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My second holiday to Australia and New Zealand started in November 1991 and I went down to London first to stay with Liz and Johnny. I had got a ticket with Thai Airlines and Johnny also got a ticket with them to Perth Airport. The flight was about 14 hours to Bangkok Airport, on arrival we got a taxi to the city centre and booked into the Royal Plaza Hotel where we stayed for three days. On the second day we went sightseeing and sailed down some of the rivers, I have never seen so many small boats before and thought it a very nice place for a holiday. Our taxi driver took us to as many places as possible all day, was good to see the elephants working, helping making new roads. There were so many things to see and entertainment places to go to, I have never seen so much traffic before as in Bangkok, the streets are nearly impossible to cross and this goes on all night. We also visited many places where you see all young children working in tailor shops and you can have a suit made while you wait, also some lovely furniture places to visit. On the third day we made our way to the airport by taxi, after we checked in they announced the plane to Australia was delayed for 10 hours, they gave us our dinner and plenty to eat in the airport until it was time to take off.

We arrived at Perth Airport then got an airport bus to Perth and checked into the Grand Central Hotel where we had a room each. I had decided to get a small job because I wanted to keep what money I had for my flight to New Zealand and back to Sydney as I had not been there before and I had not brought a lot of spending money with me. So, I started working for a lottery selling tickets for hospital funds, in Australia they have a lot of eye problems from the sun. My boss came from Jersey, his name was Ujay and he took a liking to me, we started work at 10'clock, they had a 16 seated mini bus and then we had to finish at 6pm as you are not allowed to call at house doors after that time, we also worked on Saturday afternoons. The people who worked collecting changed every week as they were all holidaymakers who only worked for a short time and then moved on.

**Anna and Donna, my best friends when working together collecting**



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There were six regular people working, their job was to take new collectors out with them for the first day, it was mostly girls who worked and it was my job most days starting newcomers on the rounds. The minibus dropped us off at different streets on the outskirts of Perth and picked us up at 6pm to take us back to the city centre. Two of my best friends were Donna McDonald a New Zealand girl and Maria Hopla an English girl and they did the same as me taking newcomers round the first day. When we got off the minibus we would go for a meal before going home, sometimes we would go to any entertainment that was on, they had a lovely wee rented house.

**Maria and Shirley very good friends while collecting**



Johnny tried the job for two days but it was not his cup of tea. I would visit all the places in Perth in the forenoons and arrive for work at midday, get my pay for the day before, Sandy Townsend made up all the pay slips and paid us for the number of tickets sold, you could make about \$90 a day which was like £35.

While staying at the Grand Central Hotel a film crew came to make a documentary on Elvis Presley. At the hotel they had two long cranes reaching up to the top of the hotel outside with big lights to shine in the windows, they were making the film on the fourth floor which I was on. The story goes that Elvis was staying up town in a fancy hotel but would come to my hotel to meet prostitutes, then one night he shot one of them. Anyway he got off with it and that was what the documentary was about, two occupants of two rooms had to move out of their rooms for three nights as they started filming about ten o'clock at night until one o'clock in the morning. It was very funny, Johnny and I would sit and watch them and the girls in the film crew would supply us with coffee and biscuits, they worked the tapes, sound and also the lighting. The film consisted of about a dozen people and had been kept very quiet, that was why they did it at night, anyone coming in making a noise or a train passing by they had to cut it and do it again. The Elvis look alike was very good and the girl was very pretty,

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it was funny watching him shoot the girl with his gun and someone spraying some smoke into the room at the time! The build up to the shooting was him getting in bed with the girl then starting to argue with her about money, he was not able to have sex and did not want to pay up, that is the main part of the story. It took three nights to film, they had to cut the take so many times as sometimes you got someone coming in with too much drink and wanting Elvis's autograph!

**The hotel in Perth where they made the Elvis Presley film**



I met lots of friends where I was staying, lots of young boys and girls from many different countries and they wanted to learn the English language. I used to meet them in the washing room which had about a dozen washing machines and dryers and they would have their translation books with them while they were doing their washing. I also met a Canadian man who came to Australia every year for four months, his name was Steve Dorsey, he was in the room next to me and we became good friends, he had a farm at Portland where he grew Christmas trees to pay for his holiday.

