

# QUASAR

Journal of the Southern Astronomical Society (Incorporated)

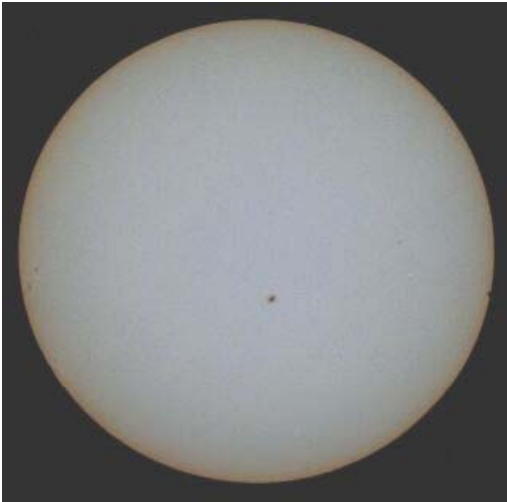
## Transit of Mercury 7<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Can you spot Mercury as it transits the Sun, in this series of photos.

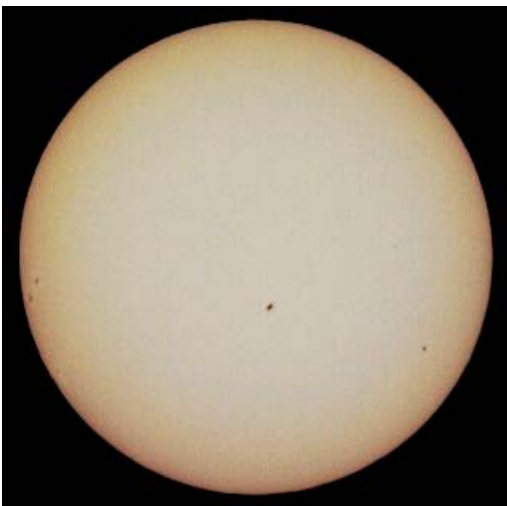
(Mercury enters at the 3 o'clock position on the Sun).

A sunspot near the centre of the Sun appears much larger than Mercury. The transit was observed from Lake Moondarra, 18km north of Mt Isa.

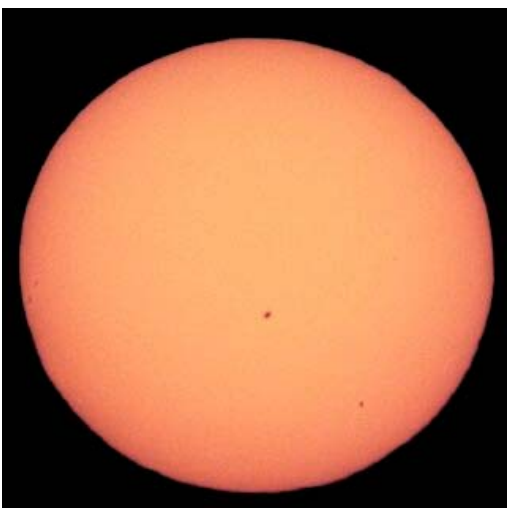
All photos by Gary Gawronski, with the help of Colin Drescher and Diane Hughes.



3:20pm



4:40pm



6:00pm

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### Next General Meetings

Saturday 14 June  
Saturday 12 July  
*7pm at Pimpama State School*

### Next Local Field Night

Saturday 19 July  
*6pm at Pimpama State School*

### Next Astrocamps

27 June – 29 June  
25 July – 27 July  
*Leyburn Observing Site*

# Southern Astronomical Society – Directory

## GENERAL

### POSTAL ADDRESS

Southern Astronomical Society Inc.  
PO Box 867, BEENLEIGH Q 4207

ABN 14 693 585 419

### MEMBERSHIP FEES

Adult \$28  
Student \$21  
Joining Fee \$5

The membership year begins on 1st July and all subscriptions are due on that date. Membership enquires and requests for the SAS Constitution should be directed to the Membership Officer.

### MEETINGS

The Society meets at 7:00pm on Saturdays away from New Moon at the Pimpama State School, Hotham Creek Road, Pimpama. Please see the *Event Horizon* calendar (enclosed) for exact dates.

### ASTROCAMPS

Astrocamps are usually held during the Friday/Saturday nights of the weekend closest to each New Moon. The location is the Leyburn Astrocamp Site. Note: These Astrocamps are not SAS events. One of our members generously donates the site for private use by interested members and other observers in the astronomical community.

Fees are \$5 pp/pn for over 12's payable on site. The correct change is appreciated. Please see the *Event Horizon* calendar for exact dates.

### SAS INTERNET SITE

Check out our WWW Site for Society news, the latest Astronomical Events, software, pictures and links to other sites. Our URL is:

<http://www.sas.org.au/>

Eric Vandersande maintains the SAS Internet Site. Our thanks to Odyssey Communications for supporting our Society.

## QUASAR PUBLICATION

*Quasar* is edited and printed by Colin Drescher.

The Southern Astronomical Society (Incorporated) publishes *Quasar* every second month. Intelligent dissemination and discussion of all ideas on astronomical matters is encouraged, whether or not they conform to the prevailing mainstream of scientific thought. Accordingly, all contributions of this nature will be presented in *Quasar*. Readers are reminded that published articles contain the opinions of their respective authors and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Society as a whole. All articles in *Quasar* are copyright of their authors.

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<b>South-East Qld Astronomical Society. Inc.</b>		
(President)	VACANT	

## Wilson & Wilson Accountants

Are proud to support the Southern Astronomical Society Inc. with their auditing needs.

Phone (07) 3255 1455 Fax (07) 3255 1466

Unit 1/63 Annerley Road, Woolloongabba Qld 4102

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Due Date for next Edition = **Sun, 20 July 2003.**

The Quasar Editor compiles this Journal using Microsoft Word 97. Therefore articles sent in a format friendly with Word 97 would be appreciated. Other suitable formats for submission include plain text formats or neatly written copy. Computer submissions can be given to the Editor by disk at any General Meeting or by email to the address "drescher@squirrel.com.au".

Contributors should note that the Editor might alter their article content for correct spelling and grammar. If larger changes are considered necessary, the Editor will contact you first. You can be published anonymously, but please include your full name and contact details with your submission.

## STARMAP & EPHEMERIS INFORMATION

The publication of a star map, lunar or planetary information on a regular basis in *Quasar* is not considered necessary. This is because of the excellent coverage in *ASTRONOMY 2003 Australia - A Practical Guide to the Night Sky* which may be purchased from good bookshops or by writing to Quasar Publishing PO Box 85 Georges Hall NSW 2198. *Quasar Publishing* is not connected with the SAS *Quasar*. We were first.

