

Letter 3

THIRD LETTER

DELAYED
ISSUE

FROM THE GROUP STUDY EXCHANGE TEAM

IN AUSTRALIA

Monday, August 30, 1971

After a delightful week in Camden, the members were up early Monday, packing and preparing to bid farewell to another group of beautiful Aussies. It was sad to wave "good-bye" to the hosting families of this beautiful town. They truly succeeded in making the Exchange Team feel at home. After waiting some time for "sleepy-head" Gregg Wadell to show up, we finally departed Camden at 9:00 with Rotarians Geoff McAleer and Allen Boardman. We meandered south-east through the Great Dividing Range to the city of Wollongong. We stopped at a scenic overlook for a panoramic view of the city, which is located on the edge of the Pacific Ocean. Coming here, we passed through escarpments of sedimentary rock which is several million years old and which, at one time, was the main building material used by the convicts that settled in Australia.

A beautiful day - sun shining brightly, yet a bit breezee with the wind blowing in off the ocean.

During our trip, we crossed a stream of water called "The American Creek" in Wollongong - made us a little homesick. Leaving Wollongong, we traveled in the shadows of the colossal cliffs of the mountains for miles. We traveled through a town called Brownsville. The Group Leader, C. F. Furlow, made the classical comment that we should go on over to Metamoras while we were there.

Arrived in Kiama at 10:00. The Rotarians of Kiama welcomed us with morning tea and a brief break for a bit of relaxation before continuing our trip. At this point, we were received by the Milton-Ulladulla Rotary Club. Leaving Kiama, driving along the sea coast, we saw beautiful white sandy beaches, rolling hills which were dotted with dairy cattle and sheep. Looking to the west, we could still see the Great Dividing Range. We observed several bush fires in the surrounding forest areas. Bob Steuart, President of the Milton-Ulladulla Rotary Club, explained that these were very common at this time of year in New South Wales. Eventually, the highway we were travelling became an arch of Eucalyptus trees. We drove through the towns of Berry, Bomaderry, crossing the Shoalhaven River into the town of Nowra, on through a few small sawmill towns and forest areas where the Yellow Wattle Tree, the national tree of Australia, was in full bloom. The forest floor was carpeted with tree ferns, small ferns, and small palms.

Arrived in Milton-Ulladulla at 11:00. Ulladulla is an aboriginal term which means "Safe Harbour." Timber, dairy farming and fishing, plus tourism are the main industries of this coastal area. Both towns, combined, have a permanent population of 4,000. The summer months and the summer holidays in December increases the population to 30,000. Arriving after a scenic, yet tiring drive, we proceeded to the Mollymook Golf Club where we met our receiving hosts. We were served lunch at this beautiful club, which overlooks the beaches and the Pacific Ocean.

Tuesday, August 31, 1971

Up early this morning, after a good nights rest, the team was ready for another day full of activities. Truly a beautiful morning; sun shining brightly, yet a bit chilly. After assembling at the Milton-Ulladulla Ambulance Station, the team drove down the hill to inspect the Fishermans Co-Op. Jim Towrance, Manager of the Co-Op, and Hartly Butson, Secretary of the Co-Op, took us on a tour of a new tuna boat in Ulladulla Harbour. We met an Italian fisherman on the dock who explained to us that the tuna season in Australia ran from September to January.

By this time, the team had worked up an appetite for morning tea, so we rushed up the hill to Hotel Marlin. There members of the Milton-Ulladulla Rotary Club had tea and scones waiting for the hungry Texan Team.

Following mid-morning tea, we were taken to the Milton Saw-Milling Company. While inspecting this computer-operated saw mill, we discovered that one of the team members was missing. Well it seems that Ron Hill had discovered this little Australian car which he decided to drive. He discovered two novelties: 1) Aussies drive on the left side of the road and 2) the steering wheel is on the left side of the car. No accidents were reported. Ha!

After leaving the saw mill, we returned to Milton to the beautiful Mollymook Golf Club for lunch. Some of the team members decided, while they were at the club, they would try their luck at the "one armed bandit". Like Jessie James, the one armed bandit robbed them of their coins.