It was now time to move on, I had decided to take a coach across Australia, Johnny was thinking about going home by now. Steve helped me to the coach with my bags and he said he would look after Johnny until he left for home.

My first stop crossing Australia was Ballator, it took about twenty hours in the coach, I arrived there about ten o'clock on a Sunday morning and the bus ticket office was closed. I found out where the lady who worked there stayed and she came to the office and gave me the ticket for the bus at five o'clock at night. I lay on a park bench with my valuable bag under my head and other bags tied to my legs! It was a quiet mining town so I slept most of the day.

I phoned John Sutherland and he agreed to meet me when the bus arrived at Dunked at ten o'clock that night. When I arrived we drove to his farm where he had a big meal waiting for me, his wife Jenny and daughter Anna and son Joseph were very nice, it was a lovely house and good farm of modern buildings.

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John's place was called Firgrove Farm in Dunked which is in Victoria, it is very good farm country, he kept Merino sheep and Hereford cows.

**John Sutherland with Jenny and family in the garden**



**John's store bullocks**



John took me to the sheep breeding centre where all the best rams in Australia were kept for an embryo transfer programme for breeders all over the country. John's wife Jenny did a one year exchange course at nursing before they married at Callander

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Hospital, Falkirk in Scotland. They took me round lots of places and I stayed there for four days, John was an agent for a company called Amway, he took orders for people wanting to buy everything in the food line and any kind of household goods, most people staying in the outback cannot travel to the shops so they get it delivered by mail. The mail delivers twice weekly and comes by lorry, it is a very big company with many big warehouses and he takes their orders.

**Me in sheep shearing shed at John Sutherlands**



**Sheep shearing shed**



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While I was staying at Johns on the fourth day John Hanson and his wife Rhonda came to collect his order from Amway and I got a lift with them to Sunbury on the outskirts of Melbourne. Funny thing was the part they stayed in was called Woodend, the same name as our old farm. John worked in the airport and was a disc jockey at night. I stayed with them for three days and visited most of Melbourne, one day I was walking along past the famous race course where all the big horse races are held and past the dog racing track when I came to a large park where a cattle show was being held. I came to the entry gate into the official enclosure where they were taking pictures of a champion Murray Gray bull. I got talking to the young man at the gate and when I told him I came from Scotland he became very interested in what it was like and what kind of cattle and sheep we kept. After talking to him for about half an hour he filled up a plastic cup with wine and let me in and told me to mingle with the hob knobs and just give them a little nod, so I got a free day at the show!

I left on the third morning and Rhonda took me to Melbourne Airport in her car, I had been very lucky to stay with people and getting lifts. I was able to save some of my money so I took off for Christchurch Airport, as I did not visit the South Island on my last trip.

#### **Christchurch town centre**



After getting the bus from the airport I checked into Stonehurst Hotel, a motel lodge which turned out to be a very good place. It had four bedrooms and we each shared the sitting room with a television and kitchen for cooking. There was a German couple staying called Peter and Anke Gruttner, also a Malaysian couple called John Loh Ah Chai and his wife Celene and daughter Debbie Anne, also a Canadian couple called Al and Cindy Chrzanek both of Polish origin. We got on very well, some nights we would go out to entertainment at some of the hotels, Peter always brought in a bottle of Bailey's Irish Cream to share each night. I got my meal with one of the couples as long as I made the coffee at bed time which suited me! Peter always had a good meat meal, the Malaysians had me eating with chopsticks, which was not easy!

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There was a Japanese girl in the room next door who Anke and Peter were very friendly with and she came to our apartment often and wanted to know about Scotland. We sometimes went on coach tours to see places in the South island, her name was Kaori Koketsu. Christchurch is a very nice place with a big river running through it, where we saw lots of canoes, it was a hard job keeping up with Kaori and her camera, we saw some weddings held at the side of the river with pipe bands playing. There was plenty things to see so time went in quickly. The time I was staying at Stonehurst was 6<sup>th</sup> of February, my birthday. I went down to the town centre at nine o'clock at night to phone home to Auchengray, which would be nine o'clock in the morning. I arrived back at the hotel and the place was in darkness in our apartment, as I entered in the door all I heard was 'Happy Birthday' so we had a wee party which was a lovely surprise!

