



Gday...

I thought I would begin this little story with the sunrise I was greeted with this morning - what a nice way to begin my day.

Dougwe and I have been juggling our social calendars for a few months now trying to find some mutually free time. Well, the planets finally aligned and we got together yesterday for a cuppa and long chat catching up on what each has been doing over the past months. It was good to catch up and I must do it more often in future.

As I had a long drive to get to the bustling metropolis of Wonthaggi, I decided to take the long way home and hug the coast and have a look at places I haven't visited in South Gippsland for decades - more decades than I care to remember actually.

I headed south down to Cape Paterson where some friends had a beach house in the 1960s and 70s. I was a constant visitor during the summer months when I was a teenager and into my twenties. WOW, my visit yesterday was startling - how it has grown. It is almost unrecognisable to the 'good ole days'. I headed down to the various beach access points and, despite the cold and wind, I took a few photos.



Cape Paterson beach



I then headed eastward toward Inverloch along the coast and called in to remind myself of the feature called Eagle's Nest which is a sandstone sea stack that sits on a wide rock platform and is awash at high tide lying at the base of 40 m high, vegetated bluffs.

Eagle's Nest



The coastline from Cape Paterson to Inverloch is formed with 40metre high cliffs and pounding seas from Bass Strait.

South Gippsland Coast



I last drove from Cape Paterson to Inverloch about 1980 and I was taken by how much "progress" there has been. The old camping areas amongst the scrub on the western side of Inverloch are all gone and houses have replaced them. I guess the caravan parks and cabins have flourished in their stead.

On through Inverloch, down past Venus Bay and on through Tarwin Lower I stopped to view Cape Liptrap Lighthouse.

The first Cape Liptrap lighthouse was established in 1913. It was a 2.1 metre steel tower with an acetylene light. As a keeper was never stationed at Cape Liptrap, it is really the first automatic Commonwealth funded light to be put into service.

The current lighthouse was built in 1951 in cast concrete, and is octagonal in shape. It was converted to mains power in 1970.

Cape Liptrap has more high cliffs and the rugged, rocky coastline makes one understand why there is the need for a lighthouse.

Cape Liptrap



I moved on from the lighthouse to call into South Walkerville to have a look at the old lime burning kiln remains there. I had heard they were worthy of a visit and I thought I should call in and see before the light failed and the cold got worse.



A wee bit of history ... in 1875 William Millar a local farmer, reported the existence of deposits of limestone in the cliffs around Waratah Bay. Lime burning leases were issued in 1874 to Miller and partners. They called the enterprise Waratah Bay Lime, Marble and Cement Company Limited. Millar approached the firm of Bright Bros, shipping agents in Melbourne, and suggested they invest in a scheme to build lime kilns close to the stone and produce quick lime. Mining began in 1878.

Bright Bros operated the kilns successfully for several years then sold the operation to William Wischer, who engaged James Dewar as the works manager. In 1880 William Foggart Walker, who was the Commissioner for Customs in Melbourne, went into partnership with Wischer and it was after Walker that Walkerville was named. In 1895 Mr A A McCrae acquired the business and operated the kilns until about 1923, when they were purchased by Mr W Hughes and with his son Jim, he carried on lime burning until the kilns closed in 1926 due to reduced demand and increased transport costs.

At the peak of production, around 1890, up to eighty men were employed either directly or indirectly in the mining of lime. As these workers settled on the shores of Waratah Bay they built cottages for their wives and families and within a few years a busy township had developed with a Post Office, School and General Store. It was reported that at the turn of the century the lime industry at Waratah supported fifty families.

Six kilns were constructed at Walkerville. Each kiln was about 40 feet deep, brick lined and tapering to a narrow neck at the base, where a grate opened into the back of a large shed.

The kilns were built separately, some distance apart, faced with local stone (granite and basalt) and each had its own storage and packing shed. The shafts were supported by a high vertical stone wall across the front, which itself was supported by two long retaining walls extending outward at an angle from each end of the vertical rear wall. At the base of the vertical facade is a brick-lined arched chamber or vault, 2.5 m wide, 2 m deep and at least 2 m high leading to a small semicircular draw hole in the rear wall, through which the burned lime could be extracted from the shaft.





So with the sun almost gone, the wind only getting stronger and colder, I decided to head back home to some warmth.

Thanks again for your company Doug and also for the excuse to wander along the South Gippsland coast and think about the old times I spent in the area.

Stay well



I don't know where I'm going....
But I know where I've been!