Following the delightful lunch in the club which over looks the ocean, Bob Steuart, President of the Milton-Ulladulla Rotary Club, and fellow Rotarians drove the team out to the rolling country side for a tour of the dairy farm of P. C. Johnston.

Strolled down to the Herringbone Bails to watch the cows being milked. Climbing the hill back to the old historic home, which was built in 1868, Rich Corder, the only Texan in the group with cowboy boots, asked if he could climb over the fence and pet a baby calf. This really brought on some laughter among the team members plus the Australians. Being from Texas, I assume the people in the area had the stereo type image of each of us owning several herds of cattle back home so they proceeded to take us to a Beef Cattle Stud Farm. Arriving, we boarded a VW Wagon full of hay and proceeded to drive over the hills to see all of the high breed cattle. Much to the Cattlemens surprise, none of us bought a stud bull. As the sun began to fall behind the tall Euclalptus trees, the temperature began to drop and us Texans were ready to head for warmer places. Each of us returned to our hosts home to clean up for the evenings meeting.

We were the guests of the Combined Ladies Night of the Ulladulla-Milton and Bateman's Bay Clubs at CWA Hall in Milton. The team was happy to discover that we were being served "lamb" again. Ha! Gregg Waddel was given the title of being the groups Lover Boy. It seems that earlier that afternoon we had stopped at a Chemists Shop (Pharmacy) to purchase some film and Gregg was waited on by this beautiful "bird" (girl). After having found out that the "birds" father was a member of Rotary; Gregg, being the gentleman he is, invited the "bird" to the meeting. That night at the meeting both parents of the girl appeared but not the good looking girl.... After the meeting we wandered over the Mollymook Golf Club for after-dinner drinks and more warm fellowship with the Rotarians and their wives. Finally retired to bed that night at 1:30 A.M.

Wednesday, September 1, 1971 - First Day of Spring in Australia

Up early the next morning packing and preparing ourselves to say good-bye to another group of wonderful hosts. Bob Steuart and Dr. Piers Booth, Rotary Presidents, met us in Milton. We all climbed aboard a bus and headed south. The scenery same as the day before. Traveled through several State Forests with signs posted intermittently along the road showing a picture of a kangaroo and "next 5 miles" written under it. Well, the eyes of Texas were keenly on the outlook for kangaroos. Haven't seen one "bloody" kangaroo yet!

Upon arriving in Batemans Bay, it was time for morning tea. Everything stops here for "the morning's spot of tea." After tea we stopped and took a brief tour of Perrys Spoke Factory, located on the edge of the bay. We discovered, after our inspection, that this 120-year-old-family-operated factory did not make spokes, but manufactured 100 different kinds of handles.

With time running short, as usual, we hurried back on the bus and disembarked for Canberra, Australia's Capital Territory. We traveled meandering roads through a large forest mountain range. We finally reached the summit, which is 2470 ft. above sea level, and stopped and traced our path, which we had been traveling for a couple of hours. Truly a beautiful site, seeing the mountains as they fade silently into the Pacific Ocean. After reaching the peak, we began our descent. On the opposite side of the mountains, the terrain was somewhat different. Plains appeared before us for the next 100 miles. Growing tired from road fatigue the Texas team began to sing the "Eyes of Texas," "Yellow Rose of Texas" and "Texas Fight."

Arriving in Canberra, we were informed that Canberra is an aboriginal term, which means "A Meeting Place." Well, by this time, the team was looking for a "meeting place" to eat. We were taken to the Queanbeyan Leagues Club for a delightful lunch. After lunch, we proceeded to Australia's Parliament House where we were met by the Honorable Allan Fraser, a member of the Parliament. Mr. Fraser took time from his busy schedule to take us on an inspection of the Parliament House. After leaving Parliament House, we were driven to the American Embassy. Mr. Simpson, U. S. Officer of Information, invited the team into his office where we visited for a while and then were taken on a tour of the premises.

