

1988 Australia (Townsville to Melbourne)

Nov 12, Singapore. Ming Court Hotel, 21.00. Heavy drizzle when driving to Schiphol Airport. We obtained bike boxes at “unoccupied luggage”, checked in but no window seat. I had a body check and our bike bags were opened. The two pinion removers and our tent pole were suspicious. Left in a Boing 747 about 18.00.



After five hours a stop-over at Kuwait, arriving in Singapore at 08.00. Collected our luggage and bikes. Our bikes could not be stored overnight, and a friendly porter, an Indian guy, went with us to the Qantas office. Explained that we would like to store our bikes overnight but in vain. Then he took us to the “duty officer”, who phoned the storage facility, but without success. Finally, our bikes were stored overnight in his own office. Let’s hope the bikes are still there tomorrow...

About 12 km to downtown Singapore. A six-lane (2x3) road with old pickup trucks, antique busses, double-decker busses, motorbikes, taxi’s, and “normal” cars. Judged by the driving behavior of our driver, there aren’t too many traffic rules. Lots of palm trees, fan palms, beautiful tropical trees, flowering plants, amongst others bougainvillea’s, etc. About 86% of the population lives in flats. Only a few scattered remains of the old Singapore here and there. About 29 °C and high humidity.

From our balcony we can see a few trees, between flats and over the swimming pool. Myna’s with yellow bills and legs, black white wing spots, Fruit pigeons, pretty small, about the size of our Collared Doves, green back, orange-pink breast, and, striking, a dark underside of the tail with possibly a light tail band at the end. Also one Oriole sp., bright yellow with a black eye stripe and wing in the top of a tree, and Barn Swallow-like swallows. While travelling to the Botanical Garden,

we saw two strange crows or ravens flying over (very long and thin tail and a long neck), rather small and entirely dark swifts. In the Botanical Garden at the edge of the pond, at dusk, a kingfisher sp. Red legs, black bill, rusty underparts, blue upperparts and a striking “Jay-like” tail. Two turtle species . One about 50 cm, with a speckled head and a little pig-nose. Plenty of dragonflies, bats, etc., and stunning plants and trees. Bought a batik for Annelien at the market. A nice way to spend American dollars! (Notes: the film roll was lost with pictures made in Singapore; the birds are described because we had no bird guide for South-East Asia – travelling light).

Nov 13, between Singapore and Cairns-Townsville – 14.20. Slept well. Fine breakfast with bacon and eggs, rice crisps and milk. This morning hot, humid and rain. Watched birds from our room. Left at 09.10 together with another traveler to the airport in an old VW bus. At the airport we had some trouble finding our bikes back. Third floor, left at the Chinese restaurant. Bikes still there. Just when collecting the bikes, yesterdays’ porter appeared, send by Annelien. Together we brought the bikes down and “checked them in” after some minor problems. Paid 12 Singapore dollars per person for airport tax. The left-over dollars were given to the lady who had taken care of the bikes, the porter, and we bought some nice stamps. Checked-in the luggage at 10.30, 5 kg overweight, and left at 11.30 with aDC9 or DC10, again as scheduled. Now just hope that our yellow monster (*note: big bag containing all bike bags etc.*) and bikes are on board too. About 6 more hours of flying to Cairns and then about 30 more minutes to Townsville.

Nov 14, Townsville – 10.40. Coffee in a shopping malt, 30 °C outside. Flight ended in Townsville. In the green-and-yellow arrival hall we were informed that food of plant or animal origin is not allowed to be imported, with a max fine of 50,000 Australian dollars. We had to unpack all our luggage.



Since we were the last passengers, all police men and custom officers joined. As expected, we were “clean”. While we re-packing our bike bags, a lady asked us whether she could bring us to a spot to pitch our tent. Bikes and luggage in a van, pitch dark, and dropped at a spot in the middle of the night. Pitched up our tent behind a toilet building, rather hot inside. Slept at about 02.00. Oh, Annelien made a call, call-collect, to Doetinchem. Parents happy to hear we arrived. Awake at 05.00, discovered we camped close to the water. Great birds. Stayed to about 07.30. Put the bags and flag poles on our bikes. Bought groceries in Townville, including a bird guide (Slater) and now coffee with pie. Outside hot and humid, about 30 °C. Beautiful vegetation, flowering trees, etc.

Nov 15, Townsville - Ayr. 10.15. Warm yesterday. Ibises and kites common. Asked for a camping spot at a farmer. Got some drinking water, pitched up the tent, and watched birds, Pheasant Coucal, Koel, and cooked an early dinner. Dinner wasn't what it was supposed to be, because we had confused a can of tomatoes with potatoes. Dark at 19.00. Rain showers during night and morning. Everything soaked. Wet bike bags.



Beautiful hills with eucalypt forest for the first 15-20 km, gum trees, tree ferns and yucca's. Seen our first kangaroo and cockatoos. Beautiful. Last stretch before coffee we passed meadows and fields with cane sugar. Houses built on poles and a not too inspiring scenery. Road not too bad and not too much traffic.



