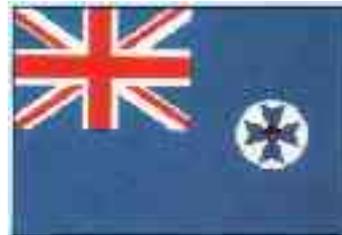


# Our Journey to Cairns by Train May-June 2006



## Forward

Ever since I retired and was eligible to receive the Queensland Governments free Q. Rail passes Marie wanted us to use them. Being a Tasmanian I don't like hot weather and said I would travel no further north than Bundaberg.

So I finally relented and so we used our passes, paid some money to travel in a bed sitting cabin. We did this on the Indian Pacific from Kalgoorlie to Sydney in 2002. I loved it but Marie did not enjoy it very much.

Our journey to Cairns and return was a very enjoyable part of the Journey but not as well appointed as the Indian Pacific. It certainly is a relaxed way to traveller. Also because I didn't want to do a lot of car driving we rented a car for only four days.

I have entered the KM travelled that day in our rental car and the outside temperature at about 7am that morning. I always carry a temperature gauge on our journies.

Prices for entry and tours at places I show as each and are pensioner/senior prices where possible.

In this book I have inserted some plastic sleeves which contain brochures and the like.

## Technical details

I produced this book using OpenOffice.org (OOo) on my PC11 2.4GHz PC using both GNU/Linux and MS W98 operating systems.

Most of the photos were taken with my Nikon E4100 digital camera and a few with a film camera which I scanned with my Canon FB 630P flat bed scanner.

I edited a few images with The GIMP and Irfanview.

I printed with my Lexmark Z25 inkjet printer.

The filename of this document is;

“2006\_Journey\_to\_Cairns\_by\_trainFin08.sxw and also PDF.

I dedicate this book  
to my darling wife,  
Marie, my fellow  
traveller.

This is the railway route in graphic form, they are not to scale.  
**RED** shows our train route.



*Railway graphic of southern Queensland*



*Railway graphic of northern Queensland*

## Departure

### *Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2006*

16c at 6am. My weight 61kg, my backpack and a sports bag within limits. We only took one suitcase about 20kg. Marie's hand luggage was also within limits of weight and size.

We went by taxi to the Transit Centre (Roma Street Station) at 7.30am, \$10.50. We carried our luggage onto platform 10 about 10mt from the taxi, close.



We boarded soon after, car D cabin 5/6 being able to slide our suitcase under the seat in our cosy cabin. The train departed at 9.00am.



### *Caboolture 10.00am 15 minute stop*

Our tickets were checked by staff after three stations and given a ticket for a complimentary coffee/tea we could use later on the journey.

We went to the buffet car for our complimentary coffee/tea. Disaster! Marie broke her bottom denture

I put our travelling mascot, Garfield on our window sill so he could view the scenery.



plate biting on a biscuit! Marie was feeling motion sickness for an hour or so.

Our cabin is a bit more spacious than the Indian Pacific cabin we had on our WA

Journey possibly because there

are no shower/toilet in the cabin. They are at the ends of each car. Each two sleeper car has about twelve cabins so there was little

problem in that regard. In fact I only found the toilet engaged a couple of times during the whole journey.

There is storage room in an area above the corridor for a suitcase but would be difficult to lift one up there if it is heavy. There is a little hand basin with soap, a 240volt power socket, two drinking glasses, yes

glass not plastic. Two narrow areas behind two separate doors, both with big mirrors on the inside to hang clothes. A volume control for the train announcements, two fluorescent lamps in the ceiling providing plenty of light and a small reading light at the head of each bunk when the bunks are made up. All in all a nice cosy cabin.



Here shows Marie's feet on the seat looking out a corridor window.



*Landsborough Station*

Soon after an announcement came over our cabin speaker that a movie would be shown in the Club Bar. The Club Bar was the next car from the Buffet Bar towards the end of the train. The movie was a Harry Potter movie which neither of us were interested in so did not go to see it.

