I returned to Tasmania determined to find some new adventures but also to visit some favorite, beautiful and historic destinations. One stunning location I had not seen since 1965: Cradle Mountain. It did not disappoint. Although Tasmania is a small island it has so much to offer and to see. This small photo story barely scratches the surface of such a beautiful haven. In ten days I was able to drive from Launceston to: Low Head, Bridport, Bay of Fires, Swansea, Freycinet Peninsula, Tasman Peninsula Port Arthur, Hobart, Bruny Island, Mount Wellington, Richmond, Cradle Mountain, Beauty Point and return to Launceston. The photos of Bruny Island, my childhood home, have been posted on a separate blog.

LOW HEAD
The entrance to The Tamar River is treacherous for sailors. There are hazards on both sides and strong of the approach and combined with strong winds from the Bass Strait the mouth has swallowed many ships. After the lighthouse was built things improved but is still remains a dangerous navigational problem.

Low Head is also very beautiful. There is a lot of bird life and it is a great sailing river: flat seas and stiff breezes.
A lively mid-week regatta on the beautiful Tamar River. They scurried off so fast I could hardly snap a photo.

Part of the Maritime Museum at Low Head. The navigation buoy lasted many years as it was constructed from the amazing slow growth Huon Pine.

The Low Head Lighthouse saved many ships after its construction. You can just see one of the hazards lower left.
Low Head Lighthouse Keepers!

East Beach Low Head. The beaches of Tasmania are so natural and un-spoilt. Often you have the beach to yourself.

From Low Head you can drive east to Bridport. Along the way you must brake for these slow moving marsupials. It’s a lucky shot because the Echidnas are usually so busy digging that their nose and eyes are usually buried in the dirt.

BRIDPORT
The highlight for me was tracing some family history. Seems one of the many beautiful beaches is named after my relatives. It is wonderful safe swimming beach and remains a popular destination for summer regattas.
The beach is named after my relatives. 
Sunset on the beach.

BAY OF FIRES
From Bridport, the drive East towards The East Coast of Tasmania, takes you up and over a mountain range with wonderful vistas and lush rainforest vegetation. At Swansea you turn north and shortly you are at the spectacular beaches of the Bay of Fires. Happily, despite the publicity, they remain pristine. The brilliant quartz white sands squeak beneath your feet.
The red lichen survives in such a harsh salty environment but add beauty to the seascape.

This shore bird is an endangered species. Look carefully at the right ankle; it has been banded. (Sorry have forgotten the name... free beer for the first to write me.) The oyster catchers are also under pressure. I was amazed to learn they can live well beyond 40 years.

The oyster catchers take flight if you get too close.
The shoreline is the natural habitat for the oystercatchers. They patrol the surf zone: the swash and schwack.

Beautiful wave patterns behind.

What a privilege to enjoy the sea sand and sky at The Bay of Fires.
I like the contrast and textures. There are three lichen types: red, green and white.

I was surprised to see this gull flying in to eat green berries.

Beautiful tidal pools at Bay of Fires.
A tussock clings to a tiny crevice and finds a life surrounded by beauty.

Sun dried seaweed and kelp Bay of Fires

Bay of Fires looking West.
FREYCINET PENINSULA
It is scenic drive from Swansea south along The East Coast to the Freycinet Peninsular. The mountains and spectacular cliff are a major attraction for hikers. You need a full day to get to Winglass Bay.

Black Swan family. Dad with five teenagers. The black swans are indigenous to Tasmania.

The Black Swan is also the State Emblem of Western Australia. I don’t think there are any indigenous white swans in Tasmania.

A very light shower shrouds the mountains of Freycinet Peninsula. You can just see Winglass Bay in the distance.
“The Black Stump” was part of my father’s folk lore. The mythical elusive “stump” was a metaphor for not knowing the whereabouts of someone or something. I like the contrast on this big old gum tree stump, burnt by a bush fire, many years ago. Someone or something was always: “up there behind the black stump”.

Many secluded bays and inlets on the Freycinet Peninsula.

Coles Bay a great region for boating.
Growth rings on an old She-oak tree trunk.

Gull enjoys fresh rainwater pool.

Beautiful seascapes at Coles Bay, Freycinet Peninsula.
EAGLEHAWK NECK
The Tasman Peninsula is a very rich and varied experience: geomorphology, wild life and early history of European settlement of Australia at Port Arthur.

Eaglehawk Neck is a narrow isthmus that joins The Tasman Peninsula to mainland Tasmania. During the convict days a chain of wild dogs were placed across the narrow sand dunes on The Neck to prevent the escape of the convicts. The Neck also has an amazing wave cut platform: The Tessellated Pavement.
Sunrise at Eaglehawk Neck

Photo shows the rectangular patterns created by salt and wave erosion.

The Tessellated Pavement Eagle Hawk Neck.
Sunrise accents the rectangular pavement created by salt and wave action.

Low tide reveals the wave and salt erosion creating “loaves of bread” shaped rock.

Amazing rectangular rock pools with morning reflections.
Very lucky to catch a photo of this endangered Hooded Plover on Eagle Hawk Neck Beach.

Sunrise on the surf and Tessellated Pavement Eagle Hawk Neck.

