

## GRAND TROPICAL TOP TOUR C OCTOBER 2010 ITINERARY

- Friday 15<sup>th</sup> The tour party gathers in Cairns today for the first of our three nights at Rydges on the Esplanade. You will be pleased with this quality hotel.
- Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> A free day for you to explore Cairns., go to Kuranda on the train perhaps, or out to the Barrier Reef on a cruise. There is no end to the touristy things you can do. For dining at night there is a huge variety here from cheap to classy. The choice is yours.
- Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Today we take you up to Port Douglas to ride on the Bally Hooley Steam Railway. Volunteers operate this line which is a portion of the old sugar cane tram to the Mossman Sugar Mill. We go to the Rainforest Habitat for lunch (included) and eat with the Lorekeets. There is time to have a look round Port Douglas and we return to Cairns late afternoon and dinner is your choice again.
- Monday 18<sup>th</sup> The coach which will be with us for the next six days will pick us up this morning and take us to the Cairns Railway Station in time to join the 9.30 gold class service to Kuranda. The coach will pick us up again at Kuranda and take us on to Ravenshoe for lunch and a ride on the Ravenshoe Railway. Finally today the coach will take us on to Mt Surprise for our overnight stay.
- Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> Today we join the coach and head for the Gulf of Carpentaria at Karumba (not to be confused with Kuranda where we were yesterday!) This afternoon we have a sunset cruise from the mouth of the Norman River where we watch the sun go down to the accompaniment of drinks and nibbles. We stay overnight at this delightful location.
- Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> The coach treks back to Normanton so we can join the *Gulflander* iconic train from Normanton to Croydon. The coach follows along and at Croydon it will pick us up, do a short local tour, (there is not too much to Croydon) and deliver us to our hotel for the night.
- Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> The coach will take us from Croydon to Georgetown for a lunch break and then on to the Cobbold Gorge where we will take a late afternoon cruise. We stay at the very pleasant Cobbold Village tonight and dinner is included.
- Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> We return now to Forsayth this morning and here we join the *Savannahlander* for a wonderful two-step journey back to Cairns. The first stage today takes us to Mt Surprise where our coach will meet us and take us to the Undara Lava Caves. We have an afternoon tour of the caves and stay here tonight in the railway carriages accommodation at Undara.
- Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> It is back to the train this morning and the final leg of our journey on the *Savannahlander*. It is a fairly long day back to Cairns with an arrival about 6.30pm, but – oh joy! – on arrival there is our trusty coach to take us back to

the Rydges Hotel for our final two nights here. Are you dining on the Esplanade tonight?

- Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Sleep in this morning if you wish because this is a free day for you. There will still be other things you haven't done yet and I am sure you will fill in your time without any trouble. Tonight is your final night here.
- Monday 25<sup>th</sup> Today we meet up with our Railcar RM 1901 from the Queensland Railways (QR) Heritage fleet normally based at Ipswich near Brisbane. Over the next six days this Railcar will take us down the coast the 1700kms to Brisbane. A mixture of QR staff and volunteers from our kindred organisation, the Australian Railway Historical Society, look after us for this journey. There will be lunch stops each day and refreshments will also be available on board. The journey today is down to Townsville, roughly 300km. As you will soon see sugar is the predominant industry in this part of the state and sugar cane fields and little cane railways abound. At Townsville we take a short local tour before being taken to our hotel for the night.
- Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> The journey today is down to Mackay and is a slightly longer trip than yesterday at about 385km. Plenty to see today and you will start to realise how extensive the cane railways are. Another local tour when we get to Mackay and we overnight here.
- Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> Just for variety today we will probably see some serious sized coal trains on our way to Rockhampton some 330km away. There are some serious sized rivers too and bridges to match. At Rockhampton the main line goes up the middle of Archer Street for several kilometres in a way that would make Kawakawa quite jealous. A local tour again on arrival and we stay tonight in the centre of the city.
- Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> The rail journey today is the longest so far at nearly 400kms. There will of course be the usual stop for lunch. More coal trains and plenty of agriculture and we are 'under the wires' by now too. When we leave Rockhampton we slip below the tropic of Capricorn and so are no longer in the Tropics but I don't think you will notice too much of a difference. Some of the most popular resorts in Queensland are out on the coast at Hervey Bay. Maryborough holds our sleeping quarters for the night.
- Friday 29<sup>th</sup> A journey of a couple of hours this morning brings us to the old Gympie Station which is now the home of the Mary Valley Railway. QR now bypasses the town on a new line and the MVR operates the branch line to Imbil as a tourist line. We have a charter of the 'Red Rocket' to Imbil and back this afternoon and we stay in Gympie tonight.
- Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> The final day of our Railcar journey and we are well within commuting distance of Brisbane. Our Railcar goes a short distance north to the junction of the bypass and we then head south on the final leg of our journey. Full commuter electric unit services go from Nambour and further in you will note triple and quadruple main lines needed to cope with the traffic. Our rail journey will end at Roma Street Station mid afternoon and I hope the entire tour will have given you much pleasure.  
Tonight we have one last luxurious night together as we are staying at the Holiday Inn Roma Street which is above the Roma Street Station and just metres away from the platforms.

When you finally leave getting to the airport is simplicity itself. You buy an airport train ticket at the hotel desk, look at the TV monitor which gives you the train times and then go to that platform in Roma Street Station. So simple. We hope you enjoy your last night.

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> Sadly, after breakfast, (included in your room rate), the tour ends and we each go our own way. I hope you have found it worthwhile.

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*Paul Heighton, Tour Escort.*

- Notes:
1. A lunch stop is included each day in the schedule.
  2. All breakfasts are included but other meals and lunches are only included in the fare where indicated on the booking form.
  3. Although it is officially winter in Queensland, at this time, the daytime temperatures can be expected to be in the mid to high 20s. It can however get cold at night in some places.
  4. This itinerary and accommodation details are subject to change. A full final itinerary together with the list of hotels and motels will be made available close to the starting date of the tour. At this point no major changes are expected.

**What is NOT included:**

- (a) Air fares, airport and government related passenger surcharges or taxes
- (b) Travel insurance, which is mandatory for all passengers
- (c) All personal expenditures, refreshments, Taxis, other travel and transfers, accommodation or related charges not specifically referred to in the itinerary as being included. All Visa fees.

19<sup>th</sup> November 2009