# The President's Report

BY CHRISTINE MALLET

Dear members,

**Astroquiz.** Firstly let's acknowledge the success of the 2003 Astroquiz, "the best games ever", apart from the "whole not winning the trophy thing"! Congratulations to the Brisbane Astronomical Society. Thank you to all who contributed, particularly our gallant team, Greg, Peter and Colin. If the buzzers worked, well who knows, we were only 3 questions off the tiebreaker! Seventy people attended making this our largest meeting to date. The presidents and members of other societies kindly complimented our hosting of the event.

**Make a difference.** Your involvement in your Society is of the utmost importance. It's the reason the Society exists. Whether you've just joined or are a foundation member, make a suggestion, present an item, write an article or contribute to an event. Join the committee and make a difference, nomination forms can be found on the Event Horizon insert.

**"An Evening on Mars".** This year, our Annual Public Field Night coincides with the best Mars opposition in our lifetimes. What an opportunity for an astronomical society to involve the community! It deserves something a little more extravagant than our regular field night so I've drafted an event blueprint for the committee's approval. "An Evening on Mars". As usual, we'll provide telescopes for the public to look through. The proposal also includes, presentations on Mars and it's exploration from NASA's Australian representative, Neal Newman, and the Mars Society's, Dr Jason Hoogland (UQ's Centre for Hypersonics). There's even a sponsorship offer from the GCCC. The proposed date is Saturday 06<sup>th</sup> of September. Stay tuned, get involved.

**Name change.** The reasons for suggesting changing our name to Gold Coast Astronomical Society (GCAS) have been put on the table for all to see:

It identifies our location nationally (most societies have a state, city or region in their name). A large city's name gives credibility.

We'll be easier to contact and people will remember our name more easily.

Our meetings are held on the GC, our postal address is GC and most of our members live on the GC (and most of those who don't are within 10k).

Why now?

We're considering purchasing new poloshirts (and a banner), with our logo.

The name is still available to register.

Boundary changes have made the Gold Coast a very large region.

The proposal to give our members the opportunity to vote for either GCAS or SAS was not carried by the

committee. Instead, all members are being given the opportunity to suggest a new name for our Society (in writing before June 30<sup>th</sup>). These names will then be voted on. A new name requires 75% of the vote. If there are several names to choose from, and none get 75% of the vote, the name will stay the same.

I'd find it difficult and a little heart breaking to change. But when I look at the Society's best interests, not what feels good to me, I think the reasons for change (given above) outweigh the reasons against. Either way, we are a progressive society of good spirit and will continue to thrive with any name.

**Winter Observations.** Its such a thrill to have Scorpio rising in our clear winter skies again. Winter is an ideal time of year to visit the universe and we are very fortunate to have departure points such as Astrofest and Leyburn available to us! Our appreciation goes to the organisers of these events. Please share your observations with us at our meetings.

Clear Skies. ■

## Secretary's Report

*Events from recent meetings.*

BY NOELEEN LOWNDES

At our May Meeting:

John Connolly thanked our members for helping on the Sciencefest evening on the 8th May at Pimpama State School. We had over 160 students and their families come to look at the night sky, \$340.00 was raised for the society which was terrific. A lovely letter of thanks was sent to the society from Doug Pauli the Sciencefest coordinator for 2003.

There is a "Pushing the Limits" conference for amateur astronomers being held at the Macquarie University in Sydney, Sunday 13th July'03 for any interested members please go to: [info@ptl.ozastro.org](mailto:info@ptl.ozastro.org)

We have had a lot of wonderful letters of thanks and appreciation from members of the public and the parents and teachers in at the schools, for the Saturn evenings held for the NASA 'Saturn Observation Campaign'. Thank you so much to Kevin Dixon, Ray Suckling, Brian Pott & John Connolly for offering to help me on these special evenings.

I have presented all of my events as a member of the Southern Astronomical Society and have been very proud of these members who gave up their time to help show the beauty of our night sky to so many delighted people. I'm so looking forward to being part of it all again next year. If you think you also would like to share your love of astronomy and be part of the Saturn campaign, please go to the web site at:

<http://soc.jpl.nasa.gov>

The on- line application form will begin on the 1st July 2003 and will go through until the 14th September 2003. It is a most rewarding experience :)

Christine talked about the up and coming annual public field night that the society is going to hold for the Mars opposition in early September. We will have another update on this event, at our next general meeting.

Pat gave us a talk about the up and coming 'Queensland Astrofest' being held from August 25th to 31st at the Lion's camp, Duckadang at Linville. This year David Malin world-renowned astrophotographer will be giving a talk on Saturday evening, along with many other exciting events to be held during the week. Cost this year is \$16 Adults, \$8 children. Please find all the details on our SAS web page.

Our Main Item: Scott Sinclair & Dr Roy Duncan gave a simulated live demonstration on their new robotic observatory. The whole process is incredible; it is now all complete and ready to Go!

Renato showed us images from a new digital camera that's on the market, he was able to borrow it to see how it would go in imaging objects through his telescope. It showed very good images of the Moon, the images of the Mercury transit came out perfect! Renato explained that these cameras are still very expensive at \$4000 but it shows that they are getting better & better at astrophotography.

Erwin Van der Velden showed us his stunning images he took of the Mercury transit that was on the 7th May.

Kevin Dixon also had beautiful photographs of the Mercury transit that he took with his 8" Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope at Mt Tamborine.

We talked about the proposed name change for the society, and let members know that they now have a choice to submit their own choice of name for the society. We will talk more about it at our next meeting.

Renato asked members if they would like to go to the Slovene Club at the Bocce Centre, which is near Logan City for the AGM. The cost is \$ 23.00 per person, which includes a meal (3 choices), desert, tea/coffee. A show of hands agreed that this would be a good venue for our AGM. Gary Gawronski is going to bring his music.

Scott Sinclair showed a new plastic mat especially made for making mirrors for telescopes, called a LM3 if anybody is interested in borrowing it please contact him. Thank you also to Scott for donating a software program to our library called "The Amateur Astronomers Program". If any members would like to borrow it please contact Pat Pearl our librarian.

"Clear skies to all and wrap up tight for our chilly nights"

■

# MINOR-PLANET (3196) MAKLAJ=1978RY

BY BRYAN POTT

As mentioned by Noeleen Lowndes in the last quasar's secretary's report under general business, the Official announcement of IAU (3196) Makiaj=1978RY, discovered in 1978 September 1st, by N.S. Chernykh at the Crimean Astrophysical Observatory. Named in honour of Nikolaevich Miklukho-Maklaj (1846-1888), my great grand father he was a prominent Russian Anthropologist and Ethnographer, who studied the native populations of South-East Asia, Australia and Oceania, and the first Scientist who lived for about three years among the indigenous people of Papua-New Guinea.

He was to make a comparative study of the racial types of the Pacific region, he is known more for his efforts in defending the rights of indigenous people to their land against the spread of colonialism than he is for his ethnographic work.