At Palmwoods I saw the dance hall that we and Jack and Vera Whitehead used to go on a few New Year Eve dances.

Nambour at 11am with a five minute stop.

Later I went to the Buffet Bar and bought two packets of sandwiches as Marie didn't want to leave our cabin because of her broken teeth.

Gympie North at 12.30pm for five minutes. Here is Garfield looking at the Gympie North station.



Maryborough at 2.10pm where I detrained for five minutes.



After lunch I lay on the floor for a few short snoozes.

Bundaberg at 3.30pm where I detrained for ten minutes where I took some photos.

Some time after the train stopped for about twenty minutes. The announcement over our speaker told us a car lost air somewhere in the system.

At 5.30pm we went to the Buffet Car for dinner and it was full. There are about fifteen tables accommodating four per table. We had to wait a few minutes which was OK.

We enjoyed a nice and well presented barramundi fish with mashed potato, pumpkin, peas and corn dinner with a desert accompanied by a glass of table wine. Very nice. We had a short chat to two couples while eating. Total cost \$40.00.



Gladstone at 6.45pm where I detrained for five minutes. So far Marie did not want to venture out but it was a good excuse for people to stretch one's legs and for smokers to have a quick smoke as smoking is not permitted on the train. Great!

Just before 8pm we put our "Please put bed down" tag on the outside door handle. The job was done soon after which only took a minute or so.

Rockhampton at about 8pm for twenty minutes where I detrained again.



At 8pm we were stationary on a passing loop to allow the passing of the Tilt Train going in the same direction.

I went and had a nice shower in the shower which is at the front end of our car. A big spacious shower with a good shower rose and plenty of hot and cold water.

Bed at 9.10pm with Marie sleeping on the bottom bunk and me on the top one. I had a restless night even though I am a good sleeper. The cabin rides very smoothly but there was the constant hiss coming from the air-conditioning duct in the ceiling. The train stopped a few times during the night. Stops most likely would have been Yeppoon, Mackay and Proserpine.



### *Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May*

I saw Home Hill station just after sunrise. I had my shave using the 240volt power socket in the little cupboard near the window. Then I went to the Buffet Bar where many people were already enjoying breakfast of eggs, bacon, toast and so on. I purchased pikelets and two small tubs of yoghurt so Marie could have something soft to eat. We were surprised that there were no announcements over our speaker advising that breakfast was being served. As far as I understand, like our train ticket, the price did not include meals as apparently is the case when travelling in the Queenslander Cars which are expensive.

While I was doing that a staff train man made up our cabin, putting our bunks away for the day sitting cabin. We had put our door handle sign out for that purpose. The staff were all very pleasant so far.

This part of the country is quite flat and water logged so we saw hundreds of birds. Marie did see a kangaroo.

Townsville at 8.20am for twenty minutes. We both detrained this time. We spoke briefly to Vera's sister, Gloria who was travelling to Tully.



The station is very modern and long. Some parts of the walls are stainless steel with holes drilled to make various pictures. The first time we have ever seen anything like it. Very good. Here is Marie talking to one of the friendly staff. I didn't write her name in my little notepad.

Back on the train where I walked and took photos of the various other cars. Single person sleepers which are very small and another format where three people have a sleeper cabin.



I visited the Club Bar and took photos. I think four colour TVs mounted on the sides but the sound was a bit hard to hear due to the train noise. There didn't seem to be any headphone connections available.

A few small tables where people can play cards and have a snack. The Club Bar sells sandwiches, pies, hamburgers, chips, confectionery, alcohol and the like.

While here I bought more sandwiches and poppa drinks for lunch to take back to our cabin. By the way, the sandwiches were excellent with a good variety on white and grain bread.

Just before Tully at El Arish we saw the first damage caused by the recent Cyclone named Larry. Buildings with damaged parts and roofs missing. Also trees and banana trees blown over. Sugar cane crops did not suffer very much though.