**Peter and Anke, John and Celene with Debbie Anne and Cindy in the Hotel in Christchurch on my birthday February 6<sup>th</sup>**



While I was in Christchurch I had met this man called Andrew McIvor, he did fruit picking in the summer time and when the season was finished he went fishing. He said he was heading for Picton the port where you get the boat to the North Island and he said I could get a lift with him. I knew I would have to keep moving so I arranged for him to pick me up the next morning. When he arrived in his wee mini car my friends were all sad to see me go, I can still see them standing waving me off in the wee car, I think they were worried about my safety!

We set off with him driving in his bare feet, the boot of the car was packed with fruit, potatoes and everything you could think of, the brakes were not so good so I was hoping he would not have to make an emergency stop! About midday he stopped at a farm where he often did fruit picking, it was an organic farm owned by a big Dutch family. They insisted we were to have dinner with them, all the family sat around the table and we all had a big meal, afterwards he insisted I go and see his dairy herd before we set off. After a couple of hours Andrew stopped to have a swim in the sea while I had a walk around to stretch my legs.

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We set off again and he took me the coastal route to see the scenery, stopping at another farm to let me meet the farmer, this was a fruit and sheep farm. It was getting near night time by this time so he decided to stop for the day and continue the journey in the morning.

Andrew set up his gas cooker and started making the supper, he had everything in the back of the Mini, latterly when it began to get dark he got out two sleeping bags, we were stopped on a sandy beach so he slept on the sand. It was quite comfortable, the sky was covered with stars and the crickets were out, they make some noise through the night. Also some ponies came sniffing round our bags!

In the morning after we had breakfast we set off again and arrived at Picton about midday, I booked into the Federal Hotel until the next day and booked my sail from Picton South Island to Wellington North Island, meanwhile Andrew set off to Nelson to go on a fishing trip with fishing trawlers.

#### **Federal Hotel where I stayed in Picton**



It was a very large ferry that sailed to Wellington, you pass dozens of small islands, it was a very warm day and it was a good sail. There was a cinema on board and good meals served, it took about three hours to cross, there were dozens of cars on board below deck. When the ship docked at Wellington I found a boarding house with rooms and stayed there for two days and looked around the town then got a bus ticket for Hamilton. It took about six hours to get there and as I had been in the Hamilton bus station the last time I was in New Zealand, I knew what I had to do so I gave Jessie and Willie Williamson a ring and they were there in an hour. They were glad to see me again and everything was the same except they had a porch built at the back door for me getting a smoke of the pipe. I had carried a bottle of Drambuie from the airport all round for Jessie, she had asked me the last time I had been on a visit to bring it for her.

It was very warm the time I was there and on the third day Jessie did not feel well, she thought it was the heat so Willie took her to the hospital where they kept her in, next day Willie moved into the hospital into a room beside her.



Molly, Bob's wife came and got me and I went to stay at Raglan, I stayed there for a few days and Bill and Doreen came and took me to their holiday flat for four days down in Cooks Bay on the edge of the sea. I had bought Bill three tapes from Scotland, the Old Meal Mill and two of Dick Black's Dance Band, he had wrote to me and asked me to bring them. He had never been back to Scotland and he was first to go to New Zealand. While staying with Bill and Doreen they took me around places I had not been before, after four days we set off back up to Hamilton to visit Mina and Dick and we also went to visit George and Pauline at their Kiwi Fruit Farm where Molly came and picked me up. We went and gave Duncan a visit then back to Raglan Bay of Plenty where I stayed the rest of my holiday with Bob and Molly. We had a good time going out in the fishing boat taking his grandsons to their music lessons and playing his accordion to teach the boys and then taking them back to their mum Robin. I used to go to the beach in the morning with Bob's next door neighbour to exercise the ponies in the salt water and they would roll about in the sand and love it.

#### **Fishing at Bob and Molly's**



Before leaving New Zealand Mina came and picked me up and we went to visit Jessie and Willie, it was about two hours drive from Bob's house. When we got to the hospital we sat out in the big gardens, Jessie and Willie came out and we sat and talked about old times in Armadale, it was very sad as I knew I would never see her again as there was no cure for cancer. She gave me some money to give to a lady friend of hers in Bathgate and I said I would give it to her when I got home. I was very sad to leave and Mina was a bit upset driving me back to Bobs so I got Molly to come and get me at Minas. I spent the rest of my holiday with Bob and Molly, when it was time to leave they took me to the bus station which was an hour's drive from the beach house.