On arrival in Australia in 1878, one of his earliest activities was to generate interest in the establishment of a Marine Biology Research Station, the opening of the station at Watson Bay, New South Wales, which was the first in the Southern Hemisphere.

He fell in love, when he met Sir John Robertson's 5th daughter, Margaret Emma, he sought Czar Alexander 111's permission to marry her, and on 27th February 1884, they were married.

He returned to Russia in 1886 to supervise the publication of his works and seek the support of Czar, in a scheme to help his friends in New Guinea. Steadfast as ever in his fight for humanity, even though disappointed and ill from sicknesses caught in his travels, while preparing his research material for publication after much illness, on 2nd April 1888, he died.

Any assistance in the finding of this minor planet for possible observation here in, South East Qld, would be greatly appreciated as would being able to obtain a recorded CCD Image or otherwise, for family prosperity and interest. THANKS!

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*NOTE: The minor planet (3196) Maklaj was successfully imaged at opposition on the 23 May 2003 by Gary Gawronski with help by Colin Drescher. An animation and images have been given to a very happy Bryan Pott.*

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# Chasing our own shadow: Part 2

BY GARY GAWRONSKI

*This is my pre-article paragraph. I wrote this article in early January. Back then, Mt Stromlo observatory was doin' fine and Columbia was merrily whizzing around our little ball of dirt. Also, Victoria, New South Wales and Canberra still had all of their forests. Well, haven't things changed since then. I considered re-writing relevant sections of this article but decided against it. After all, the things I'd written about are what were happening at the time. Keep this in mind when you are reading and we'll all get along just fine!*

*Here we go.... Part 2....*

*This is it....* John has the timer in one hand and the cable to trigger his camera in the other. I have my camera tracking nicely on the thin crescent of Sun that still remains and the video camera is rolling on the beach. If the atmosphere was electric before, it had just gone thermo-nuclear. I really could not describe the feeling we all felt as we saw the tiniest little sliver of sun slipping away, and seeing that glorious clear patch of sky around it. It was like a dream. After waiting three and a half years for this thirty-two seconds, they are finally here and we are going to see it! I'm writing this more than a month after the event and I still can't believe what I saw and felt.

Solar filters came off the cameras. Mere seconds to go now. The crowd is starting to get louder and louder in anticipation. Holy cow, it's going to happen, it's going to happen! Eight thousand people are starting to scream all around me, but I don't hear a sound from any of them, not one of them. In my little world there is only the sun, the moon, the camera gear and myself. I'll explain this later.

The thirty-two kilometre wide shadow of the Moon was rushing towards us at twenty one thousand, three hundred and thirty one kilometres per hour. We could see the horizon darken a few seconds before it hit.

Then the sun was gone.

It was the most beautiful thing that I'd ever seen. I wish it had been longer so that I could have soaked in my surroundings as well, but I'll have to rely on the video to do the soaking for me. I forced myself to look away from the strange thing in the sky and get these photographs happening. I snapped off the first three quick ones then went to the cardboard and cable release as I explained earlier. My six planned shots went out the window. I rattled off eight shots during totality. After the first ten seconds that I sacrificed for the sake of the camera, I just stared at that awesome sight while taking the rest of my pictures on autopilot. What I was looking at struck me as looking just like a hole in the sky.

A pitch black centre with that fuzzy white corona around it and then back into a dark twilight looking sky around that. It looked like the sky was being sucked into a hole! I had asked John to yell the countdown to me when it was at the ten second to go mark. I only came back to Earth as he was down to five seconds. I was so out of it that I was wondering what all the numbers were about. I also realised that I'd told Tony that I would relay the count down to him for the sake of his shots.

Wake up you fool! Four, three, two, one....and the sun peeked out from behind the moon again right on cue. And the crowd

goes wild! At least, this is when I first hear the crowd going wild. Eight thousand people cheering with delight!

We congratulate each other and tried to come to grips with what we have just witnessed. Tony says that he is shaking, John is doing a little dance! It made you feel like all eight thousand of you were as one.

Such a thing have we shared. I found out later that even the people running the caravan park had padlocked the gates and gone down to see it. The lady in the park's office had that same look of amazement that everyone else had. This is turning out to be more like a religious experience than a celestial event!

All of the things that I have seen before, and classed as never to be beaten, were now placed on the lower shelf. Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 slamming into Jupiter, the massive, bright tail on comet Hyakutake, the total lunar eclipse of 2000 and even that spectacular Leonid meteor storm of 2001 were all knocked from their perches. They will always be things I will remember for the rest of my life with great fondness and enthusiasm, but this is the ultimate experience.

I think what adds to the excitement is that it was of such short duration compared to the other events I'd mentioned.

After we came down from that initial hit of euphoria, I figured I'd better change the film in my camera. You see, the very last shot I took as the sun peeped out again was the last shot on my roll of film. I just made it. I couldn't believe my luck when I heard the camera start rewinding its film after my last shot!

John came up and asked me to check the camera that I'd set up for him to get that single shot from. I looked at it and said, "It's off".

"What do you mean It's off?"

I flicked the switch forward and said "This is on..." then I flicked the switch back and said "This is off. I forgot to turn your camera on!"

When we had done our practice runs, I couldn't turn John's camera on because it had film in it, where as the one I was using didn't. I thought that I'd just turn it on when the time came. The problem was that when the time came, I could think of nothing but the gear in front of me. It didn't even occur to me to have John pretend to power up his own camera during practice! Oops!

From here on in the clouds closed in again, so I only got a few shots off after the event. Who cares? I got the bit I came for. We slowly started to pack up the gear. What a day. I went back to the caravan park and drove my car to where we were set up. Between the six of us (including Rigel) we had a lot of junk to carry. It was over quite painlessly once packed into the car and driven back to the cabins.

I started to phone people to give them a report on what I'd seen, and that I'd even seen it, but no one answered their damn phones! I was busting to tell everyone but they were all either engaged or just not answering their phones. How frustrating! I tried to ring Colin Drescher, Mal Smith, Greg Hornsby, Renato Langersek and my sister to name but a few, but Colin, Mal and Greg were unreachable and Renato was in a Karate class and couldn't talk. I did get to speak to my sister and Peter Marples but I can't recall who rang who for that one. Colin had SMS'd me saying that he saw us on the ABC news. It was a good shot of everyone else. They only showed my legs. I wasn't hard to spot as I had the only bare set!

It wasn't long before we were back on the beach again watching the fireworks that were being shot off the end of the long jetty. For a small town like Ceduna, I was expecting to see a couple of guys standing at the end of the jetty throwing fire crackers into the water, but they put a lot of effort (and money) into it and made it an excellent display.

Back to the cabin again. We sat there reliving the eclipse as we ate yesterday's pizza. It was good and soggy now and posed no risk of causing bodily harm.

Another thing we all got out of today to remember it by was sunburn. Nothing that would set new medical records, but enough to make you regret having reached down and scratched your leg without thinking!