Nov 16, Guthalungra. 15.08. About 35 °C. Easily found a camping spot between Brandon and Ayr. Behind a house. Dried our stuff and bags. The farmer gave us two cans of XXXX bitter. Tasty. Early this morning, 04.30, there was a small tree frog on our tent. Left about 06.00.



Outer tent wet again, one shower. This morning Annelien tied a handkerchief to my cap to prevent my neck from sun burn. Passed fields of sugar cane and long grain rice, later open country with eucalypt trees. A detour of about 20 km. Very dusty despite tank trucks sprinkling water continuously. Coffee at Home Hill. Disgusting instant coffee everywhere. Hamburger instead of pie. During the day two cans of cola and a carton of milk. Pretty hot and a head wind for days. Until now the Australian drivers are friendly, overtaking us carefully. The quality of the roads varies, in general not too bad, mostly tarmac or crude bitumen. Shoulders easier to bike than in US, less rubbish. Plenty of mosquitos at dawn and dusk. People seem less curious than in US, although compared to Oregon.. Saw a first dead snake, traffic victim, large, black and a slightly lighter belly. Met a guy who walks with a horse from Melbourne to Cairns. Had been walking about 500 km. Made paper cuffs because my wrists suffer from sun burn.



Nov 17, 10 km before Bowen. 09.20, roadside restaurant. Last night a great spot along the railway. Only noise from radios and Flying Foxes! Red eyes, yellow-brown-orange fur. Really big, Wood Owl size? Within ten minutes a Thick-Knee, Bustard, two Kangaroos and many Sulphur-crested Cockatoos. Up at 04.00 and left 05.50. Slightly overcast, but sky cleared again. Nice road through hills which are still partially covered with eucalypt forests. Cows in the forests and cleared parts. Channel-billed Cuckoo and Pale-headed Rosella seen.

Nov 18. Continued after "coffee" (coca cola) and a hot dog. Eucalypts, Pelicans, Brolgas, Black-necked Stork and Black Cockatoos. Camped halfway between Airlie Beach and Bowen. Biking didn't go too well yesterday, sore butt, etc. Many road constructions, very dusty. Anneliens' bike computer suffered from heat stroke. Cheese eaten by a dog. Up at 05.00 and via some questionable byways to Whitsunday, which is about eight km before Airlie Beach. Hills covered with tropical vegetation,

sugar cane and rice in the valley. Rainbow Lorikeets are common, enjoying the harvested sugar cane. Bought groceries yesterday in Bowen. In the bottle shop they sold amongst others Anchor Steam, Cooper's Sparkling Ale, etc. Unfortunately, beer was only sold per carton... Pity. A few curlews at the coast.



Nov 19, camping at the Conway NH Park. 06.05. Yesterday biked via Airlie Beach to Shute Harbour. First part through a handsome valley with sugar cane and rice, hills covered with tropical vegetation.



Saw our first White-bellied Sea-eagle, and another one in Shute Harbour. Had cola and hamburger, apple juice and sandwich. Bought a ticket for today. Yesterday evening made a walk, dry tropical forest with ironwood trees, tree ferns and grass trees of which the entire trunk consists of little scales, very peculiar. Made pictures of Laughing Kookaburra, Brush Turkey and Bush Thick-Knee. When we wanted to sleep at 19.00, a Brush-tail Possum climbed down, and almost sat down on my shoes. Annelien, with torch and in underwear, came out of the tent to watch. Meanwhile, in total four or five Possums came down, including a female with an immature about its own size on its back. The female climbed on Anneliens' bike and inspected the bike bags. Annelien became a bit annoyed about bags torn apart, etc. I just had a lot of fun. When they climbed down again, Annelien in her underpants and armed with torch chased the immature. Meanwhile Flying Foxes woke up. They climbed up to escape from the light of our torch, climbing pretty handy. Took a while before I slept because people were talking, eating, and pitching up tents. This morning Brush Turkeys everywhere, scavenging at picnic tables and BBQ sites.

Nov 20, Cannonvale. 07.55. Humid, overcast. Writing in a roadside restaurant. Just finished cola and hamburger. Yesterday walked to Shute Harbour. Boat to the Barrier Reef left at 09.00, spend 3 hours on the Hardy Reef, and back at 17.00. Fine weather and a smooth trip. Food on board and snorkeled for one to one-and-a-half hour, ending up with sunburned neck and shoulders. Barrier Reef is magnificent. Incredible variety of fish species, shells, corals, sponges, etc. Saw several typical Ocean birds including Noddy's. The Whitsunday Isles are quite posh, green but dry, and reminded me of the Olympic Peninsula coast. Tough night. Aching back and shoulders, and noisy neighbors, with an old Land Rover full of junk, who kept me from sleeping until after midnight, a rain shower fortunately just stopped when we got up. Annelien got a fly in her eye during the first descend, a screw missing from her sunglasses. Screw found in the glasses case. Now to Proserpine to see whether we can catch a train towards Rockhampton.



