

**REFLECTIONS of the POLIO HEALTH and WELLNESS RETREAT
GLENELG, SOUTH AUSTRALIA
18th to 21st April, 2013**

by Douglas Chugg, Tasmania



GETTING UNDERWAY

Leaving home at Scottsdale at 4 am on Thursday 18th to pick up my grandson, Wade, at Evandale (who was to take custody of my car and collect me from the airport on Sunday 21st) was my first move in attending the South Australian Retreat.

However, leading up to this, I was putting up with pinching a nerve in the Sacrum joint (back of my pelvis). On the Tuesday morning before leaving for SA, not really knowing if I would be able to make the trip at all, I made a visit to the Doctor for some anti inflammation tablets and pain killers to gobble to try to get myself fit enough to travel. The pills did help some.

A 6:00 am flight from Launceston Airport saw me heading for a very wet Melbourne.

A three hour delay in Melbourne for my Adelaide flight turned into four hours due to the bad weather. So running into Mary-ann Liethof (National Program Manager for Polio Australia) was great as we had a good discussion about all things, including Polio Retreats.

THE RETREAT

I must admit, on my arrival at the Stamford Grand Hotel, I was somewhat unprepared for meeting so many Polio's in one place. I guess this was an environment I'd not experienced since childhood. I very soon found my place and for a change was not the odd one out with a handicap, as I know we are all so familiar with.

My impressions of the Stamford Grand as a retreat venue was overall very good, with all facilities being on level 1, and all the house staff were helpful and courteous (I recognise that I was not one of the organising committee though, and they would have their own story to tell).

Maybe a basic 'country meal' would have been nice occasionally but that's just being a bit picky, as all meals were of a high restaurant standard.

SESSION LEADERS

The calibre of the presenters was second to none and I could not begin to say enough about the ones I experienced. Also, the two Physio volunteers were very pleasant and helpful, and were very much part of the team.

I was most fortunate with being able to attend all my preferred sessions.

THE SESSIONS

- Falls and Balance concerns - Ann Buchan (Neuro Physiotherapist)
- To Brace or not to Brace - Adam Holden (Orthotist & Prosthetist)
- Holistic approach to Health – Robert Elliot (Herbalist/Iridologist)
- Physiotherapy consultation – Ann Buchan
- Chair Yoga – Maria Merlino (Hatha Yoga Teacher)
- Hydrotherapy – Lee O’Connell (Aquatic Physiotherapist)
- Singing – Doris Henderson (Singing Teacher)
- The Gift of the Holy Spirit – Bishop Bruce Rosier

Every session I attended was excellent, but I make special mention of the hydrotherapy session at the Repatriation Hospital. This fits in so well with life at home, as Sandra (my wife) and I swim in a heated pool twice a week. There was so much Lee taught us I can make use of. I was so lucky to get this session as there were some who missed out due to limited spots available.

Also my time spent with Ann Buchan regarding my physiotherapy assessment was very reassuring and helpful.

Although not previously mentioned the closing presentation “the Healthy Spirit” with Professor Ian Maddocks AM (Palliative Care Specialist and Senior Australian of the Year 2013) was really great, and I’m sure all enjoyed his talk and slides.

SUMMING UP

The Retreat in all its phases was very well organised and presented, and Mary-ann and co from Polio Australia must be congratulated for all their good work.

I was just starting to get myself organised with the somewhat hectic schedule, sessions, meal times etc, when the time came to pack for home.

The friendships made, shared experiences and fun times will not be easily forgotten, and the closing microphone pass around was a very touching, I must confess. So after making a hasty retreat at 1.45 pm and a \$28 taxi fare, I arrived at the airport in time to buy Sandra a nice gift before departure for Melbourne. Once there, I had to be prepared for a 3 hour wait before my Launceston flight.

I arrived at Launceston Airport on time to be met by Tori, my granddaughter. There had been a car swap - Wade was in Hobart with his dad helping with the race horses.

I eventually got back to Scottsdale around 10.30 pm, with Sandra waiting up, which was nice. While on Retreat, I had often wished she had been there to enjoy all the goings on, as I know she would have made many friends too.

Well I guess that’s about it folks, I may consider doing it all again some time in the future?