We all turned in, feeling very contented. Little eclipse thoughts dancing around in our heads and large kick drums pounding around in our ears.

Turns out that the band wasn't going to shut up at ten o'clock as advertised.

Eventually they did finish playing, leaving us with the soothing lullaby of abuses being hurled between the drunken locals that were standing outside the caravan park fence. We were due to get up in about four hours so that we could drive all day to our next destination. SHUT UP!!

Death would have been welcomed with open arms as the alarm went off.

Everything was once again packed into the car and we were on our way.

We left a note for Tony and Anne-Louise saying goodbye and that we had let one of their tyres down so that we could get a good head start on them.

I thought I'd see if Christine Mallet was in phone range once we'd reached Port Augusta again and ask her how her eclipsing went. Turns out that she was somewhere in town as well. What a small country!

Christine had gone to Wirraminna to catch the action and apparently got a good unobstructed-by-cloud view of the whole thing. Well done!

Once again we didn't have time to find each other in town and have a chat, so we said our good-byes and kept going.

Nothing really happened today except for driving. We pretty much passed straight through Adelaide without stopping. I'm sure there is heaps to see there, but if we stopped at every interesting thing along our journey we wouldn't get home until December next year!

We ended up at a place called Tailern Bend for the night.

John showed me the first hotel we had to choose from. I thought that it looked like the sort of place you see on the news after some nutter has set fire to it and heaps of people have died in the inferno because there weren't any smoke alarms fitted. There weren't any lights in the halls either for that matter.

The hotel down the road a bit looked a lot better.

After a big steak buried under one kilo or so of garlic butter (these people down here sure do like their fat!) we headed back to the hotel for the night.

I fired up the laptop and did a check on where and when the next bunch of eclipses would be. Only counting the good ones, we came up with Turkey, which will have three minutes and forty six seconds of totality in 2006 (this one is four minutes and seven seconds in Libya but the smoke haze from the artillery fire might obscure the view!). Next was China in 2009 with five minutes and fifty-three seconds, depending on where you're standing. You'd have enough time to read a magazine while this one was on!

Then it's back to Cairns in 2012 for a two minute and five second totality.

We all agreed that we *need* to see the one in Turkey in 2006. While in the neighbourhood, we couldn't pass up the opportunity to whip over to Egypt and see the pyramids and sphinx. I want to ride around a pyramid on a camel!

If nothing nasty happens in the next three years, you'll see us in turkey for sure.

Having decided all that, we drifted off to sleep with little eclipses dancing in our heads again.

The noise coming from the back seat was getting louder, so I relinquished command today and handed the bridge over to John. John drove us from Tailern Bend to Peterborough. This is Peterborough in Victoria, not the one in South Australia. The Great Ocean Road starts near here and the views were magic.

We'd noticed that the cold wind hadn't changed a hell of a lot between Ceduna and here. There were heaps of lookouts along the way, including one of the wind farm. The wind farm is an environmentally friendly way to generate electricity down there. There are fourteen, fifty meter high wind turbines along the coastline, away from the scenic lookouts. There didn't seem to be any lack of wind when we were there. It was fair howling!

However, in the store windows you would see partitions to get rid of them. It seems that the locals would rather have a smoke billowing power station in someone else's back yard than this clean one in theirs. I didn't think they looked *that* bad.

Diane had booked us into a lovely cabin with a spa. Luxury!

The good thing about sharing cabins with John and Diane was that I would always get the room with only one bed, which is always the master bedroom.

Did I feel guilty, sprawled out in my queen-sized bed while John and Diane squeezed into their single bunks? Na!

I gave the spa a whirl as well. I lay there in the bubbling hot water feeling like a piece of rice in a pot of boiling water and wondered when this was going to start becoming enjoyable. After a while the thrill was gone. Any bits of me that were sticking out of the water were perspiring profusely and the heart was now pumping at a million beats per minute. That's it. I'm outta here before any vital systems shut down! As cold as it was there, I could walk around in bare feet and a light shirt for another hour afterwards, and still feel uncomfortably warm. I guess I'm not a lounge-around-in-hot-water type of person. I think I shall form a lobster liberation movement.

It was a shame we had to leave the next day. I thought you could easily stay here for a couple of weeks just seeing all of the lookouts. The area was spectacular. We did have to move on though so that we could see the twelve apostles and Melbourne planetarium, which were our two main objectives for the day. We drove along, stopping every four hundred meters or so to check out the lookouts and take more photos. It felt like I'd taken about seven hundred 'rock' pictures by the time we left this road!

At the rate of progress we were making along this road, we wouldn't reach Melbourne until next Friday, so we started skipping the odd lookout.

That's when I drove past a sign advertising helicopter flights from seventy dollars.

For seven milliseconds I considered it and then got over it just as quickly. I have a nasty fear of heights. Helicopters and heights go hand in hand.

While we were on our way to another lookout I turned to John and made a whirly gesture with my finger and shrugged. We turned around and went back to where the helicopters were parked. I was constantly teetering on the brink of chickening out. The thought of taking some great video and seeing that spectacular coastline from the air made me strong. As strong as lime jelly.

Seventy dollars got you eight minutes of flying time to the twelve apostles and back. For an extra twenty you got sixteen minutes and flew up to the London Bridge formation, down to the twelve apostles and back. Let's do it before my yellow streak gets any wider!

John had no qualms about going in a helicopter as he had bungee jumped out of one once. Clearly insane, no doubt about it. Diane didn't want to know about it and I was still shaking but committed. Then we got into the thing.

The guy asked us who wants to sit in the front. I looked at the perspex floor panel and said "HIM!" pointing at John. The back had a nice solid floor. You couldn't see what wasn't under you this way. The pilot flicked a few switches and it started whining (even loader than John had the other day!).

If I were a different sort of person I would have asked to get out of the thing at this point. It was borderline panic. I was Petrified!

The noise of the engine and rotors got loader in direct proportion to my terror.

What am I doing in this thing? Am I nuts? What was I thinking?

I gritted my teeth and hung onto the bar at the back of John's seat.

A lot of good this lap belt is going to do me if we drop from six hundred feet!

I think the pilot said, "Here we go" but I get a bit fuzzy on things when in a state of blind terror. Up, up and away. We flew back up the coast in the same direction we had just driven from. The view was brilliant. Worth every moment of horror!

I calmed down to just plain old 'scared' for the rest of the trip and really enjoyed myself. The coastline looked stunning from up here. All the while I had my video camera at the window so as not to miss a moment. John was taking a few shots with my digital camera from the front. The pilot gave a good talk on all of the formations we were flying over while giving us a lovely, smooth ride.

I was liking this more and more as we went. I knew there'd be nothing to worry about...yeah, well. The helicopter would have come in handy at Wilcannia to gain access to the toilets!