Nov 21, Calen. 08.20. Fine weather. In Proserpine the first train to Brisbane was scheduled 20.05. We decided to bike to McKay. Just past Proserpine there is a marsh with lily-covered ponds. Saw Magpie Goose, Tree Ducks, Pygmy Geese, Darters, and a male Red-backed Wren. In Bloomsbury we bought something to drink. Meanwhile, the sky turned pitch dark, clouds accumulating at the hill tops. Biked further. The rain soon started and we sheltered in a bus stop. Heavy rain. We biked into a farmers' shed and were allowed to camp. Nice guy who offered us a cup of coffee. Rain at night. Up at 04.50. Two slices of bread with peanut butter for breakfast, drinking a cup of tea with garlic taste, mwah. Left at 06.00. Now enjoying cola and pastries.



McKay, at the station, 22.11. Before the “Sunlander” of the Queensland Railways departs, scheduled at 22.35, a quick note. Rest of the day wasn’t too spectacular. Before McKay there was a pig farm with a nice lake. In the lake one Dabchick and lots of Plumed Whistling-duck. Bought groceries in MacCay, exchanged American traveler checks for Australian dollars, and looked for the train station. Some things here look very old fashioned, railway employees in shorts, and very few passengers. Buying tickets was cumbersome. The train was fully booked. Options being the next train tomorrow evening, biking to the station in Sarina, 30 km, the only station within reach to catch the next train, or travelling first class, i.e. 230 instead of 120 Australian dollars, including bikes. We went for the last option but had to travel separately. Curious. Cooked at the station and wrote some postcards to family and friends. Meanwhile a thunderstorm and pouring rain. Annelien is laying on a bank, sleeping now and then.



Nov 22, Gladstone. From the train, 08.55. The train was much more luxurious than expected. I had my own coupé with a huge chair / bed, a toilet, a wash basin (broken by the way), mirrors, four light switches, a wardrobe, table, airco, footstool! And that all on about 1.5 m². Slept well last night from 23.30 to 05.30, tea. Saw Black Swans etc. from the train. Barren scenery, plenty of eucalyptus trees, tree ferns, grass trees and "bottle trees". Will arrive around 11.00, must have a look how Annelien is doing and how warm it will be.

Nov 23, Torbanlea. Mobil-station near Torbanlea, 09.10. Arrived yesterday in Bundaberg precisely at 11.00. Bikes still there, so I was happy. Pretty warm, but slightly less than up North. In Bundaberg posted the postcards. Biked to Childers, a nice Victorian-style town, many café's and hotels with pretty facades. Camping behind a messy house, difficult to find a flat spot. When we had pitched up the outer tent, the inner tent caused problems due to strong wind and a very dark sky. So we decided to put the tent with its butt into the wind, with the disadvantage of not having a flat space to sleep. With hindsight we were very happy! A huge thunderstorm, strong wind, etc. Fortunately, all stuff remained dry. To bed at 19.00, waking up at 04.45 because it was light already, left at 06.15. The Bruce Highway (1) is getting pretty busy. Yesterday Highway 1 passed an agricultural area with

beautiful red soil like in Childrens, a kind of giant heather with grass trees, fir trees , other tree species, and some Eucalypt forest.



Nov 24, between Tiaro and Gympie. 09.10, fine weather. Yesterday hot and heavy traffic. Only a few nice patches of forest and grass trees. In Tiaro we looked for a spot to camp after Annelien finished apple juice and I a bottle of "Carbine" (XXXX). When I asked a few chatting ladies, we were not allowed to camp behind the building. Just when I went outside, however, a lady asked whether we were from Holland. Bingo! Large house and a beautiful spot. Just while pitching up the tent, another thunderstorm started. Slept inside, had dinner (potatoes!), and breakfast. She was born and raised in Utrecht ("wa") who immigrated in 1958. He was a constructor (again!). Slept well in a too soft bed. Damp and foggy this morning. Disappeared soon. First 20 km a fine road with shoulders. Last stretch pot holes. Still heavy traffic.



Nov 25, Cooroy. Parry's Corner Store, 09.58, fine weather. Yesterday arrived in Gympie about 13.00. Annelien was tired. Just after we decided to look for an overnight spot, we met Jan van der Meer, Dutch parents, Frisian father. He gave us the key of his house. Stayed there a while, doing our laundry and drying, chipping our nails, drinking tea, and looking in a book about kangaroos. Oliver arrived, a guy from Mauritius. He build his own fiberglass boat, which took him about eleven years, intended to sail around the world, but first had to earn some money. After a drink, the four of us went for dinner. Dinner wasn't great, the steak wasn't from a calf for sure and the vegies were grossly overcooked, but we had lots of fun. Dinner was with six people, Jan had asked two Dutch friends, Frank, a retired art teacher from The Hague, and Sjef, his son. To bed at 21.30. Slept with open windows. Up at 05.00 and left at 06.15. The "1" is very busy and narrow here and there. Deforested hills with cows. Sad sight. Last stretch through a forest. Will put some oil and grease on the chain and gear shifters of Anneliens' bike, and then towards Noosa Heads. Saw four or five Galahs today!