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After getting my ticket to Auckland which was six hours drive away to the airport I can see the two of them standing looking at the bus windows as I was leaving, Molly with tears in her eyes and a sad look on Bob's face as he has never been back to Scotland and was afraid of flying, I knew I would never see him again so I was glad I had visited them all because I knew I may never see them again.

**Ponies on beach at Raglan Bay**



**Ponies at Bob and Molly's Raglan Bay**



On the way to the airport on the bus there was a girl called Tracey Murphy who I had met before in Raglan, she was heading back to Perth in Australia after being on holiday in Masterton, her home town. So, I was getting the plane to Sydney and she was going on to Perth we decided to sleep outside at Auckland Airport as our plane did not come in till early morning. You cannot get into the airport at night so we slept on seats until it opened in the morning then we got something to eat and were ready to board the plane when it arrived. The airports on New Zealand are very small and quiet with just the odd plane arriving daily.

The plane landed at Sydney Airport and as this was my first time there it took me a long time finding a place to stay. It is a very busy place and I knew I had very little money so I thought I would be best to buy a bus ticket to get back to Perth which would be three days and nights in the bus. I could keep the ticket until I was ready to leave Sydney, I found a place on Main Street, just rooms only and it was very handy. There were three big cinemas just across the road and you could go Undertown easy from where I was staying, it is a great place and so large the railways all come into it, the big line that comes over Sydney Bridge is such a busy place you could spend a great day down there.

### **Sydney Bridge**



There was so much to see, one day I walked over Sydney Bridge and back again, so many roads and railways go over it into Undertown, it is hard to believe there is a big town under Sydney. You can also go on the Sydney Tour where you get a great view across the water to the other half of the town as well as Chinatown which is such a big place with everything there. You can spend a lot of time at Sydney harbour, the boats come in non-stop, so many shows all day long and it is good to go upstairs to the Opera House, it is such a large place with all the fancy restaurants, ballrooms and large orchestras playing every day. It is a very nice place to sit in the sun and watch all the rich people rushing into the opera.

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I knew I could not stay long in Sydney as I had to get back to Perth to change my return ticket home to a later date so I could have seen lots more if I had more time, I tried to see as much as possible. I had a quick sail in the boat to Bondi Beach where they make all the good films, there is just so much to do and so many places to see from Sydney and so many boat trips to all the islands and up to the barrier Reef. You can also get a bus to the Blue Mountains every morning but I did not get time to do this trip. I was kept so busy there trying to visit everything and went to two big cinemas two nights, went to entertainment centre one night, which was a great place to go. There is a boat called the Solway Harvester which came from Carsethorn, Dumfries-shire in 1800, it is good to read the history of some of the old boats

### **Sydney Bridge**



I was staying in a very good place called the George Hotel, it had a big sitting room with television and rest rooms but there were no meals which suited me. I met a girl who was head receptionist and she was on call most nights, her name was Amy Chalmers, her mother was Judith Chalmers from the Holiday Programme, she had been brought up in New Zealand, her father was with the British Naval Embassy based there and he still lived there, her mother had stayed in Britain most of her life so Amy was very interested to know about Scotland. I would sit in the office with her talking late on at nights, she was very nice and intelligent and wanted to know all about farming on Scotland and all its history. So it had come time for me to head for Perth, when I was leaving Amy took me to the main bus station which was a bit out of town and let me off without paying my last two nights in the hotel to help me on my holiday.

**Sydney Opera House**

The first two days and nights on the bus were not too bad as I had met two Swedish ladies who were sisters and dairy farmers. They were on holiday and were getting off at Adelaide. So I had their company for two days and we could share the seat for sleeping and have turn about, by the third day my ankles were swollen up and I could not get my shoes on. After getting off the bus I managed to walk to Grand Central where I stayed before, I managed to get a bed in the linen room for the night until there was a room the next day! So the first thing I did was to go to the Thailand Air booking office and change my return flight until near the end of March. By this time I had no money left so the first thing I went to see if I could get a job collecting lottery money again. While I was there one of the girls I used to work with told me about a lady who was selling phones and was looking for someone to help her. So, I got a trial with her, it was Panasonic Mobile phones and alarm and television phones, they were just beginning to come on the market in a big way.