All too soon the flight was over and we were back in our car. We drove to the twelve apostles and went into the visitor centre. Well, it was a large structure that appeared to be a visitor centre. Half of the building seemed to be wasted space and the other half was toilets. Not a souvenir in sight. What a missed opportunity this place is! The views were nothing short of breathtaking. By now I was getting tired of lugging all the camera gear with us wherever we went. If I left one of the three cameras in the car at any lookout we stopped at, it would surely be the one that suited the scene best. Another trek back to the car.

Unfortunately, time and tide wait for no man (or Diane) so we headed off towards Melbourne. It looked like we might be cutting it a bit fine to catch the planetarium, but we should just make it.

Missed it by that much! We were half an hour late for the last show. The place was still open for one more hour so the guy at the counter graciously let us pay nine-fifty each for the displays. This was a mistake.

Ninety percent of the displays were at knee height! This was obviously not designed with adults in mind. We went around on our hands and knees as fast as we could but they ordered us out before we could see everything. Some other year maybe.

We drove out of Melbourne not knowing where we would end up that night.

Warragul is where we ended up. It took a lot of searching to find a place that wasn't booked up. Once again we had a nice cabin with a big bed in the main bedroom. It was nice to relax after a busy day.

Tomorrow would be the push up through the Snowy Mountains to Jindabyne. We had chosen a road which took us through a place called Suggan Buggan, for no other reason than I had to

see what a place with a name like Suggan Buggan looked like!

We left early in the morning stopping for breakfast on the way at a place called Sale. A McBreackfast sounded alright at this point, so we went in. I was watching some woman a few tables over (That's watching, not eyeing off!). She was making cross signs over her chest and mumbling to herself. Maybe the food here is cause for concern or something. She would weep a bit, then smile to a passer by as if today was the best day of her life, then started crossing her chest and mumbling things again with the odd weep thrown in for good measure. This lady was unsettling to say the least. Who knows what was going through her mind. For all we know she may be preparing to smite some heathens who prefer Satan's grease to God's own Weet-bix for breakfast. This went on for a while until a gentleman sat down opposite her. Now you couldn't tell that there was anything wrong at all. Smiling and chatting quite normally now, she was. She was scarier than the helicopter flight! Might be caused by some contaminants in the special sauce pipeline being pumped into this outlet. I guess we'll never know, because we were outta there as quick as a rat through an aqua duct!

After driving for a while I noticed that I couldn't see out of the rear window very well. John had cleaned it when we fuelled up and I hadn't driven through water. What was that? I pulled over and we inspected the back of the car. It had an oily consistency. Oh dear. We popped the bonnet and found brake fluid everywhere.

In amongst the brake fluid was a flouro green liquid. It looked like the coolant in the radiator, but I thought that the odds of two things failing at the same time were astronomical and ignored it for the time being. John fiddled with the brake fluid reservoir and found that the rubber insert in the cap had fallen in and wasn't sealing it anymore. Thank goodness this was not a problem. It was reseated and never played up again.

The water I thought I'd seen was a different story. I watched the temperature gauge fluctuate quite a bit over the next few kilometres. Bugger, there is a water issue. I pulled up into a service station in a town called Bairnsdale and checked the water level. There were a few drops of water left in it. It made my heart sink a little as the water had to go somewhere, and it went there because something had failed. Today was Sunday, and the chances of getting something fixed on the car today seemed slim. We topped up the water and let it idle, watching for leaks. There were none. I liked this less and less every minute. After a good five minutes I thought I'd have one final look under the car before shutting the bonnet and heading off again. I was the proud owner of a waterfall! One of the main radiator hoses had blown – in a hard to see spot.

How lucky could we be? The hose just happened to blow before we were due to head bush again, and in a town that had a Supercheap which was open on Sunday! They even had the correct hose to suit my car. I was stunned.

Even the things that go wrong on this trip aren't that bad! John and I walked across town and bought the hose. We even got to see a hairy hippopotamus sleeping in the drive through of a bottle shop. Actually it was a Rottweiler, but it was as big as a hippo. John washed all of the excess brake fluid off of the car's tailgate while I put the new hose on. I feel sorry for whoever (if anyone, hopefully no-one) was driving behind me when the brake fluid sprayed out behind my car. I hoped that they were planning to wash their car soon, before there wasn't any paint left on it to wash! With that all sorted out, we continued on our merry way.

Buchan was our next port of call. The map said that there were caves there, so it was marked down as a must-do thing. We arrived with five minutes to spare for a tour of Royal cave.

It was a forty-five minute cave tour that was very enjoyable, and cramped. I'd been through several caves before but I don't recall one that I had to hunch over so much for. I even had to squat down to get through one part. The tour guide said I was lucky I didn't go through the Fairy cave, as it was smaller again. We saw heaps of lovely formations and rock pools in the cave. There really are so many nice places to visit in this country.

Once we were out of the cave, we hit the ice-cream freezer and kept driving.

We were on the road to Suggan Buggan now. It was a grungy little dirt road in the middle of nowhere. The sign said two hundred kilometres to Jindabyne and I had half a tank of fuel. Heaps. Heaps if you are on a nice highway doing one hundred kilometres per hour, not such a heap if you can't get out of second gear because the road is too steep, windy and bumpy! Suggan Buggan came and went. I only saw two small buildings hidden in the trees, so far from civilisation that no human has any business being here.

Been there, done that, now we move on. I was getting a bit concerned with the level of fuel now. It was disappearing at an alarming rate. I kept everything crossed (which can be quite uncomfortable when you're driving) that we would hit the bitumen soon.

I wouldn't have thought it possible, but the road got worse. I've walked along fire trails that looked like main roads compared to this! Is this the right way? I was thinking about how cold it is going to be here tonight, sleeping in the car! Eventually the bitumen returned and we drove into Jindabyne with cupfuls of fuel to spare. No worries, didn't doubt we'd make it for a minute. It was more like an hour!

Oddly enough, Jindabyne had the warmest temperature we had encountered so far since leaving home. Don't get me wrong, by no means was it hot here. I just mean I could get by with one jacket. Now to find home.

After driving in circles for a few minutes, we located our lodgings.

The Birken Apartments, which was on the shore of lake Jindabyne.

Lovely view, and for thirty-two dollars a night each, it was a bargain.

After loading our four tonnes of gear into our home away from home, carrying everything by hand down a driveway that was on at least a sixty degree incline, we drove into town for some Chinese food. We placed our order and were sitting there salivating down the front of our clothes when I saw Kevin Dixon and Erwin van der Velden walk in. I was very surprised to see them come through the door. We'd tried to loose them for nearly a week now and they still found us! Just kidding, we hadn't actually seen them at all up until this point. *Now* we would have to try and loose them! We had a good chat, exchanging eclipse stories with them over a not so cheap (but tasty) meal. Kevin said that they were climbing to the top of Mt Kosciusko in the morning. We'd hoped to go up as well while we were here, so we figured we would keep an eye out for them tomorrow. Eating to capacity, we went our separate ways. We went back to our apartment and they went back to their hollowed out log in the woods. You two will have to excuse me. Usually I have Colin to work with, but he didn't come along on this trip!

