



'High Street', Dover, Tasmania

Something for Dad. . .

MARIE-MAY KILN, neé ADAMS

BREAKFAST television is a phenomena which, here in England, I have never chosen to experience. But it was just such which launched this mini-adventure within our "Greater Holiday in Australia."

It was already the middle of November and we were booked to fly home just after Christmas. Always hoping to gather and bring back meaningful presents for family and friends an underlying anxiety was beginning to make itself felt. What to take home for Dad? Something worthwhile, but what?

Standing one morning with another cup of tea and vaguely listening to the Australian voices on the breakfast television programme, I heard the word DOVER. Attention! I just caught the end of an item about a museum of old steam engines connected with the timber industry in Tasmania. Tasmania!

As part of our four-month's holiday in Australia we had already arranged a trip there, with our daughter and grand-daughter, for the second week in December. So where was this place called 'Dover'? Would we be able to go there? Would we be able to get something for Dad there? Would we be able to take photographs? 103
Would we . . . ? »

My husband, ever practical, slowed me down and went off to find the map and the itinerary for the Tasmanian trip. Yes, we found Dover on the map, about 60km south of Hobart. Yes, it appeared to have a metalled road all the way – quite a consideration in a country with many kilometres of unmade gravelled roads on which we would be driving a small hired saloon car, not a 4WD high axle vehicle. And yes, we had a whole day scheduled for Hobart so we could use half of it to drive to Dover.

The time for the mini-holiday came and we flew from Melbourne to Hobart. We had our first look at Tasmania and agreed with friends who had said we would find it to be the most English of all the Australian states. Now it was time for the drive to Dover. We set off on the Houn Highway, the A6, and we were soon out of the town and travelling through most attractive farmed countryside. There were apple and cherry orchards and soft fruit P.Y.O. We were very taken with the likeness to Kent and, sure enough, there were hop fields, all set out with frames and strings and the young plants greening up to more than a metre; December was the equivalent of our June and the harvest was due in March.

Feeling confident in our hired car we ventured off the main road and on to one following the coast more closely, hoping for sea views. The road at first was metalled and quite smooth. The Blue Gums (*Eucalytus globulus*) were everywhere and in full bloom with a incredible scent and the sea could be glimpsed now and again. As the views became more spectacular the road became more rutted. We were driving along about half-way down the steep side of the Houn River valley looking out across the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, with the bank dropping away on one side and rising sheer on the other. Glad that our daughter

was driving, we just marvelled at it all and tried to catch some of the magic with our cameras.

We were there! Dover seemed to be just clustered about the junction where the coast road rejoined the A6 on which we had started. A large notice informed us that a new shopping mall was now open. It included a tea shop and had its own car park. Good enough for us. Suitably refreshed we looked around. The new mall consisted of six or seven shops gathered around a central covered area with tourist information boards, play equipment and tables and chairs outside the café. This had been built on a green field site and seemed to us to double the number of shops in the town.

There was an older "Milk Bar" on the established corner site and this appeared to be the mainstay of the local community – as indeed they are in most small towns in Australia – supplying everything from newspapers to knitting wool, from ice creams to corn flakes.

Then we found it; Casey's Museum of Steam Engines. A strange rambling set of buildings housing samples of many different timbers grown in the district and set up to illustrate forest camps and the loggers' way of life. Then out to the Engine House. Quite remarkable! Here were huge machines, all hissing and puffing as only steam engines can. On the wall above each engine was a brief history and some details of the work it had carried out. The first and biggest engine was from Raminea, just 6km away and the notice informed us it was used in the preparation of 100ft logs used in building the national harbour at DOVER, ENGLAND. Fantastic! More photographs.

We wanted to know more about the logs themselves – what wood? how heavy? etc., etc., etc. We talked with the new owner



The Town Centre

who was a very enthusiastic engine man. He didn't really know much about the logging history but thought we could learn more if we retraced our steps to Geeveston where there was a Forestry Commission Office and a Conservation Office.

What, go?, already? I couldn't do that. So, reminding us of the time, our daughter and grand-daughter went off to find the beach and my husband and I went off to see if we could find any more town. We found a new petrol station, an old one, two butchers and a Post Office. We took more photographs and then went into the Post Office, which was in a small single room attached to a private house, and wrote a postcard to Dad. The young man in the Post Office was very pleasant and interested in what we were doing. He stamped the postcard very carefully to show the name DOVER and his area code. He then gave us copies of the local high-school newsletter and a local promotional paper. We thanked him and went off to find the others.

The beach, I must confess, was really

disappointing. The tidal movement is very small compared with any British beach, so the coast, which is not exposed to the great oceans but is protected naturally by promontories and capes, makes for safe harbours but very boring beaches.

Turned half past four! Offices the world over close at five o'clock. We dash back to Geeveston. Stop at the Forestry Commission. "Do you know from which trees the logs were made that were shipped to Dover, England 100 years ago?" How's that for a question at ten minutes to five? They were grand! The receptionist called to Fred, Fred called to Charlie, Charlie called to Bert¹. Bert came over, and found for me a lovely series of A4 sheets all about the timber trees in the local forests and thought that the logs were most probably Blue Gum. Lots of thanks! Rush!, rush!, on to the Conservation Office 100 metres up the road. The man there already had his coat on ready for the off. But, again real interest. He

¹ The names have been changed to hide my memory lapse



The Post Office, Dover 7117 Tasmania. *The tall pointed conifer above the Post Office will direct you to the same spot on the first and second pictures.*

The red letter box outside the building is where *all* letters must be posted. The rack at the right of the doorway is where incoming mail is placed to await personal collection.

remembered a bit about the loggers that he'd seen in an old book. He found it, photographed it and sold us two souvenir pencils, all in less than five minutes!

So that was that, we'd been to Dover. Promising the grand-daughter a visit to a fun fair the next day we went off to look for a cup of tea.

Returning to England in the New Year we took a little time to recover from jet lag and then down to Dover, Kent to deliver our goodies.

"We got these for you, Dad, in Dover,

Tasmania. Did you know there was a Dover in Tasmania? "Yes", he said "we've just printed an article about it in the December *Newsletter*. It was a follow-up from a lady in New Zealand to *World-wide Dovers* in the August issue."

Oh, well! Life is full of the strangest coincidences. We'd lost the element of surprise because I hadn't read the August *Newsletter* before setting off "Down Under". But we'd had a wonderful afternoon's trip and brought back news of another Dover. Something for Dad . . .



The entrance to Casey's Steam Museum. The huge logs standing vertical at the entrance are from trees similar to those cut down for the building of Dover Harbour