Tully at 12.30pm where Gloria detrained also myself to take a photo of the station.

**Arrived in Cairns at 3.45pm.**



Signs to show people where to get a taxi were not very good which was right at the side of platform 2. About thirty people and ourselves waited for about thirty minutes for one. We arrived at our RCI resort, The Trilogy at 4.35pm.

## The Trilogy



We arrived in our hotel room number 702 B which is on the seventh floor. A very modern building right on The Esplanade. The main entrance is in Abbott Street which is the next street parallel to The Esplanade.

While Marie was settling our luggage I looked up the Cairns telephone book to find a dental technician. I 'phoned "Cairns Denture Service" Jason Plant and left a desperate message. His clinic is at **44A Aplin St., Cairns**. We later decided to walk to his dental office but by then it was closed so I left a message under his door. Back home I left another message saying we would be around to his office at 7.45am in the morning. His opening time was 8am.

Good night in Cairns. The last time we were here was 1970, thirty-six years ago.

### *Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May temperature 23c.*

We walked to the dental clinic but we were early so were looking in the window of the Real Estate shop next door. Jason came out of his clinic and beckoned us asking if we were the people who left an urgent message on his 'phone system. Yes we are. He inspected Marie's denture and said he would fix it and to come back in an hour and a half. We walked over the street to the big Myer shopping centre which is above the railway station. Marie collected her dental plate later which was great!

Being in the far north the temperature was almost summer temperatures as I wore shorts, no singlet and a summer short sleeve shirt. In the shopping centre a woman who Marie was to visit was there also much to all in surprise. We arranged for Esme and Harley to see us tomorrow.

As we walked back home via various streets we checked the prices of rental cars at three places. We decided that we would stay overnight in Kuranda so I 'phoned the Kuranda Hotel Motel and booked the night of

the 22<sup>nd</sup>. I 'phoned and booked our train trip up to Kuranda for Monday. I later played a little music on my harmonica which I don't do very often. Dinner at the RSL which is only at the corner of our hotel block, about 50m away where we enjoyed a nice roast pork meal costing \$12.50 each. I viewed the clubs war time memorabilia which is quite good.

### *Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 23c.*

We walked Cairns again but had not found the "real" Cairns Information Office until we walked further along The Esplanade. It's in the Mulgrave Shire Council building. We walked past the Casino then to the Cairns Museum which is one of the best we have seen anywhere. History of Cairns featuring aboriginal and Chinese which was interesting.

Its Web site is [www.cairnsmuseum.org.au](http://www.cairnsmuseum.org.au)

Marie pointed out the lushness of plants, green and big leaves on some. Plenty of rain here unlike the rest of south western Queensland.

For dinner we walked to a new Thai restaurant, PJ Thai at 21 Aplin Street. Fantastic meals as usual. On our way back home we noted the movie, "March of the Penguins" was showing at the City Theatre complex so hoped to go next week.

### *Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May.*

We packed ready for our move into an apartment so left our luggage in their store room. We Paid \$372.80 for the three nights, not cheap. The apartment would be cheaper.



We waited to be collected by Esme and Harley Dudley who took us to their home in a Cairns suburb called Bayview Heights. We had a quick morning tea of

scones, jam and cream. Then Marie and Esme looked at her plants and things associated with her hobby, dried flower arrangements. Harley and I talked radio and mechanical things. He has a great little workshop with all tools imaginable.



Then a lovely salad and ham lunch then they drove us to a place near Gordonvale about 30km south where a man planted a lot of Esme's cactus which she sold him but which had been damaged by cyclone Larry. Such a shame. He has lots of Adeniums and Euphorbias. On

the way back Harley drove to a couple of picture theatres so I could take photos of them. They drove us back to the Trilogy where we were booked into an apartment, 706A on the same floor as the hotel room. I had asked for an apartment overlooking the the Esplanade, to the beach but this one is further around to the south overlooking the new building and towards the Casino. Not such a great view but later proved interesting for me.