Nov 26, Buderim. 08.45, café, mediocre hamburger, fine weather. Left the busy Highway 1 yesterday and biked via Tewantin and Noosa Heads to Caloundra. Very hot and humid along the coast. Vegetation reminded me of the Waddeneilanden, shrubs resembling heather in the dunes with a winding, small and not too good black-top and above all very busy road! My mood dropped. Next my chain got stuck at a certain gear, the cable of my rear gear shifter went loose, and Anneliens' chain dropped next to the small chain wheel. Hurrah! Meanwhile now and then moving to the edge of the road to let a truck pass. Crap. Next the sky turned dark. Because a "free spot" to camp was unlikely, we decided to go for a camp ground after taking shelter for a small thunderstorm. Pitched up the tent, slept well from 19.00 to 04.15, and left at 05.45. Scenery not too exciting but some good birds. Suffered, mostly walked, to get over a very steep hill at Buderim.

Nov 27, Surfers Paradise. 07.45, apartment, heavy rain. Biked about 80 km yesterday on Highway 1 with a strong tail wind. Pretty warm. On our right side we passed the Glasshouse Mountains, bare tops. About 50 km before Brisbane, just where there is no emergency lane, and Highway 1 has four lanes, we stopped at an exit to eat a sandwich. Out of the blue, a lady brought us a cold glass of orange juice. When we still had to bike about 40 km, Jan and Olivier overtook us in an old VW bus. We "hitchhiked" with them to Surfers Paradise, where Jack lives, a brother of Jan. Jack just turned 22, that's why the visit. Had a look at the beach and attended some shops. Just had dinner with the entire family, i.e. four brothers and Jacks' girlfriend. Decent Dutch food: potatoes, meat, and vegetables! Listened the entire evening to Jacks' mother, a rather stressed women of 55-60 years with a pollen allergy. To bed at 22.30, i.e. a mattress outside on the balcony, with next to us a giant flat. Slept well but awake at 05.00. Had a look at the beach, breakfast, and called heit and mem for

three Australian dollars, cheaper than expected. Today we would like to go to Lamington, but heavy thunderstorms and rain now.



Nov 28. We left yesterday in the end. Bought a onion-cheese bread at a bakery. Immediately thereafter, sheltering for the rain, consumed a large part of it. When biking to the Hinze Dam (steep!), we sheltered for hours against heavy rain in a toilet block of an old school. Heavy rains showers with thunder. Rain stopped about 14.30.



Upon arrival at the Hinze Dam, we found out that we couldn't bike over the dam due to ongoing constructions. So, we had to return. Biked only 38 km when we arrived at a farmer who had a nice meadow, only disadvantage being the cow dung. Pitched up our tent, ate chow-main and meanwhile seeing plenty of birds. To bed at 19.00 and up at 04.30. Slept last night under the second sleeping back, pleasantly cool last night. Breakfast, made pictures of cockatoos and Crested Pigeons, and now on our way to the Natural Bridge. Pleasant and quiet road, very scenic, fine weather, and saw a.o. Wedge-tailed Eagle and Crimson Rosella.

Nov 29, near Kungbar - now at a closed café annex gasoline station, 09.08. Yesterday via Chillingham to Uki. Made a walk at the Natural Bridge, beautiful rainforest with huge Eucalyptus trees, orchids, tree ferns, vines, etc. Both road and weather were fine. Just before Natural Bridge we had tea/coffee with scones in a nice place. Finding a spot to camp proved more difficult. Finally found a spot at a

house with 4-5 small kids who find the tent, our bikes and my cooking skills extremely interesting. A view at Mt Warning. Just before we found this spot, two Wedge-tailed Eagles flew near the mountain top.

Yesterday we entered New South Wales, our second state, we had to turn our watch one hour ahead. So yesterday to bed at 20.00, didn't sleep too well. Bump under my back. Up at 06.30 to Uki. Nice and quiet road through a river valley with plenty of forest with grass trees, tree ferns, and clubmoss. Now to Nimbin. Just had cola / apple juice and a bounty in the (just opening) restaurant, but the power is out.

Nov 30, Casino – 09.15. Just after yesterdays' coffee we entered a 5 km stretch of dirt road. According the road sign, the "Worst main road in NSW". Indeed the road wasn't excellent, but fortunately not too long. For a few days we now bike through the hills and dairy cattle, whereas in Queensland this was sugar cane, rice, and cattle. Bought groceries yesterday in Lismore, and got free roadmaps at the NMRA. About 17.30 we found a beautiful spot on top of a hill with some very nice people. She asked whether we needed anything. So I said "maybe a shower", after three days. Both clean again. Lentil soup, bacon and a fake baguette with cheese and herbs, a cheap offer at Woolworths. Diarrhea started immediately after dinner, fortunately only once. Slept well until 04.00. Heard a Butcherbird trying to mimic a Kookaburra. Cool last night, but pretty warm yesterday.