This was the first night that I felt a bit hot in bed. The feather doona didn't help either, I'm sure. Slipping on my faithful old KT26 all-terrain sneakers, I felt ready to tackle anything. So we went into town and tackled breakfast. A mountain climbers breakfast. This consisted of a stack of pancakes with a banana chopped up all over it, drowning in maple syrup and a scoop of ice cream balanced on top. Lightly dusted with icing

sugar of course. Not to forget the mountaineers drink of choice, a chocolate milkshake. (A little known fact that I'm about to make up, is that Sir Edmund Hillary wouldn't even *think* about climbing Everest until he'd had a chocolate milkshake first.) Now I was ready for anything. Anything that resembled a bucket! Not really, I was feelin' fine and ready for the hike up the mountain.

The three of us drove into Thredbo village and parked the car. It certainly wasn't as warm here as it was in Jindabyne. The 'Keeper of the mountain' said it was quite cold at the top (then she said, "Tickets please"). We all had extra gear with us just in case anyway.

The ride up in the chair lift was good, but it would have been gooder if John would have behaved himself. I was already edgy because of the gap between us and the ground. John just had to raise the safety bar a good six meters before we were over the top platform. He reckoned that the sign said to raise it, which was a sign that I'd apparently missed. I took his word for it and hung on for my life. "What a dumb sign that was", I kept thinking to myself. At least we were at the top of the lift now. The rest is all done by walking.

The 'keeper of the mountain' wasn't wrong about it being colder up here. The temperature would have been fine if it wasn't for the force ten gale blowing in your face. This must be what it's like to free-fall from a plane without actually risking your life. Up ahead we noticed a couple of suspicious looking people. One of them looked like he had a pumpkin on his head. We figured that it might be Kevin as he was wearing an orange beanie the day before.

We three caught up to them not far from the top of the chair lift.

Here at base camp, we lost the first of our team. Diane backed out. I think it had something to do with the freezing wind and summer dress with cardigan combination. John and I pushed on against the headwind. Occasionally we would pass or be passed by Kevin and Erwin, depending on who was looking at what at the time. I remember seeing Erwin skipping across the alpine region as if on a stroll through a park. John and I were not quite so spry, but were coping without too much risk of having to send for the care flight helicopter. Kevin had this I'm-going-to-get-to-the-top-if-it-kills-me kinda look on his face. The walk would have been ten times easier had the wind been at our backs instead of hitting us from the front.

We came across our first chunk of snow. A stranger rushes towards us waving a camera around and asks if he can take a picture of John and myself because we're in shorts. I paused for a second thinking that it isn't *that* cold that you wouldn't see someone in shorts up here when he smiled and changed it to can we take a picture of *him* in the snow. We did. This fellow was from Rockhampton and probably doesn't see snow that often at home. He even ended up in our group shots at the summit.

Onward we trekked. As we walk, I catch the glint of something in the water under the suspended walkway, which spans the length of the walking track. I back up to have a closer look to find that it is a twenty cent piece. It was too far under for me to see it and reach for it at the same time so John guided me as I felt around for it under the water. This water is flowing out from under the ice about two metres away. In the ten seconds that seemed like thirty minutes it took to grab the coin, my arm had turned into a cold, dead slab of meat. I decided not to do that again unless it was one of those two hundred dollar gold coins!

We were getting close to the top now. Kevin and Erwin were well ahead, as they didn't stuff around as much as we did! The dark, black clouds were a bit of a worry. You could see heavy

rain falling a few mountains over. Being rained on in this temperature did not seem like a pleasant prospect, so we hustled on up to the top. We did the usual picture taking and hung around for a few minutes chatting. We didn't wait around too long though, just in case the rain came our way. I swear the temperature dropped to about three degrees for the short time we were up there.

Kevin left first. I don't think I saw him again until we got back to the car park.

Erwin walked with John and myself for a while. We took some pictures of him skiing down the snowy slope for about twenty metres, just in his boots. John, not to be outdone, does it as well. I don't think that John's slide of about one metre had Erwin worried about losing his downhill skidding title!

The walk down was a lot easier, but that wind had some extra bite that it didn't have before.

When we were off of the rocky track on Mt Kosciusko and back to the suspended walkway, Erwin says that he will catch up with Kevin, and says his farewells. We thought that we were walking at a healthy pace already. Erwin just drops it down a gear and pulls away from us, still not looking like he's doing anything more than strolling. A short while later we see him about half a kilometre ahead of us. At the next hill we see him about one kilometre ahead. It's not normal! We may have been around forty, fat and unfit, but he shouldn't be *that* far ahead!

Diane is waiting for us at the top of the chair lift. She had been busy cancelling our accommodation in the Blue Mountains near Sydney. We were due to stay there in a few days time, but with the Blue Mountains on fire, we felt it might be better to be flexible on this point. We would stay an extra day in Canberra.

I had intended to hold my camera at arms length and take a group shot of us sitting on the chair lift on the way down. My fingers were too cold to confidently hold the camera out in no mans land and trigger the shutter so I gave it a miss. It would be a hell of a long walk up the mountain if I'd dropped the camera here.

As we came close to the departure point for the chair lift, I saw a sign that said 'Do not raise safety bar until you are on the platform'. John, you dog! You lying hound! It says not to raise it until you're on the platform, not when you're dangling five metres in the air before you get there! I'm glad John thought it was funny.

Amendment to note for future reference: Don't eat twice the recommended yearly intake of chocolate for lunch and never listen to John.

Our fourteen kilometre round trip to the top of the mountain and back had certainly sharpened our appetites. We raided the bakery in Jindabyne and grabbed anything that didn't look healthy. At this point John went off to make a phone call, while I sat at the table outside the bakery eating a sticky something and guarding John's goodies. I noticed some tiny little sparrows looking on hungrily so I threw them a small piece of my pastry. They enjoyed it immensely.

I looked over at the paper bag which held John's Strudel, only to see a few tail feathers sticking out of the bag. It's a sad state of affairs when a bird will make his home in a mans Strudel bag. Obviously the other little winged freaks were a decoy so that this little flying pig could get into the bag. They hunt in packs you know. I defended Johns Strudel 'til the bitter end. We took the remains of our goodies home and left the micro-vultures to fend for themselves.

We had originally intended to do the walk to Blue Lake today. I pulled out of this walk because my all terrain sneakers had

caused me quite a lot of discomfort the day before. The lining had worn through on one shoe which left you walking on an uncovered seam under the pad of your foot. Small walks were alright, but I knew this one was not a small walk. Instead we drove to a few of the ski resorts which were like little ghost towns at this time of year. The ski tube that runs from Bullock Flat to Perisher and Blue Cow wasn't even operating.