Totally exhausted, the team members were taken to the Zebra Motel where they were accommodated during their stay in Canberra. That evening, the team members spent a few hours touring Lake Burley Griffin on a Sunset Cruise Boat. Dinner was served to the Texans on the boat. This particular evening, the team members experienced a low of 24° F. One team member could not take the temperature any longer so he purchased a coat to keep warm.

Thursday, September 2, 1971

Up early the next morning. Breakfast in bed. After a good night's rest, all seven Texans and their hosts boarded a bus for a tour of Northern Canberra. The city of Canberra is truly a beautiful, clean, well-planned city. It reminded the team very much of their own National Capital City. Some of the sights that were seen that morning were the Planning Exhibition Center of the National Capital Development Commission, the Australian National Library, The Australian Institute of Anatomy, Old Saints Church, the Royal Military College, and the fabulous Australian War Memorial.

While touring the Australian War Memorial, a thought came to mind - the 2nd of September, just 26 years ago today was a fateful day in world history. - THE END OF THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC - The Japanese surrendered.

The team said "good-bye to Canberra" and departed for Narooma. After traveling for two hours we had a rest stop in Cooma, which is the gateway to the Snowy Mountains.

As we crossed the plains, the sound track of Oklahoma was played on the tape deck and the Texans sang along. As we approached the Great Dividing Range, the escarpments along the highway, which had been shaded from the days sun, was covered with snow. The discovery of this, brought the bus to a stop so that the Texas team and their hosts could play in the snow. Snow balls were made and thrown at each other. Boarding the bus again, we proceeded South for a two hour drive and two hours of rest. The rest period did not last too long, because the Texas Team entertained their hosts by singing "Oh Them Old Cotton Fields Back Home".

We arrived in Narooma around 6:30; were met by the receiving hosts, then taken to their homes where we quickly refreshed ourselves before we departed for Highway Motel - the meeting place for the Combined Ladies Night Meeting of the Narooma and Moruya Clubs. The Rotarians and their wives, of these two clubs, certainly did receive the Texan Team well. The team members were presented membership cards to the Ex-Servicemens Club and the Narooma Golf Clubs. After a delightful evening of fellowship and warm hospitality, the team members were ready to return to their respective hosts' home for an evening of rest.

Friday, September 3, 1971

The Exchange Team was met by Mr. Jeff Brown, Manager of the Bodalla Cheese Factory, to take the team on an inspection of the Cheese Factory. Bodalla is a small town located north of Narooma. While inspecting the cheese making process, a photographer from Channel 4 - T.V. Station took pictures of the team, which were shown on the news that evening. Each team member was served a slice of the Bodalla Cheese. Delicious!

Leaving the Cheese Factory, the team disembarked to the 92,000 acre Bodalla State Forest. The Forest Ranger toured the team via automobile through the mountainous forest. The forests in Australia are comprised mostly of Eucalyptus Trees. There are over 600 different species.

Leaving the forest, we drove to Bodalla War Memorial Hall where we were received by the Country Womens Association. The team was welcomed by Mrs. Spiers and her assistants. Morning tea and scones were served.

Harry Dudley, Vice President of Narooma Rotary Club, welcomed the team when they arrived at Naroomas Ex-Servicemens Club for lunch. Each team member was presented a membership card to the club. After drinks and a few games of bowling, the team sat down to a delicious meal of scallops, natural oysters, King Prawn cutlets, and T-bone steaks. Gregg Waddel was taken to the office of the club because of a violation of the rules. It seems that people with long hair are not permitted to enter the club. Greggs' hair, as well as the other team members hair, was beginning to get a little long. Ha!

Leaving the Ex-Servicemens Club, we proceeded to a Oyster and Scallop Farm owned by Ted Rose. Arriving there, we climbed aboard a boat and were taken up the river to the oyster farms. During the trip up the river, Ted gave us the biological history of oysters. After arriving there, oysters were taken from the water, opened, and served to the team members from the shell. Australian oysters are the best we had ever eaten.