Unlike the hotel room, it does not have a bath just a shower. The rest is very good with the bedroom separate from the rest with a sliding door. And of course a little balcony with a small table and four chairs.

Now that we were in the apartment we walked to Woolworths in Lake Street two blocks south for our groceries. I bought a cask of tawny port at a liquor shop.

We watched the ABC Garden show on TV and I later watched some football.

TV free to air channels, ABC, CNN, 7, 9 and 10. Seven cable channels, three Movie, Discovery and Music. Two Sports.

### *Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May.*

I did not read my temperature gauge any more as the temperature did not vary much anyway. It was hot all the time. We put the doona under us and slept with just the sheet over us.

This apartment is quite noisy, that is noise from a big round exhaust fan down below us near the swimming pool. At about 10am there were people possibly a hundred people with dogs on leads walking along the side of the Esplanade, the footpath and bike track. About thirty minutes later they came past again in the other



direction. What was it all about? It was a special day to advertise the RSPCA.

In the afternoon I watched on CH9 The Lions defeat the Port Adelaide Power footy game. Great!

After dinner in our apartment Marie watched Jamie Durie in his garden show on TV.

### *Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May.*

To Kuranda.

We didn't take all our luggage, just our carry on bags. We took a taxi to the railway station. The driver let us out near platform 2 at 8.20am which was an hour too early for the second train so we arranged at the ticket office to catch the 8.30am train. Each passenger is given a numbered seat in the correct direction so that everyone is looking in the direction of travel. Our seats 13 and 14 on car 9. There were about eighteen carriages which was hauled by two diesel locomotives.

A little folder with map and a short story was given to us. A recorded story on board the train was easy to listen and very interesting.





We could really only remember the Stoney Creek Falls and the Barron Falls. The scenery is quite spectacular with many tunnels on the way.



We arrived at Kuranda at 10.25am. We immediately walked to the Kuranda Hotel which is about 50mt from the railway station, on the corner of Arara St. and Coondoo St., very close. Their 'phone number is (07) 4093 7206. We booked in, cost was \$60.00. then walked up Coondoo St., the main street which is very interesting, pretty and touristy. We visited the **Australian Butterfly Sanctuary** where there were plenty of butterflies. Their Web site;

[www.australianbutterflies.com](http://www.australianbutterflies.com)



Various women gave little talks which were informative. \$10.00 entry. The next was the Bird World



Kuranda costing \$13.00 each which was our favourite. So many different birds flying around as well as ducks.

I went into St. Saviour's Church on the main street which has an interesting story. We had a lunch snack and walked some more before returning to the Hotel. I walked back to the station and took more photos. We had dinner in one of the hotel's eating/bars where there were ten green bottles hanging over a doorway. We both had battered fish with potato chips and salad. The hotel has an Irish theme with all the usual decorations one would expect.

*Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May.*



It was such a nice quiet night even though we were in a hotel. We arranged to have our bags put into safekeeping before we booked out then walked back up the main street. There are so many colourful things to see, tiles, statues, signs and so on. A pretty town. We viewed

and had a conducted tour of a new venue where the people keep venomous spider, centipedes and soon snakes so it's a venomous animal zoo. They milk the poison and is used for anti-venom, for medical use! Cost was \$12.00 each.



We went back into the Butterfly Sanctuary for no charge because one of the woman wrote on the back of their ticket to allow us the day before. Here is a photo of the Bird Wing butterfly caterpillar.

We assume most people would only be in Kuranda for only a day. Actually the time varies from two hours to four hours depending on one's travel arrangement. By the train or the SkyRail.

We walked back to the hotel and had a Scotch & Dry and I a Rum & Dry. Then collected our bags and back to the station. The photo here shows the station looking from the south-east, the signal and track changing house in the centre. Photos of the station are usually taken from the other side showing the platform.