The brain of the truck driver that almost drove straight over the top of us wasn't exactly operating at its full potential either. We were driving past Perisher on the main road as I saw him flying through the car park heading for us. I watched him as he watched butterflies fluttering by in sweet smelling fields, little buzzy bees, buzzing from flower to flower during his childhood summers or something. One of the bees must have stung him on the rear end because he finally woke up and saw what was about to happen. Do you know the way the coyote's eyes would pop out of his head just before the TNT, that was meant for the road runner, went off in his hands? So many wheels locked up at once. What a lot of flat spots he will have!

We arrived at Charlottes Pass and had a look around. It was from here that the walk to Blue Lake starts. John suggested that maybe we could just walk down to the river and back again. Fair enough. I noticed a chimney in the distance when we arrived at the bottom. The chimney wasn't on the track but it looked kinda interesting. Once again, fair enough. We sat at the chimney thinking up scenarios that might explain its existence here in this remote spot.

Finding a new way across the river, we headed back up the mountain, where we stopped to chat with a lady that was catching her breath. She said that she thought this chimney belonged to a lodge that was destroyed late one night many decades ago in an avalanche. A lady had been trapped under a beam and died in the accident. To make matters worse, the poor people were all in nighties.

Enlightened with that depressing little tale, we made our way back to the top, puffing and panting heavily, and located Diane.

It was early afternoon by the time we got back to Jindabyne again. We stopped in our favourite café and had our daily fix of pancakes and milkshake. We weren't allowed to have pancakes in the morning, as the girl was there on her own. I expect that it required two keys to be inserted into their respective slots while being turned counterclockwise (on three) to gain access to the restricted area around the pancake machine. That's after palm print and retinal scan confirmation of course. They dropped the DNA testing last summer as it seemed 'A little over the top'.

I turned to John and pointed out that so far we had been on the highest point in Australia, the lowest point in Australia, we'd driven across the land, flown over the land and been under the land. All we have left to conquer now is water, and that illusive chocolate barrier. As I was only one cherry ripe away from the chocolate barrier anyway, we decided to hit the water!

Off to the lake we went and hired a small power boat. I use the term 'power' in its broadest sense here. I should really say a small *powered* boat.

Captain Blood, a.k.a. John, took the helm for the first half of our voyage while I played first mate, then we would swap at the half way point. I would be the Skipper and he would be Gilligan.

Apparently the job of the first mate was to paddle the boat whenever necessary because reverse didn't work.

Diane was back at the mansion waiting on the verandah with the video camera. We were supposed to drive the thing past her so she could video us. Her videoing was a bit wobbly as she was laughing to much as our 'little boat that couldn't' just sat there in the water with the motor screaming away and us not moving at all! Later on in the voyage I found that if you

grab the linkage at the motor and give it a shove, it did go into reverse. To late for now though, as we'd already made complete idiots of ourselves!

We had almost made it around the entire lake in the two and a quarter hours that we had the boat for. We would have done it quicker, but I'm sure we were towing a typhoon class nuclear submarine behind us. Even with the massive 9.9hp power plant screaming away, with its reactor at one hundred and ten percent, you still could have got out and swum ahead of the boat. Me doing a few too many crazy Ivans along the way didn't help us get back on time either. I've got to stop watching The Hunt for Red October!

That evening I checked and found that this was the first place we'd stayed in that had a TV suitable to plug my video camera into. We were keen to see how the eclipse bits went.

John and I had discussed the eclipse several times by this point and had both agreed that there was no sound at all during totality. There was dead silence.

It was only as the Sun emerged again that the crowd went ballistic.

We were both stunned to hear the crowd screaming like banshees the whole way through the eclipse! We had been so focused on the task at hand and the stunning spectacle that the rest of the world had faded away for both of us. What a bizarre realisation. I watch it now and still don't understand how we heard nothing! Brain dead maybe.

Morning came around and we made the final climb of our visit to the Snowy Mountains. It was the climb we made carrying our equipment back up to the car. The driveway felt like a seventy degree incline this time. We drove to our café for one last breakfast. As it was the last we would have here I chose the one called 'The Full Hog'. I'll leave it at that.

A few hours later we found ourselves at Tidbinbilla. It is part of the Deep Space Tracking Network and at seventy metres in diameter, is the largest radio dish in Australia. The seventy metre dish was having maintenance work done today so it just sat there like a big hills hoist. We went through the visitors centre and viewed all of the displays. I always get a kick out of seeing the piece of moon rock that Buzz Aldrin collected during the Apollo eleven mission. Winding our way through the displays, we found ourselves in the souvenir shop and eatery. Time for second breakfast!

Next port of call was Mt Stromlo Observatory. Unfortunately we had missed the tour by a tad so we just wondered around looking at everything. There have been a lot of improvements since I'd been here last. There wasn't even a souvenir stand here last time. Mighty impressive.

When we'd seen everything we could here, we headed for Canberra.

We located our caravan park, which was out the other side of Canberra and actually in New South Wales, loaded our junk into another great looking cabin, and headed back into town to find a Cinema. We saw the new Harry Potter movie, which was very good, and headed home for some food and a sleep. By the time Harry had finished, everything near us was closed. I decided to rough it and have some heat-it-yourself service station food and a bottle of Milo from their fridge. As I gagged my way through the thing they'd sold as a 'chicken roll', we planned our next day's adventures. It, gag, was going to, gag, be a busy, gag, day, gag-burp. I washed the thing, that would have liked to have been a tasty chicken roll, down with my Milo. What was the gelatinous clot that glopped into my mouth as I finished off the bottle? Maybe I should have had a glass of water for dinner.

The first thing on our agenda today is the Dinosaur Museum. We arrived at nine in the morning. It opens at ten. One thing

we had noticed here is that nothing opens until the day is half over! If we wait for this to open we will miss the war memorial which was next on our list. The dinosaurs have waited this many million years for us, another couple won't kill them.

I parked the car in Commonwealth Park and we walked to the memorial. First we needed to visit the powder room in the exhibition centre. Before we knew what was happening, a young bloke, beaming with pride over his nations capital, gave us bits of paper and headed us into the exhibition. We don't have time for this! He was so enthusiastic about it all that we didn't have the heart to tell him we were only here for the toilets. We watched one little video presentation that went on for a good five minutes and didn't actually say one single, solitary thing about anything. These words should have been sent to an illiterate nation somewhere so that they could be assembled in a different order and do some good in the world. Obviously one of the pollies' speech writers must have written the narrative.

We saw a back way out through the canteen and we made our great escape!

I walked along for half the morning carrying these bits of paper the eager beaver guy had given me. I couldn't find a bin anywhere. How can a park this big stay this litter free without any bins?!

Finally we made it to the war memorial. What a big place. We could only read about one sixth of the things they had over the displays, otherwise we would have needed an overnight pass!

