

Vindi Down-under Reunion 2009

They traveled from all parts of Australia, New Zealand and the UK. They came by air, they came by car, and they came by bus, but come they did staying in caravans to motel units to glamour apartments and resorts. The Vindi boys gathered in Caloundra on the Queensland Sunshine Coast for the 9th Annual Down-under Reunion. Sadly Gordon Moggach of WA and his partner traveled half way across Australia with their caravan only to have their vehicle break down and they could not make it.

In Caloundra the weather forecast had us down for a very wet weekend and in Brisbane on Thursday the sky opened up with heavy rain and lightning and much of the city plunged into darkness. In Caloundra 100km north the wind got up and the skies were looking ominous. But Friday morning the sun was out and stayed that way the whole weekend with gentle sea breezes, the down-under lads were in for a treat as the Queensland advertisements say "Beautiful one day, Better the next."

With days around the 17 to 29's deg I did hear from a lad from cooler climes saying tongue in cheek "how hot it was". Which goes to show that you can please some people some of the time but not all, all of the time.

The venue this year was the Power Boat Club at Golden Beach, a club with 1st class amenities and a superb outlook over the Pumicestone Passage This stunningly beautiful passage of water separates Bribe Island from the mainland.

Thursday evening a non organised reunion dinner was hastily arranged at the Caloundra Bowls Club with 36 attending making this a jolly event.

On arrival for the traditional 'Meet and Greet' on Friday the banner and flags were up and raffle prizes were wrapped waiting for some lucky winners. All that was needed was for the expected 113 Vindi boys and girls to arrive, collect their information bags, name badges and catch up with friends both old and new. There were raffles with 'winners and grinners' For those who are more energetic there was dancing to musician/singer Joe Bishop. For everyone it was a chance to 'catch up and swing the lamp.' On the evening menu was chicken, chips and salad or fish, chips and salad served alternatively with some swapping and of course the bar was open to wet dry throats and tea and coffee always available.

Saturday morning it was off on a 'Magical Mystery Bus Trip.' We didn't know where we were going, but we got on the two coaches anyway!! The trip took us up into the hinterland around the Sunshine Coast, through Landsborough to our first stop at Mary Cairncross Park, with picturesque summit views and back drop of rain forest parkland. We had a cup of tea or coffee and were each given a lunch box with some tasty sandwiches a muffin and some fruit. It was a chance to look over the valley and across to the magnificent, stunning Glasshouse Mountains and of course to continue talking. It was then on to Montville with its myriad of little art and craft shops. Some Vindi lads opted to sit out the time chatting instead of shopping while others had more than their fill of ice cream!!

The next stop was The Big Pineapple, just outside Nambour. More ice cream for some and ginger gummy bears for others as we wandered round the complex. No time for a ride on the farm train, but it was trundling its way round. It would be noted that the complex is in receivership for \$36mil and that the giant pineapple is heritage listed. It was a glorious morning with the sun out and birds in full voice and one to remember. We arrived back about 3pm in time for a sit down and get your breath or a siesta nap for some before the nights formal dinner.

The Vindi cake was made, the tables were set and the ladies dressed in their finery and many lads resplendent in full Vindi jackets and tie uniform for the formal dinner. The tables dazzling in MN theme and tables named in Oceans, Seas and Rivers to assist seating. On the menu was pumpkin soup, lamb shanks and vegetables or as the previous night, alternative servings of pork cutlets and vegetables. For sweets either date pudding and custard or meringue and cream. Once again there were speeches, dancing and raffles. The major prize a Vindi engraved bell was won by Arnie & Mavis Piddington from the UK. An auction was held for a collection of Dave Partridge's poems including 'Heroes'. The bidding was brisk and the final buyer was Percy Grout from Tasmania with a bid of \$101.

The Sunday service held at the club was conducted by Vindi lad Robert Buxton who is a preacher. The Red Duster was lowered and then raised after a wreath, made by Andy Squibb, was laid by the President. A reading of David Partridge's 'Heroes' was read out by Queensland President, Roger Wilson and later Doug Duxbury read his well known poem 'Vindi Boys' Then it was time for the usual group photographs and lunch of sandwiches. A spirited rendition of Vindi boy songs followed conducted by Vic Rother, a song or two from our own Pearly King & Queen, George and Lily Shepherd-Ashby then it was farewell to the 2009 ANZ Reunion.

Some, if not all continued with the party, many went to the Bowls Club. Other held a BBQ around the pool at the Golden Beach caravan park and 'swinging the lamp' late into the night. A delegation was also formed to attend the 11th/11th-11am Remembrance Day ceremony in Caloundra on the Wednesday.

Bill Davis