers lie.
The timeless hunt a journey back
To what we once came from.
Compassion and nobility
Beneath the Midnight Sun.
The mighty struggle on the seas.
A way of life is run.

THE TRAVELLING WILSONS

We made up a list of days to go till we were on our way

Stuck it on our kitchen fridge and crossed off every day

*Finally, the lumbago rolled out of Cessnock on April
twenty two*

*To a sixtieth birthday in Sydney, for an old fiend we
knew*

*Sunday morning we headed south with Albury on our
mind*

We made it there safely leaving 600 kilometres behind

*But we struck some bother when the Lumbago's radio
wouldn't work*

*No matter what I tried I just couldn't fix it we were both
just about bezerk!*

No Roy or Cliff to listen to, well it really would do

*And you can all imagine how Carmel felt when she
couldn't hear "you know who"*

THE MURRAY

*We'd planned to follow the mighty Murray as it makes
its way to the sea*

*And check out every town along the way it all seems
too easy to me*

*Echuca was our first port of call, we thought a river
cruise would be fun*

*Wouldn't you know we were on the paddle steamer
used on "All the Rivers Run"*

*On Anzac day we followed the marching band down
main the street*

*A nice remembrance service at the cenotaph in the
sunshine and the heat*

*We both thought of our friend Max and wondered how
his day would be*

*Perhaps the boys would take him to the Club to spin a
yarn or three.*

*Ever since his pacemaker went in the doctor's
instructions were quite clear*

*It's just a cuppa or orange juice for him certainly not
beer*

*Before we left Echuca we stopped at the "Holden
Museum"*

*What a great old car they have been, we just had to go
in and see em*

Then it was off to Mildura with an appointment to keep

To get the b---dy radio fixed probably won't be cheap

*It seems the 12 volt esky we bought blew the fuse in the
LIGHTER socket*

*They replaced the fuse the radio was fixed; it was still
under warranty nothing out of the pocket*

*Some tips on growing oranges you had to hear to
believe was true*

*Dried fruit, gemstone shop, a pot of pumpkin soup filled
in a wet day and gave us something to do*

*Our fruit and veg we declared at the South Aussie
border, "we'll just look in your fridge to see what you've
got"*

*Just as well we made pumpkin soup the night before
because they took the bloomin lot!*

*What a pretty little town Renmark is, it's very tidy and
neat*

*We looked over the paddle steamer "Industry" and had
lunch on a river seat.*

*Carmel wanted to see the red cliffs just like the picture
in the book*

*We were told, "drive 12 kilometres out of town and have
a look"*

*"Heading's" lookout tower revealed the answer to a
dream*

*Red coloured cliffs for as far as you could see, up and
down stream*

*In the little township of Berri, with the best fruit and
juice, they say*

*We heard about a local bloke "Jimmy James" who has
sadly passed away*

*An indigenous black tracker who could read the bush
like we read books*

He assisted police in three states; solving crimes and catching crooks

They honoured him here with a monument in his name

Overlooking the river he loved, a touching memorial to his fame

In Loxton there's a tree of knowledge with flood levels clearly marked

We were not in any hurry so we did the washing while we were parked

There's a bakery at Wakerie with enough pies and cakes to satisfy an appetite like mine

And at Blanchtown the river levels change at number one lock for the very first time

At Big Bend lookout just after Swan Reach there's a view you could not buy

The biggest cliffs on the entire river stand over twenty meters high

We turned south off the Highway at Tailm Bend still on our way down

We were on the wrong side of the river and took the punt over to Wellington town

This historic site was the first punt crossing used to get to the other side

Our Murray meandering was nearly over the river was getting pretty wide

In fact it turned into Lake Alexandrina as it made its way to the southern sea

And from Hindmarsh Island we watched it's final journey just the Lumbago Carmel and me

