



The Five Ferry Run, Sunday, 13th March 2011

The day began in the dark with the expectation of showers, however, it turned out to be a fine and bright day. We met the group of Nick, Kerrie & Kaleb, Bronte, Norma & Wayne, Joann & Peter, John & Astrid, Marie, Peter & Sandra, Brent & Keryn, Martin (on his motorbike) & Bronwyn & Roy at the Institute Park in Mt Pleasant and set off to explore the Murray River and five of its ferries (no Wayne & Brent; ferries not fairies).

We meandered on the black top through Sedan to the first ferry at Swan Reach and it was here that Quenton explained one of the side activities for the day; Poker. Each car was to be given a card at each ferry in which to play Poker with the winner to be announced at Wellington.



Next was the morning tea stop by the swollen river front at Swan Reach with a vast array of yummy cakes shared by all. From Swan Reach we travelled on to Walker Flat stopping off at the lookout over Big Bend. This lookout gave us a great view over the river and the force and quantity of water now flowing down the Murray River.

The murky brown colouring was of no surprise as we had seen the colour of the water at the river mouth last month but what was surprising was the amount of algae covering the outer part of the river as far as the eye could see.

The next stop - Walker Flat and another smooth ride across the river although there was some discussion about if beards are part of the uniform of the ferry operator.



The third ferry ride was at the very busy town of Mannum, I think most of northern Adelaide had chosen that day to visit. Both ferries were operating, however, the wait was still lengthy and it took three ferry rides to get the group across but this gave us a chance for a chat and to admire the mural at the local caravan park.



The ride across was like crossing the Tasman during winter, well that may be a slight exaggeration but if the journey went any longer sea sick tablets may have been required.

The trip to Murray Bridge was through typical saltbush country and we arrived at the river front to enjoy our picnic lunch, however, the weather had changed and we were greeted with a cold wind and grey skies.



The river front has certainly changed over the years, however, the Bunyip was still in fine voice and many of the beaches we had seen previously are now covered by water.

We left Murray Bridge under the threat of rain and travelled through cow country to Jervois where the ferry ride across to Tailm Bend was a lot smoother but there was certainly more evidence of the river bank damage that had occurred.



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On the trip to Wellington the radio was littered with talk about card swapping and blatant card cheating this was, however, curbed by Quenton who walked car to car during our wait for the ferry with warnings (well that's what he told me in defence to the lousy cards I was given).

We arrived at the Wellington Court House ready for an afternoon tea of what else but scones and coffee and to find out who the winner of our Poker run was. The winner with a "straight flush" was Kerry, Nick and Kaleb. Their prize was a wine pack donated by Yalumba from Angaston.

This afternoon tea was a welcome stop and we were also given an impromptu story of the history of the Court House. The walk around the compound was interesting and we were given a fishing lesson by Bronte. I'm not sure but I thought I heard the fish laughing?

We inspected the "Ferryman's" rooms under the courthouse, (now B&B rooms) and all agreed they would make a lovely romantic spot to stay.

We then all went our separate ways and made our way home after a most enjoyable day.



[By Deb]