This time we looked at the SkyRail and the stations little shop. I took more train photos. We caught the 3.30pm train which this time our carriage was a different type. We arrived back in Cairns and there were supposed

to be taxis near the platform but there weren't any so Marie waited on the footpath while I walked through the big Central shopping centre to other side and caught a taxi there. We collected my darling and arrived home at 5.45pm. Then down to the Esplanade where we had a dinner of Turkish donah kebab, very delicious.

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May.**

Home today.

I walked to a digital photo place on The Esplanade and put my digital camera 128mb card in to have the image files written to a CD. I didn't want to run out of space on it as I would be taking many more photos. I then went to an Internet place to check my E-mails and delete most of them. This was **The Call Station, 123 Abbott St., Cairns**, which cost only \$3.00 per hour which is the norm these days. The young man gave me a plastic card with a password on it which I typed in to the computer. There are about thirty little cubicals. The PC I used and others I noticed were running W XP. At the rear were two 'phone boxes where people could make ordinary telephone calls. I deleted about three hundred and seventy SPAM E-mails out of three hundred and ninety-eight.

On my way back home I collected my camera's card and CD which cost \$9.50, cheap.

In the mean time Dimmpy walked around the shops then met in one of them. Back to Woolworths for more groceries then home. After dinner at home we watched an old movie on a cable station called "Krakatoa, East of Java" which I hope I spelt correctly.

A rest day. Most days I watched the men and the work being carried out to the new building next to the swimming pool. I took photos of the man who worked the big crane when he finished work and climbed down the ladder. It was interesting to see them work.



**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May. 148Km today.**

We collected our rental car from **Car Rentals at 72 Abbott Street** about 50mt from home. It was a little four door Mazda Metro with the number plate **821 ELF**. So naturally we nicknamed her **Elf**. It had 212,703km on the

speedo so although she was manufactured about 1999 I believe it had been used quite a lot. There were a couple of scratches and some paint peeling off which I took a photograph of but the man there was not too concerned.



We arranged to have it for four days at \$50.00 per day which is the usual rate. We drove back to the dental clinic for Marie to get him to check her upper plate as she could feel what could have been a crack. While Marie was doing that I familiarised myself with Elf.

There was nothing wrong with Marie's plate, just a small scratch. We then drove up to Port Douglas which is about seventy-five km north on very good but narrow and winding road to arrive at 10.30am. We drove up to the little lookout above the town then had lunch down near the beach. The beach was closed because crocodiles had been sighted so people were warned not to go near the waters edge let alone in the water. Of course as with Cairns and other cities further south there is no big surf due to the Great Barrier Reef.



As we were packing up to head back to Cairns we saw two people pulling two big suitcases along the street. We asked them if they needed help. Apparently they had come up from Cairns in the morning by bus but their accommodation was going to cost them \$295.00 for one night. They were young Italians from Italy on a world journey who spoke reasonable English. They could not afford that price and when we told them that the beach was closed for swimming they were disappointed. We

said we were driving back to Cairns and could come with us if their suitcases would fit into Elf's little boot. They did fit and so they took up our offer with great delight. Hauro was the man's name and the woman's was Quintiliani.

We stopped at a little café on the beach front in Port Douglas where they bought themselves and Marie and I a drink.



On the way we stopped a couple of times to see the view. Last stop was at Yorkeys Knob because I had a tee shirt with Yorkeys Knob printed on it when we first met in 1959. They came with us to our home

where they checked it for accommodation. We were pleased that the big road signs had "Slow to 40km/h" on the bottom edge as can be seen in the photo.

We arrived back at 2.45pm. They left their two suitcases in Elf's boot while they checked other places in Cairns. They returned a couple of hours later to collect their suitcases. They had booked into another hotel as they still wanted to spend more days in Cairns before leaving Australia. They seemed a nice married couple.