KANGAROO ISLAND

We had done it, for that was the final leg of our Murray River odyssey

And we were ready to tackle the next exciting challenge, whatever it may be

We booked our passage to Kangaroo Island even the Lumbago's havin' a ride

That way we can please ourselves how long we stay on the other side

Just before we sailed we took a motion tablet so we wouldn't get sick

And over we went just like two old sailors they really did the trick

But as the day went on we found we were quickly running out of zap

Those tablets have a strange effect we both needed a nana nap

The pelicans are fed at five o'clock and there's more than just a few

And for a mere two-dollar donation you can witness the mayhem too

Then you find the little penguins all return home for the night

A local guide will show you them with a red torch no bright light

There's a lavender farm at Emu Bay so we called in it was very nice

They even make lavender jam but I gave that a miss not even for half the price

But at the Organic Honey shop well that's something else to me

Four different kinds of beautiful nectar what a very busy little bee

At seal bay in the dunes to the surf there were seals and pups everywhere

We walked the boardwalk and on to the beach we got very close to them there

We stayed overnight in a National Park not too many campers and a very nominal fee

Poached eggs for breakfast, no one came for the rent, so that one was for free yippee

Kelly Caves were simply amazing limestone "stalagmites and tites"

You have to climb about to see the lot and it's very dark when they turn out the lights

At Flinders Chase National Park there's a formation of weathered stone blocks

And one of them is shaped like an Eagles head they call them "Remarkable Rocks"

"Admiral's Arch" was as far south as we could go for the road came to a stop

*We took a picture of the Lumbago for posterity sake
we'll do the same at the top*

*The wind and rain blew all Saturday night and the sea
was as wild as could be*

*We were booked on the ferry the very next day so we'd
better not have much tea*

*Thank goodness the weather cleared up and we
crossed over safe and sound*

*Fuelled up the Lumbago and headed north, now we
were Adelaide bound*

ADELAIDE

*Well we are really just country folks as you know and
Adelaide's a pretty big place*

*So the City sightseeing tour was ideal and someone
else can deal with the rat race*

*A statue of Don Bradman and the Adelaide Cricket
ground it's all a bit much to believe*

*And at a tour through Haigh's chocolate factory I could
hardly get Carmel to leave*

*We passed beautiful parks and gardens and at Glenelg
the tour was over in a flash*

*And I found a book I've wanted to read an
autobiography of Johnny Cash*

*The next day the mighty Lumbago powered up through
the Adelaide Hills*

*And some hot apple strudel and cream at Hahndorf
really cured our ills*

*We spent the night in the Barossa Valley, nice but I
think the Hunters the winner*

*Then a long drive to Port Augusta, were both worn out
straight to bed after dinner?*

THE FLINDERS RANGES

*Next we went to Willpena Pound and stayed for a
couple of nights*

*And a walk into the old homestead revealed some
wonderful sights*

From a lookout on a ridge just on the edge of the pound

*We had a great view of the entire inside you could really
see all around*

But the three-hour walk "in and out" really took its toll

*As for the phrase "move it or lose it" we could see no
logic at all*

*I'd crossed my legs for as long as I could and I badly
needed to go, if you know what I mean*

*So off with the torch in the black of night to find the loo
I'd seen*

*When I shone the light on the sign, it was the "Ladies"
to my grief*

*So I went round and in the other door and proceeded to
find relief*

*But the voices within were feminine! "What ever will I
do?"*

*The "Men's" was at the other end, struth I've really
made a blue*

*So when all was quiet I sneaked away into the dark of
the night*

*And pondered over what might have been someone
could have got a fright*

THE CENTRE

*We've certainly covered some ground so far were in
Port Augusta and only the 16th May*

*So we filled up with tucker, fuel and beer to head north
on the Stuart Highway*

*When you get to "Spud Murphy's Roadhouse" turn right
and Woomera's only 6klms away*

*A well designed town of concrete and tar it's all pretty
quiet today*

*It seems the pommies were keen to build and test a
"missile" after the Second World War*

*Because the German V2's had destroyed parts of
London, and they wanted to even the score*

*We'd been driving a long time and both worn out and
ready to stop for the night*