Dec 1, Grafton City – café, 11.15. Yesterday a nice stop at a parking lot, Four new species, including a Mistletoe Bird. Quite a distance to Whiporie, but a nice road and acceptable scenery. Found a dead Koala, traffic victim? Whiporee, eighteen inhabitants, is nothing, "a hole". Were allowed to camp next to the Mobil gasoline station. Also some nice birds here, a male King Parrot as an orange flash between Eucalypts. Slept very well last night and up at 05.10. The 50 km to Grafton City were tough

to both of us, both having a not so good mood. Annelien almost in tears a minute ago because I want too much biking or too large distances, which I consider as “not too bad”. We’ll have a look at the station to see whether we can get near Sydney today or tomorrow.



Dec 2, near Duran – 10.07. After a refreshment at the station, we took a look at Grafton. Train would leave at 19.20. Bought groceries and gasoline, 0.17 Australian dollar (now in total 0.52!), and fruits, including passion fruits. Changed the remaining American dollars at a bank. Bought train tickets at the station, cooked, and collected stuff from the bike bags that we should keep with us in the train. Rather busy, no time to get bored. Unfortunately, there was nobody at the luggage storage where we could deliver the bikes, but somebody of the railway company assured us that it shouldn't cause any problems. Which it (almost) didn't. Train stopped, was late, all got out or in, except the bikes. Asked somebody of the railway



company urgently to assist to help getting the bikes to the last carriage. We also entered the train, and left. Again first class, about 75 Australian dollars including bike, but no sleeping facilities. Pretty cold last night and wasn't easy to sleep, although still managed to sleep about five hours. Worried about the bikes this morning. Either because the train was late or just being a habit. Train stops are a few minutes only. So, when we arrived at Hornsby at 06.40, we ran to the last carriage of the incredibly long train. Has to move twice because the platforms are too short. Also a load of suitcases had to get out, but I saw the flags again. Both happy having our bikes back. Quite "an art" getting out of Hornsby: four lane road without shoulders combined with roadworks. One or two lanes closed, lots of heavy traffic. Parts biked over a bike trail, sidewalk up, sidewalk down, very tiresome, especially with all traffic around us. Now getting slightly better with traffic.

Dec 3, Bilpin – 10.11. A nice small road to just before Windsor. There entering the 'big road' to Richmond. Bought some groceries in Windsor. Very busy, heavy traffic until we were fed up with it, just before Kurrajong Heights. Stopped about 16.00 and looked for a spot, found a nice flat spot, government property, but nevertheless slept 9 hours without any problem (20.00-05.00). Were allowed to take a shower from the people living in the house next to the lawn, and got some maps from Victoria and Melbourne. Dinner was excellent: mashed potatoes with mushrooms and leek, and grated parmesan cheese. A nice change from the regular tomato "prut". Annelien her period started, made pictures of Galahs (up to 7 meter with the 200 mm!). Just when I wanted to make the picture, the film roll was full. Left at 06.30. Bell Hill. A very steep climb of four to five km. At about $\frac{3}{4}$ quarters of the way up, I decided to put 28 instead of 34 on my crankset. Very dirty hands, bleeding. After we passed the top, there was a blue gum forest with a Bell Bird colony.

Dec 4, Lithgow – 09.05. After the climb yesterday, we climbed further into the Blue Mountains at Mt Tomah, elevation 1030 feet. Again a steep climb. Before Mt. Tomah we visited a (new) botanical garden. We got a free admission (2 Australian dollar per person) and bought ourselves "waffles" with cream and maple syrup. The botanical garden was slightly disappointing, but the Blue Mountains are beautiful.



Rounded mountain tops of about 1000-1100 meters, covered with Eucalypt trees and shrubs, rather "open", and now and then rocks. The road is beautiful but very steep, biked everything in the "1:1". Almost when leaving the Blue Mountains, we saw signs of the famous "Zig zag railway". Made some pictures of the steam engine and train that was just arriving. We were both pretty tired but also very

much would like to have a nice camping spot. We saw a house with a huge lawn and trees, and tried there. Bingo! Food, BBQ and salads, shower and breakfast. He was “coalminer”, she a cleaning lady, with two children. Other visitors were a policeman, his wife, and three children. Also an old but very friendly Labrador dog, and a cat. When we had our outer tent in place, after fifteen minutes there was a cloud of flies in the highest point, which also were able to enter the inner tent. Removed the outer layer, and when a few rain drops fell down, we put it on again. Home brew beer and nice red wine from the Lower Hunter valley, 11 years old, to accompany the salads, BBQ sausages, garlic bread and steak. In short, excellent. Before dinner removed our dust and grease. Slept well and up at 06.00. Plenty of rain. First breakfast inside of tea and toast, and collected our tent while still raining. Not much to see of the Zig zag railway, but the scenery is very pretty. Now via a backroad to Brathurst.