For dinner I went to the All Night Markets and bought a take-away Chinese meal.

#### *Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May. 29Km today.*

I had one of my occasional giddy/dizzy attacks so was glad we were only going to the Botanical Gardens and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). By 10.00am I felt much better so arrived at the Flecker Botanical Gardens at 10.15am. It's north of the city. As one would or should expect it is not a flower type garden but more tropical green plants. Never the less it was OK.

It's Web page at;

[www.cairns.gov.au](http://www.cairns.gov.au)



Then to the RFDS which cost us \$5.50 each but money well spent as they do a fantastic necessary service to people in the country, all over Australia. The photo shows Marie in the museum with photos, medical equipment, radio transmitting and receiving equipment and other memorabilia. We had visited the one in Kalgoorlie but this one was better. I even sat inside of an old aeroplane which still had all its medical devices in it.

Its Web page at;

[www.flyingdoctorqueensland.net](http://www.flyingdoctorqueensland.net)

We had lunch in their little grassed part next to where Elf was parked. Then to Red Lynch where we had been through on the train to and from Kuranda. I took a photo there then to Freshwater. This is the connection station for people who don't want to use the Cairns station. Two railway carriages are set up as diners where people can enjoy a light snack so the advertising says. But alas it was not operating. We would have had afternoon tea there so it was a bit disappointing. Back to Woolworths for more groceries for the next couple of days. Marie was not going to cook meals after those days as we would eat out.

Back home at 3.30pm. We 'phoned Marie and Grace. All was OK at home. At 7.00pm I went to the Plaza which is at the intersection of Lake and Shields Streets where there is a small entertainment shell, to see and hear a Gospel Group and their music. I stayed about an hour.

***Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> May 250Km today.***

Very cloudy. To go to Atherton.



We drove down to Gordonvale and then westward on The Gillies Highway up the mountains. This stretch is very windy for about 20km. We arrived at the Yungaburra and its Markets at 9.15am. A very big outdoor markets about the size of a football ground with many types of things for sale. Fruit, vegetables, jewellery, farm machinery hardware, takeaway food, art and so on. We left at 10.15am to drive on to Atherton arriving 15minutes later. I went to the Information Centre then on further to Mareeba. This is where one can drive down to Cairns via Kuranda.

The first drink for Elf at Mareeba, 25lt at 132c/lt.

The Mareeba Museum was our next stop. It is a good little museum and I was happy for Marie to take a photo of me standing at an old ambulance mounted on railway

track wheels. In other words it travelled on the rail tracks years ago.

Its Web page at;

[www.mareebaheritagecentre.com.au](http://www.mareebaheritagecentre.com.au)



Here I am standing on the side step of an ambulance that has railway wheels so it could be used on the tracks in the last century.

Onward where we visited The Coffee Works. We did the tour for \$9.00 each. A lot of useful information about how coffee is grown and the beans made into coffee. The tour included tastes of about twenty different coffees from all over the world. In the photo Marie is trying another coffee. Then quickly into the chocolate room where that's made plus some free samples.



On our way back we went to the Mt. Uncle Distillery to check out the wine tasting. Wine tasting cost about \$15.00 each so we did not stay. Just south is a War Memorial Cemetery which we did not stop at.

At Tolga I took photos of the railway station museum which is just a museum as the rail is no longer used. Tolga was a very busy town during WWII so it has a lot of history in that regard for a small town. Further along through Atherton then to Malanda. Malanda is where I wanted to see and photograph the picture theatre.



This picture theatre in Malanda is one of about five of the original theatres remaining in Queensland. It operates as a standard theatre meaning that it shows present day movies. At the time it was screening "Mission Impossible 3" and "Cry Wolf" on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. Yes two movies as was the usual case when we went to the flicks in the 60s to 80s.

On our way it rained quite heavily so we were a bit worried that it would be hard driving down the windy Gillies Highway. I took a couple of photos and then we had an early dinner at the only little café that was open just in case the way home took a long time.