I started to work with Melissa Collins selling phones, it was good meeting all the different people, she would take one side of the street and I would take the other. Lots of people were interested in buying one for taking into the garden or when they were using the swimming pool. Melissa did all the paperwork, if I got an order my side of the street we would change streets and she would complete the sale. It also consisted of putting in a reception aerial at the house door and the most popular phone was the alarm one. We would start about eleven o'clock and finish about four o'clock in the afternoon, I did it for about three weeks and she wanted me to stay on as she said Australians liked a Scotsman but not an Englishman and her sales had went up with me!

During my last weeks in Perth I was kept busy meeting all the friends I had worked with. I met up with Tracey Murphy who I had stayed with at Auckland Airport

and she had rented a lovely flat in Dianella and was sharing it with two other girls so I stayed with them one weekend and helped them to empty their swimming pool as it was full of sand. In Australia some people fill their swimming pools with sand for their children to play in which is a very good idea for safety. Anyway it took the four of us two days to empty it, the girls treated me to a night out to a quiz night and it was a good laugh. The three of them had good jobs in Perth, Tracey worked with a newspaper printing office and the two other girls worked for a travel agency. Well it was time to pack and I was very sad to be leaving, I would miss all the company and friends I had made. So, I had to get the Thai plane at Perth Airport, Melissa offered to take me there and when we arrived we had a meal and she kept wanting me to stay on and work with her, she gave me one hundred dollars to help me on my holiday. I had been talking too long and when I went to go to get through to the Departure lounge I thought it was very quiet and it is quite a long walk to the plane, as I was walking along I heard an announcement for John Graham to come to the Departure desk! As I got there the girl was waiting and asked if I was John Graham and rushed me onto the plane, I got some right looks from all the passengers as I went in! So, that was me off to Thailand, we landed at Bangkok Airport after ten hours flight, I got a taxi to the Cadena Palace Hotel which was a very good place to stay. I had been so lucky on my travels through Australia and New Zealand being able to stay with people and get lifts and make the little money I had last out so well, I did not want to go home!

In Bangkok I booked this taxi driver for two days and he took me round all day, up the river to the flower markets that is held on hundreds of small boats. The drivers name was Joh Changsuwan, he took me to all the big temples, down the rivers where all the houses are built on the water and you see all the children swimming about in the water underneath their houses with open fronts. He also took me out into the country where hundreds of people are working in the paddy fields and to see the elephants working on building a big new road, also to the crocodile lake where all the crocodiles are lying asleep in the sun.



**Thai girls dancing**



Another place he took me took to was a big show with girls doing traditional Thai dancing which was good and he took me to a factory where young girls make clothes and work all the looms, this is cheap labour, some of the girls looked about as young as ten years old. We also went to a factory where they make all beautiful wooden furniture that I've never seen anything like before and to a jewellery factory with really expensive jewels. Another place was the gentlemen's clothing factory where they make you a suit while you wait.

**Thai elephants**



I saw so many things in just two days and he also gave me a quick run around at night making a quick stop at a lot of night clubs which last all night long.

It is very hot in Thailand and I had a good veranda with a bed I could lie on and watch all the traffic. The streets are so busy you could not walk across them and I had never seen so many small bikes with people going to work.

It was now time for me to leave for home, my taxi driver Joh Changuswan arrived at my hotel and was waiting to take me to Bangkok Airport. He had been very good to me, always waiting at the hotel each day. Bangkok is the busiest airport I have ever been in, all the police dogs run alongside the baggage conveyers sniffing out the bags for drugs and you are given a very thorough check over before being allowed into the departure lounge.

My first stop was Bombay, India but we did not get off the plane there, it was very hot, next stop was Dubai, again only a short trip. My last stop was Paris Airport where the plane refuelled and stocked up on food, this took about an hour. The final short journey to London Airport was only about an hour taking me back to the cold British weather! It was the usual getting back from the airport, about one hour in the train to the underground station, then on the tube to Liz's flat at Brownlow Court, Bounds Green, North London, I stayed with Liz for two days then took the coach back to Dumfries and back to life at Auchengray Farm, New Abbey.