Dec 5, Brathurst – 09.25. Yesterday via Tarana to O’Connell. Terrible road conditions, horrible tarmac, stretches of dirt road –“road works for next 6 km”. Met six Australian boys, racing bikes and in full outfit. Half of them walked uphill while we were biking, and one even tumbled over with his bike. Well... The road was very steep, the “1:1” was very necessary, and due to the poor road conditions even going downhill was tiresome. Annelien got grumpy and next I joined. Lots of Crimson Rosella and White-cheeked Rosella, Galahs, Red-backed Parrot, White-winged Chough, and a pair of Brown Falcon (very large, well seen, jizz resembling a harrier). After 60 tiresome kilometers considered to stop in O’Connell. Annelien asked a lady who was pruning her roses, and yes, at the first attempt! Took a shower, used the toilet, and got a pile of asparagus for dinner. He is farmer with 6000-7000 sheep, she is nurse. Talked a while with him, very nice. To bed at 21.00 and up at 05.00.

Before Brathurst I didn't feel well, slightly dizzy and a bloated feeling. Cola and one-and-a-half hamburger helped. Yesterday evening and last night rain again. In Brathurst a sandwich at a take-away is 1 Australian dollar, and when eating inside (i.e. using a chair and table) 2.20 Australian dollar. Ridiculous! The bakery didn't accept traveler cheques, so my temper was below zero. Have to try buying some cards, cheese and cookies here.

Dec 6, Camra – 14.20. Just finished apple juice and chicken sandwich, so better start writing now. Got a nice book yesterday, from Annelien, in Brathurst (about 12.50 Australian dollars), in which all prints of Birds-of-Paradise and Bowerbirds of John Gould are shown. After Brathurst we had a hilly but quiet road, and stopped 2 km before Barry. Only the son, a teenager, was at home. He didn't know what to decide, but he also didn't dare to say no! Pretty flat field, lots of flies (also in the tent!). Next to the house is a large dead Eucalypt tree with –in the end- about fifty Galahs. Lots of noise.



At dusk they all flew into a pine tree. Up at 05.00, after nine hours of sleep, and tried a phone box in Barry. Didn't work well, couldn't get an operator. So we biked to Nevelle, no connection because the lines were too busy. Finally, about 08.45, we tried in Mandurama, lines still too busy. So, Annelien had a sandwich and I "fish and chips" after almost 30 km. Yesterday overcast all day, and again rain last night. This morning the sky cleared and now about 35 °C. Between Wali and the Highway made pictures of a lizard, a (white) cockatoo and Hoary-headed Grebe. Next we entered the Highway, which was very quiet. Covered quite some distance. About 16.30 we had biked about 97 km (!) and wanted to stop. Success at first attempt. Could camp behind a house of a couple, 50 years or thereabouts. Cold Fosters beer was served by the landlord, who was truck driver and had several bypasses. Both very nice people. Inside the house the Christmas presents were ready, already. Had a shower and joined for dinner of salad, fries, garlic bread and steak. Upon arrival, he was just painting his house in a banana-yellow color. Tried to phone heit and mem, but failed. Next Annelien tried her parents, which worked. At 21.00 we had an amazing double bed and slept very well to 05.00. Left at 06.00. Again a hilly scenery, but the road is fairly flat. Sheep everywhere, a few cows here and there. Lots of wind, especially from the side. Saw lots of birds this morning, including Superb Parrots, Australian Hobby, Black Falcon, Musk Duck, and Australian Shoveler.

Dec 7, Murrumbarrh – 17.20. Still sufficient time for writing. It isn't going too bad. Tough going this afternoon, strong head wind, to Kingsvale. Desperate for a drink, but of course there was nothing. When we left the town, we saw a large hall where they sold cherries ("Petalfalls"). We went inside. Only large boxes containing kilograms of cherries. A nice guy served us a large bowl of cherries and

told us to eat as much as we can. Which is what we did. Very taste cherries, very large. Something very different from the Dutch cherries. We also got two apricots and a glass of cold water each, so we did end up with our “cold drinks”. Next, against the wind, to Murrumbarrah. Had a can of cola and a bottle of apple juice, and tried to find a spot. We saw a perfect lawn at a very large house, but that didn’t work out. A terrible wife, who told us to go to the city park. Second attempt was better. Annelien asked a for sure not too slim lady, dressed in a pink (Galah-coloured) dress whether we could pitch up our tent at her lawn. Yes! Shower, toilet, bed (double)) and diner (sure)! The two portions of freeze-dried nasi have been in our bike bags for days now, apparently not intended to be consumed.

Dec 8, Coolah – 15.00. Dry at last. After a good night up at 05.00 and left at 06.00. Carol gave us two pins of Young, showing a few cherries. After a few km rain started already. Soaked after 35 km. At a Mobil gasoline / grocery store we had a cup of instant coffee, owned by an extremely grumpy or frustrated couple. Sheltered a while in the house of a girl, who put our clothes in a washing dryer, which turned out to be broken. “Bother!” Thereafter spend a few hours in a take away / café, not a nice place at all. At about 14.00 rain stopped, and with a strong tail wind we were soon in Coolah.