THE TASMAN PENINSULAR
The Tasman Peninsular is exposed to the Great Southern Ocean. The storm waves mount a relentless attack on the coast. Frequently the waves find a weakness in the rock face where blowholes can be created. Collapsing overhead strata created: “The Arch”.

Sunrise on the surf and Tessellated Pavement Eagle Hawk Neck.
Fungi attach to, and eventually kill, a big gum tree. It looks like it is also a nice home for spiders.
Cape Barren Island Goose, a long way from its native home, in the Bass Strait

We are just Tasmanian Devil buddies.

Hi! I am a Tasmanian Devil. I am a real big fan of meat. I can smell meat from many miles away. I mostly hunt at night so it does not matter I can hardly see. I just use my nose!
Oh boy I am really hungry! My teeth can crush large bones.

The beautiful Yellow Wattle Bird.
PORT ARTHUR
Port Arthur is one of the most important historic sites in Australia. The British wanted to grab Australia before many of its rivals could claim Australia and Tasmania. The Port Arthur Penal Colony was created to gain control of the region. Convicts were used to do most of the work. If they behaved well some were released and encouraged to take up land and farm it. They were given a “ticket of leave”. Badly behaved convicts were flogged and quite often put in solitary confinement. Skilled convict stone masons built some beautiful public buildings.
This church, at the outset, was built as an inter-denominational church to serve Anglican and Catholics.

The convict built Gothic style church at Port Arthur.
My Great Grandfather served the church from 1857 to 1870. His eleven children formed the choir. He was known as “the good parson” and cared greatly for his flock.

Part of the Penal Colony at Port Arthur.

HOBART AND MOUNT WELLINGTON

The King of the Derwent Hobart Yacht Regatta is held shortly after the completion of the Sydney Hobart Yacht Race at the end of December.
The view from Mt Wellington is spectacular; bays, inlets, The Derwent River and beaches are all part of a varied and irregular coastline. Mount Nelson is a haven for many wild birds. Here, a pair of New Holland Honey Eaters enjoys the nectar from the red hot pokers.

Family of Spur-winged Plovers takes a siesta on Mount Nelson.
RICHMOND

Richmond Bridge

24/02/2017

54/02/2017

45/02/2017

Richmond Bridge

54/02/2017

45/02/2017

Richmond Bridge
CRADLE MOUNTAIN
From Richmond if you put the pedal to the metal you can make, in 5-6 hours, another jewel of Tasmania: Cradle Mountain.

In 1957, when I was a young boy, my big brother frog-marched me through the Cradle Mountain Reserve to Lake St Claire. He had taken compulsory National Service Training. He was a burley, fully mature, rugby player. My pre-puberty body of about 98lbs could barely lift my 65lbs back pack. We had to carry all our food and the tracks were deep black mud on the button grass plains. You sank almost knee deep. If you tried to bound from button grass tuft to the next, you were in constant danger of slipping head over turkey. It rained. The tinned meat and freeze dried food horrible and my brother set a pace more suitable for SAS on a secret mission. There was bravado back then to “do the track in less than three days”! But my custom made Blundstone boots from Hobart, with triple leather tongues, saved my feet and despite the blisters; I prevailed. My brother thought the pain was character forming. I think it put me off extreme wilderness hiking for life. A more pleasant memory was a stay overnight at the original Waldheim Chalet in 1965 with friends beside, a cozy log fire. Oh and I did climb to the top of Cradle Mountain.

How incredible to find the view unchanged and unspoiled. While the reserve has been made accessible to many more tourists the development has been done with great care to preserve the pristine natural beauty. The little boat shed on Dove Lake is unchanged since construction. The local pine used was also used for ship building. It is very strong, light and long lasting but it takes hundreds of years grow to maturity.

So wonderful to see a mature wombat, out for an evening meal, on the button grass plains.
The ancient species of the alpine flora is a perfect range for wombats and wallabies.

Beautiful Cradle Mountain streams cross the button grass plains. The mosses and grass are suspended by black peat bogs formed after the last glacial period.

Beautiful reflections in a mountain stream.
The original Waldheim Chalet has been faithfully restored. I was lucky to stay here when it was alive with log fires and snug cabin beds. Gustav Weindorfer (1874-1932) created the chalet and campaigned throughout his life to have Cradle Mount Park created as a National Park.

Delicate evening colours of the view from Waldheim.

A friendly wallaby enjoys the natural vegetation.
BEAUTY POINT SEAHORSE WORLD
A half-day drive can bring you down from Cradle Mountain then, East along the North West Coast, to the banks of the Tamar River at Beauty Point. Here is the super exhibit of SeaHorse World. There are dozens of seahorse species. It is wonderful to find they have a breeding program to protect the Seahorses for the future.

Beautiful seahorses.

There is a wonderful variety of species. I think it is a male on the right with the babies! They carry them and raise them.
Black cockatoo at Beauty Point. They can live for up to 70 years.

Suddenly the 10 day magical tour is over. A short scenic drive along the Tamar River brings you back to Launceston to be ready for an early morning flight to Sydney.

Terry

Finally caught up at Lagos, Portugal

April 11, 2017.