It was getting late in the afternoon and we still had plans. When we were all back in the car we checked out the map on how to get to the civic centre. I needed to buy something in a shop there and we all needed to see the new James Bond movie that opened today.

We eventually found the shop and made it to the cinema with a few minutes to spare. Another excellent movie! I was glad we went to the afternoon session because the line was pretty big when we were leaving that evening.

After last nights alleged food, we chose to have Mexican for dinner. I love my Mexican food! Then it was back to our cabin. This was our second last night on the road and the realisation was starting to sink in now. Soon it would be over. Oh no!

The next morning we headed off towards Coonabarabran, our home for the night.

We didn't have time to fit in a visit to the Anglo Australian Observatory on the way down, but as we had to change plans because of the bush fires, we decided to drop in for a look on the way home.

I think that the poor old displays at the visitors centre of the AAO are in desperate need of an update. Some of the displays don't age, but others were a bit on the sad side. We watched a feature in their small theatre that was made in 1988. Ideas have changed a bit since then. A second movie started. This one had William Shattner narrating it. It was older than the first one! We couldn't find one reference to the Hubble Space Telescope in the whole place either. It was still interesting, but would have been a lot better with some new material.

We walked around to the dome and went up to the observation level. From here you could see the 3.9 metre telescope sitting in its massive horseshoe mount. It's an impressive beasty! Once again though, the posters on the walls were the same ones that were there when I first visited the place in the mid nineties.

We went back to our Motel, which Diane had got us into cheaply because the owners were the parents of someone she

knew, and planned for dinner. It was getting close to six in the evening and nothing was open yet. I suppose that gave us more time to search out a place. After the success of the Mexican food in Canberra, I felt like having it again. Diane found the number of the El Paso restaurant. I rang them and was told that they cook pretty much anything but Mexican food. Maybe they should change their name and remove the happy little cactus from the sign! We ate elsewhere.

How do these people put up with their daylight saving? We finish dinner at eight o'clock and the sun is still high enough to shine over the building we are in and hit the street! How do they get their kids to bed in broad daylight? Every house must have a dungeon for the kids or something.

It had been another big day, with a big day to follow. Tomorrow night we would be home. Bummer! I went to bed early, only to be sucked into watching Ghostbusters on the TV, which I hadn't seen in many years. So much for my early night. Eventually I did turn off the lights and try to sleep. The little bar fridge in the room must have been built employing the relays they use in the national power grid in the event of an overload in the lines. Whenever it turned on or off the 'CLACK!' Of its relay would make your heart rate jump considerably. I unplugged the noisy little sucker and eventually went to sleep.

There was no more sight seeing planned for today. We just hit the road in the morning and had, what I think, must have been my twentieth kilo of bacon and eggs for breakfast on this trip. We had our lunch, just for old times sake though, because none of us was really that hungry anyway, and headed on down the road. We drove into Tamworth, the home of country music. I slammed it into top gear and we were outta there, Beatles tunes pouring from our windows all the while!

Our plan was to head to Nerang and meet up with John and Diane's parents, Barry and Vivienne. They would bring John's car along and we would then go to the SAS Christmas party in two cars. Which we did. Upon arrival at the party John informs me that my two main brake lights don't work. I wonder when they blew out? Probably on that lousy fire-trail road. I was lucky I didn't get pulled over for it, or run into!

The Christmas party was as good as ever, with a special appearance by Santa. I like Santa; he gave me more chocolate! At the end of the night we split up our gear and headed in our own directions. How sad. It's the only trouble with holidays. Sooner or later they have to end.

We travelled seven thousand-two hundred kilometres in the last two weeks.

What a ball we had. Now the planning starts for the big one. I've heard several people say that they would like to see the eclipse in Turkey in 2006. I hope we can all make it. If you do make it, and you visit the pyramids, keep an eye out for someone on a camel wearing Nike shorts and KT26 all terrain sneakers.

It might be me!

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# Astro Puzzle #4

BY GARY GAWRONSKI

Puzzle #4 is hot off the press and waiting for your brain power.

The format for the puzzle is this: Answer the question and the correct answer will be found in the puzzle. To assist you, I've put a number value after each question to indicate the number of letters in the answer. To easy!

Once again, there is an extra word in the puzzle. This is the one that could win you wheel-barrows full of cash. I'll even give you a hint at the extra word. Just a small hint though!

Here's how you win your fortune. At the July meeting, you submit your answer at the end of the meeting when it is called for.

If more than one person comes forward, the names will be drawn from a hat.  
DON'T SHOUT IT OUT!

The competition is open to all members...except me of course!

The winner receives a \$5 scratchy which is *almost* guaranteed to secure your financial future (and some of mine, I hope!). A drum roll please.....

- 1 What is the 20<sup>th</sup> letter of the Greek alphabet? 7
- 2 Who was Andromeda's mum? 10
3. Name the inferior planet that will transit the Sun next year. 5
4. In which constellation is Ross 154? 11
5. A Polish bloke who lived between 1473 & 1543. 10
6. Which asteroid was discovered in 1801? 5
7. The boundary between a planet's dark and sunlit sides is called a what? 10
8. Explain the general theory of relativity in one word. Alright then! What was the first name of the man that thunk it up then? 6
9. What was the last name of the poor sod who stayed in the command module of Apollo 17? 5
10. NGC 253 is close to the border of which neighbouring constellation? 5

The usually minimalistic clue for the bonus word....Question 10. 8

R G L H O H C G Q T U R O N K N S D Q  
 E B W N E R K N U W O L T O Y R H Y R  
 O G S U N E V R E T C Z H E Z N F Y B  
 S W U U P C C T A J R G T H I S E W N  
 M A D Q I S N N G P F Z M L R N P Q L  
 N S K S W G I I O M Y V O M S X F K W  
 O H G K U M Q L P F O M D N U D C Q I  
 A L B E R T Y I O I A C E L P X M W Y  
 C S F E R J P V N N A E E Z G P I N X  
 G U T C I V Q Z B S N T M E K V R O B  
 S I J O M R Z E S N O U I P W I M F Q  
 T R L P I O J I W A J S B K L F M D Q  
 Q A O E B T O O Y V H R N D V C O N O  
 P T C R T P L Q X E L X E C N O H X H  
 T T E N E L M G R D P G Y L X P U S J  
 P I R I X U O D Q U K N H G G D Q B L  
 L G A C B C Q X A L B F L E W O W G B  
 N A S U F S T F N K H A W Q H C W I N  
 N S X S G N W J M B X M I F M L G N J

Answers to the last puzzle:

- |                |            |
|----------------|------------|
| 1 Inferior.    | 7 Five.    |
| 2 Nadir.       | 8 Proteus. |
| 3 Circumpolar. | 9 Nut.     |
| 4 Parsec.      | 10 Edwin.  |
| 5 Galileo.     |            |
| 6 Lion.        |            |

Bonus word: Galilei.