Dec 9, Gundagai – 12.09. Yesterday (in Coolah) we had Devonshire tea from Royal Albert porcelain, probably out of the ordinary here. A nice thickset lady was making Christmas puddings in the kitchen, and we were served by her daughter-in-law. Rain started again, and to cut a long story short, we slept inside. So we ordered a hot meal, which was very nice. Got recipes for scones and Christmas pudding. The latter is an enriched “Jan in de Zak” and lasts for months. This house is from 1850, a coach house, with a wind mill next to it, which is now being used to generate electricity. During the afternoon Striated Pardalote and Red Wattlebird, and found a bottle with the text “Not to be taken”!



To bed at about 21.00 and up at 06.30. Slept in a little room full of our drying stuff, taken out of our wet bike bags. Including the two bird books and lens covers. Slept on our mattresses on a wooden floor, bit hard but dry. Pouring with rain during the night until 08.00 this morning. Then the sky cleared a bit. Now getting dark again. Today we will bike, when the weather will allow us, to Tumut. Made a stop at a garage to clean our bike chains, rather necessary. Yesterday my rims were pitch black, aluminum? In a minute we have to bike over the longest wooden bridge of the Southern hemisphere.

Dec 10, Tumut – 17.20. The two wooden bridges of Gundagai are in a rather poor condition, one is a railway bridge and the other for all other traffic.



The small road to Tumut was nice, a tail wind, not too much climbing, and little traffic. On our way we had a heavy downpour but fortunately could shelter in a barn. Upon arrival at Tumut, rain poured down again. Took shelter at a “Mixed business” and looked for a camping spot. We could sleep in a haystack at a farm, a nice little Australian terrier that could jump like a cat. We had to walk through the mud, and took shelter under the roof of the haystack. The hay was wet and full of fleas. After half an hour we were fed up with it. Still pouring with rain. When the rain finally stopped, we searched for a motel. For 43 Australian dollars a great room, with a double bed, a shower, not too bad.

Actually didn't really know what to do, when Annelien came up with a brilliant idea: rent a car (*to visit the Snowy Mountains*). First problem was the weather. According to the locals there was more rain last month than normally in a year. Nobody remembered anything like this happened before. To the West of the Continental divide it should be dry with temperatures between 35 °C to 40 °C. Second problem was the distance, 120 km to Cabramurra, mostly uphill. I went to the motel owner who only had lived here for a month. But he finally managed. A very friendly lady brought the car herself, AVIS, Ford Falcon (automatic). To bed yesterday at about 22.00 after finishing a can of “Victoria Bitter” (from Carlton in Melbourne!).



This morning up at 05.00 and left at 06.00 by car. What a luxury! Gently and softly uphill! In general the slope wasn't too bad at all, apart from one nasty stretch of about 6 km, many curves, narrow, and about 6% or so. Mountainous scenery, patches of Eucalypts and shrubs, other parts barren (lower parts) with fields of ferns. Immediately after entering "Mt Kosciusko National Park" there were Kangaroos everywhere. Probably "Eastern Grey". Made lots of pictures.



Bought a few groceries in Talbingo, where I saw big bottles of "Invalid stout"! Just before entering Talbingo, what was standing along the road? Two Emu's! Large and ugly! Made pictures. Other good birds included Fairy-Wrens, 100+ Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Galahs, and three Gang-gang cockatoos.

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, five or six – very close, Black-shouldered Kites (on the “puna”, praying with dangling legs), Brown Falcon, Australian Hobby, Crimson Rosellas (common), Richard’s Pipit, Grey Fantails, Eastern Whipbird, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Brown Treecreeper, Silvereye, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, and Whistling Kite. Near Kiandra a wet “puna” interspersed with Eucalypt forests. Very nice colors due to occasionally pitch black skies. Returned about 17.00.



Dinner chow mein, early to bed. Our goal is to reach Melbourne by bike. Annelien called Lean yesterday, no problem in case we arrive a day earlier. Her friend will try to get a few bike cartons.

Dec 11, Tarcutta – 12.25. Heavy rainshowers yesterday from 15.00 onwards. Up at 05.00 this morning, left at 06.00. Raining to Adelong. Stopped for a coffee and a burger. Weather improved a bit, suffering a strong head wind. Heavy biking. Likely saw a Grey Falcon. Looks like the weather won’t improve. A minute ago I wasn’t too happy, but cola and a burger improved matters.

Dec 13, Springbrook (Victoria) – 09.10. Day before yesterday stopped about 40 km before Holbrook. The head wind was too strong for biking. A beautiful lawn of an elderly lady. First she wasn’t too sure, but she became increasingly nice. Just when we finished our nasi, she invited us for dinner. Especially the desert was excellent, pineapple with whipped cream. After a good night we also had breakfast together, i.e. just after I made tea. About 06.45 entered the Hume Highway again. The entire day the weather was fine with now and then a head wind or a tail wind.