*When we came across a spot with a campfire and all, in
a roadside-parking site*

*So we gathered our wood, watched the sun set and
enjoyed a wine and a beer*

*Lit up the fire, gazed at the stars and watched the
embers disappear*

*Not much to be said about Coober Pedy it's a dry dusty
place,*

Everything worthwhile is underground and the rest is just a disgrace,

So we moved on to see for ourselves the sun set on Uluru,

And as the night sky dimmed the big rock changed from Gold to Blue

We joined some folk for a guided walk around the monolith's base

And the memory of being able to touch the rock, time will never erase

In Kings canyon the ghost gums stood out against the rich red stone

And we walked along the riverbed to where the aborigines made their home.

We'd been driving for a while and thought we'd better stop for the night

We found a roadhouse called "Jim's Place" and it really was a welcome sight

It was quite rustic to say the least, but we didn't realize we were in for a treat

For Jim has a Dingo named "Dinky" who sings and plays piano with his feet

I know it may be hard to believe but it really is quite true

He performs for every tour bus and he put on a show for us too

THE ALICE

Alice Springs is a pretty big place so we restocked with beer and food

Posted some mail and did the washing, while we were in the mood,

We wanted to visit Desert Park for the free flight show of birds

But management wouldn't fly the Eagles for reasons too silly for words

An aboriginal elder was demonstrating and describing some medicines they used

He made "Damper" and "Billy Tea" on the coals, that simply couldn't be refused

He spoke of their different languages that even other tribes couldn't understand

Then he said "words are not everything" because "song is the sovereign language of the land"

Back into town to the Namatjira Gallery with paintings they wanted to sell

And that evening I watched the "State of Origin" and had a few beers as well

To save the Lumbago we booked a trip to Palm Valley to see cabbage tree palms that are rare.

But the road was so rough up a dry river bed I was wishing that I wasn't there

In the community of Hermansburgh we had morning tea, you could have either strudel or scones

And there was an old church with acoustics so great I just had to sing a few songs

We rang and sang "happy birthday" to our granddaughter "Sarah" who is one year old today

And to our old friend Ashley Eyles who also celebrates on the 26th May

THE TROPICS

The floods that came after cyclone "Larry" had left their mark on the land

Mataranka and Bitter Springs had suffered a lot but the hot pools were really grand

On a four-hour trip through Katherine Gorge we saw about a dozen freshwater croc's

Just basking peacefully in the afternoon sun on the sand, logs or rocks

With only three hundred more kilometers to go we were soon in Darwin at last

It's taken us about twelve days from Port Augusta but theirs no way to do it fast

It's a long way to go and not that much to see but to watch the fuel gauge go down

And they certainly know how to charge for that it gets higher in every town

DARWIN

We drove the lumbago on into Darwin and took it as far as it could go

And where the Stuart Highway meets the Timor Sea, we took another photo

*Darwin is a pretty place and unlike any capital city
we've seen*

*Beautiful beaches and water so blue and the parks and
palms so green*

*The colorful markets at Mindil Beach with all the food
and wares you can get*

*Then just walk over onto the sandy beach and watch
the amazing sunset*

*We've settled in now no more long trips just the pool
and a quiet sun bake*

*We booked in here to stay ten nights, which won't be
too hard to take*

*Family and friends are reminding us that it's cold this
time of the year*

*Were up here in shorts and thongs and the only thing
cold is the beer*

*We are sending postcards, and keeping in touch with
emails, from and to*

*So if you have the time drop us a line at
hifis@bigpond.net.au*

*A BBQ and a couple of beers, that's just about how
tough life can get*

*If there's anywhere that's better than this we haven't
found it yet!*

*We wore ourselves out at the big shopping complex the
first one we've seen for a while*

*Processed some photo's, didn't buy much and walked
about a hundred mile!!*

*Just for a treat we went to the cinema to see Robin
Williams in the movie "RV"*

*And we laughed so much we were both in tears, what a
funny man he can be*

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More coming next month!