As we reached the downward section the rain stopped and was so all the way back home where we arrived at 6pm.

### *Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May 6km.*

In the early hours of the morning we were woken by banging on the corridor door. We both got up, Marie held our door open while I asked who was there making the noise. A woman answered so I opened the corridor door and she entered. She didn't have her door key card. She was in her pyjamas, didn't say "thanks" then knocked on her door which someone opened. Later Marie heard a woman say something about sleep walking. Perhaps that's what happened to the young woman.

This is a scout den in a Cairns park.



We drove up and down most of the streets of Cairns then to a plant nursery about 15km south. It was not much

of a nursery, Marie was disappointed. Then on our way back we stopped at a defunct Drive-In picture theatre where I took photos. It really is sad to see places like this in ruin.

Then at the Cairns Football Club and ground I took photos to put on my Web site. Then lunch at a Hungry Jacks.

The last stop was at a petrol station across from the Cairns Railway Station for Elf's second and last drink from us. 13Lt at 132c/lt. She didn't drink much. We couldn't return her as the rental place was closed. It was Sunday.

Home at 2.30, a short driving day.

Marie cooked a nice dinner then later we watched a very good true story movie about the Dali Lama on Cable TV with Brad Pitt.

### *Monday 29<sup>th</sup> May.*

I took Elf back to the rental place at 8.15am with no problems, no extra charges.

Marie and I dressed nicely to go to the flicks, to see The March of the Penguins but it was no longer showing. No longer showing at either of the movie complexes. This one is called City Cinemas and the one at the railway station centre is the Central Cinemas. We were disappointed but we may see it in Brisbane sometime.



The photo shows Marie sitting on one of the seats in a Cairns street. So pretty with all the coloured tiles.

We walked around more then back home for lunch. I sorted the brochures and other material we had collected so far. I had a sleep while my darling watched a movie on TV. For dinner we again went to the Turkish Kebab place on The Esplanade. Then to the Night Markets which runs between The Esplanade and Abbott Street. It has an atmosphere a little like one in South East Asia. We bought two bottles of fruit wine which comes from a local winery.

Here is a photo of one of Cairns' picture theatres that would have been a central point for the people's social life years ago. Of course it no longer operates as such.



**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> May.**

I walked over past the closed beach to The Pier where a maritime museum was supposed to be but it no longer existed. So I had a quick look at the very expensive shops, the items were not priced most times except at the art shop or gallery. A few oil paintings were priced at \$12,500.00 and \$5,000.00 which I didn't think looked very good. While I was away Esme Dudley came to give Marie three plants.

I went to the Internet place again and downloaded Headers of 267 E-mails. About 250 were SPAM junk.



Here Marie is standing amongst a big plant, a Bismark Palm, on The Esplanade.

Dinner at home but no cooking for dimmpy as I went to The Night Markets this time I got Thai take away. We love Thai meals but this was not as good as what one could enjoy at a Thai restaurant.

We watched another old movie on TV called "Lucky Me" with Doris Day, Robert Cummins and Phil Silvers. Doris Day is one of Marie's favourite actresses.

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May.**

Our last full day.

We did some packing then after lunch I took Marie to where I went the other day, The Pier and showed her the expensive shops and the very expensive paintings. She wasn't impressed either.



The photo I took standing on the Esplanade footpath. Marie is standing on our balcony just left of the green leaf of the shrub on the right. The photo shows our view of the Trilogy's swimming pool.



Our last dinner in Cairns because we will not return to Cairns at the RSL on the corner. We enjoyed the same type of roast pork and hot vegetables.

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June.**

Back to Brisbane.

Up early at 5.45am. Very cloudy.

We checked out and caught a taxi at 7am to the railway station. He let us out at the bottom of the platform ramp right at our Sunlander car D again. While we waited I walked around and took more photos then cleaned the window opposite our cabin. We talked to a staff man. His name, Max being an immigrant in the 1970s from France so we enjoyed talking to him. He told us that the Sunlander could carry from 250 to 500 passengers so the number of carriages varies.