Altogether, we biked about 128 km. Good views of Budgie's and Cockatiels near Holbrook. About 15.30 arrived in Albury, where we crossed the Murray River, the border between Victoria and New South Wales. Last part of the road yesterday was four lane with a decent shoulder. Looked for a spot, and only one attempt again. A cattle farmer having beef cattle, "Santa Gertrude's" or so, a race from Texas. A toilet, a shower, dinner, and a trip in a big car to the Murray River. New bird species Australian Reed Warbler. Lots of Crimson Rosella's of the yellow-and-blue variety. They guy drove his big American car through the meadow like it's no big deal. Both he and his wife spoke with a stiff lip, strange for Aussies! Didn't get to bed before 23.00 and up at 05.30. Left at 06.50. Biked part of the freeway where biking is not allowed, but unclear where to bike then. The Hume Highway is shrinking in size, and shoulders are now gone too. Not unexpectedly, road constructions are all over the place. Still about 260 km to Melbourne. We hope to get there tomorrow... Fortunately for us, Lean lives on "our side" of the city.

Dec 14, Seymour – 11.40. Yesterday we biked 148 km! Mostly over the Highway and freeway. Especially the last part before Euroa was a bummer, two lanes, no shoulders and lots of heavy traffic as trucks and busses. Annelien was very tired when pitched up the tent. Easily found a spot to camp, in front of a large open barn of a horse farmer. Temperature yesterday about 35 °C, i.e. business as usual. I slept fine last night, Annelien didn't. About 90 km to Melbourne. Biked a road parallel to the Highway this morning, lots of birds and hardly traffic. We had a tail wind now for a few days, and since two or three days we are both wearing bright orange safety jackets which we got from the DMR (Department of Main Roads). A passerby (car) stopped and gave us one each for visibility. Just got a few maps.



Dec 16, Melbourne – 09.00. Yesterday went sight-seeing in Melbourne, haven't been so tired this entire trip. Day before yesterday arrived in Melbourne after 163 km! Arrived at 21.00, dusk just setting in. Yesterday bought a few small odds and ends, and two books over Australia, one about landscape and the other about flora and fauna. Yesterday saw a bird book of Casey. Didn't buy it, but guess we may have today.



Dec 19, Sydney – 18.10. In the plane, having one to one-and-a-half our delay due to a broken down fuel pump and/or hiccup in the fuel system. In the morning of the 17th we bought Casey's . Visited Philip's Island, about 120 km from the center of Melbourne.



Large numbers of surprisingly aggressive mossies, see my legs! Next morning up at 05.00 and at about 06.00 at Pyramid Rock. Two Gannet species and an Albatross! Two Petrel species and Short-tailed Shearwater. Then visiting The Nobbies and Seal Rock. Beautiful and saw an immature Fairy Penguin. Completely forgot that we attended the “penguin parade” the evening before. Quite a show for 3.50 Australian dollars. At dusk, the penguins arrive in large “flocks” while remaining in the water, about 100-500 meter from the shoreline, before coming out of the water. An amazing sight. But back to the 17th. A brief nap at lunchtime, and in the afternoon to Cape Woolamaloo. A walk through the “Muttonbird rookeries”, i.e. Short-tailed Shearwater, a large area with “rabbit holes”, rather strange.

Some holes are right in the open, others are below bushes. Area partly covered with heather and ferns. On the South side, beautiful red rocks that rise steeply from the sea, impressive. After a short night again up at 05.00 to visit the Oswin Roberts Reserve and Rhyll-inlett. Birdwise, the last one wasn't too productive, Pelicans, Curlews, some waders, etc. In the Oswin Roberts Reserve we saw two Ibis species, Royal Spoonbill, Osprey , Chestnut Teal (common), and –best of all, a few Cape-barred Goose. Annelien found a feather, probably near a nesting site, nicely fenced off. The call is very strange. Sounds like a pig. Pretty and impressive bird. Left at 10.00-11.00, drove back to Melbourne, had some food, and took the bikes apart in the afternoon.



The bike cartons weren't too large, even had to get my steer off. The chains and gears in the hand cabin luggage. Yesterday evening went with Mike, Lean and Chris to a Malaysian restaurant, really nice food. Also here "BYO", bring your own. Dinner with plenty Coopers Sparkling Ale. After a good night of sleep went to the airport around 10.30. Mike had removed one of the front seats and after a few attempts everything (bikes, yellow monster (front bags and sleeping bags) – together about 49 kg, i.e. 9 kg too many. No problem. Also our cabin luggage, due to books, was very heavy. They didn't check at Melbourne but in Sydney they did. The rear bags of Annelien were fine (although way too heavy), but mine were not, and one of my rear bags had to go into the .. luggage. Now a can of Toohey's Draught and a very tiny bag of peanuts. Just passed the Continental divide. Via Singapore, Bahrein, and Frankfurt to Amsterdam.



Flying over inland Australia (top, left. Arrival at Schiphol (top, right). Cowes, Philip's Island, 1988 (below, picture made by Lean or Mike)