I took photos while the train was ready for boarding.

We entered our cabin, same number 5 and 6. This was not the same car/carriage as on our journey up but very similar. There were fourteen cars on this train including a Power Car, a Luggage Car but not including one diesel locomotive.



It was cold in Brisbane, 5c minimum so I was looking forward to the cold.

We saw the same things on the way. We had our little fruit bars for breakfast then our complimentary coffees for morning tea in the Buffet Bar. For lunch I bought sandwiches from the Club Bar which we had in our cabin. For dinner we went to the Buffet Car and enjoyed their



lovely tasty barramundi again. We talked to the friendly staff, Cameron and the chef.

The photo is of sunset at the Burdikin River, pretty.

Then at about 7.30pm while I was having my shower our bunks were fixed for the night.

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June.**

During the night we had stopped and I went to the toilet and I asked a staff member who was walking through where we were, at St. Lawrence was the answer.

Marie was woken at 4.30am as we stopped at Rockhampton. We had our usual breakfast as usual of fruit bars in our cabin. Our beds were made up shortly after. We went to the Buffet Bar for morning coffee and talked for about an hour to another couple, Pam and David who lived on the Gold Coast somewhere. I bought sandwiches again from the Club Bar then we went back to our cabin.



Our suitcase would not fit under the seat. We had lunch in our cabin.

This photo is of the Burnett River looking westward.

On our way we passed the Bundaberg Show which was in progress.

The photo shows Garfield looking at another train as it stopped while we were stationary, I think at Nambour.





Here Garfield is looking at a train which had stopped at our window as we were stationary, I think at Nambour Station.

We arrived at Roma Street Station at 3.00pm. Again more taxi troubles as there were none just outside platform 10 where there should have been. So Marie waited there while I went to find one. I walked out to Roma Street but there are no taxi ranks there so walked to The Crest where I waited with about ten others for about twenty minutes. Finally a young Afghan man picked Marie up from outside platform 10 then home in cooler weather 18C. Home at 4.20pm.

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## Our Observations

### Firstly the Sunlander.

The staff, train equipment and actual ride was great. The information and announcements over the train sound system were meagre. We were asked by various passengers "where is the Buffet Bar?" There is no paper work to advise people about that and other things. The ride was very smooth due to the track being modernised, the track road being straighten and levelled out in many places. On most occasions after stopping, one could not tell by feel that the train had moved off again. Very smooth!

I would like to make another booklet about trains sometime where I will show photos of the inside of the various cabins and the outside items near or on railway tracks.

### Cairns.

We are impressed by Cairns. A clean city. Lots of tourist shops run or worked by Asians and expensive things for sale. Meals not cheap.

There are a lot of interesting, pretty and artistic things on buildings, the footpaths and elsewhere. Such as tiles depicting animals and so on. Sign posts with directions on them. Historical signs everywhere. We say that one needs to walk along a footpath twice to see all these things.



Everything is nice and green and lush, the gardens in streets well kept and colourful. The motorists are much better in Cairns, more patient. There are many shops selling the same things. A progressive city with lots of building in progress as well as many new housing estates being constructed in the suburbs. We also noticed a lot of medical and dental practices. The city is quiet until lunch time, noon, when it becomes alive. There is no surf on the beach of course so we suspect tourists go on tours and arrive back in Cairns in the afternoon as we did when we went to Kuranda. Then they go into the city as we did. One thing seems strange to us, that being that there are no Buskers in Cairns. Why? It is an ideal place for buskers to be and ply their wares.

The highlight for us both was the train ride to Kuranda and the Bird Sanctuary. The next best was the Cairns Museum.

If required I can send the text only version by E-mail my address is;

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or I may put it on my Web site at:

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Thank you.

John C.E. D'Alton

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