

87. Oh Brother, thou-est see-est some victories or Part 3

Andre and I had the loss to Collingwood that we shared together. Our salve was to go to Sandringham the Sunday after and watch the baby Saints and the Sandy boys claw back an unlikely victory against the Northern Bullants. Andre didn't listen to me when I told him to borrow a warmer jacket, so after saying hello to David Downer and twitter friends Louise from Tassie, and her singing daughter (look her up on u-tube) Aimee Francis, Louise's son Tom and his girl Kate, and of course, the gorgeous, ever patt-able Cuba, Andre retreated to the Trevor Baker Social Club, got a beer and watched the Sandringham boys bring about an unlikely and wonderful comeback and win. Local football has the feel of life when we were young, the thump of bodies, the immediacy, the supporters gathering around and listening to the coaches quarter time and three quarter time instructions. It's the kids kicking the ball around the oval at breaks and after the game. The people wrapped up warm standing around the ground or in the stand, trying to keep out of the cold sea breeze. It was a great afternoon of chatting and watching, and seeing a victory with familiar faces.

It's been an incredible few weeks. We have eaten our way through the Hall of Fame, many dinners, afternoon teas, lunches. We shared the first mother's day with Mum for 39 years, with all her chicks gathered around her and 2/3 of my chicks gathered around me. We ate seafood from Ferg's Fish in Hampton. I added to the 3 kilos of cooked prawns that I won when I rung up SEN during my exhibition. We pigged out on calamari, oysters, crayfish and SEN prawns. We ate and ate, and then ate some more at my Aunt and Uncles for afternoon tea. We rolled all the way back to Mums, where we scrabbled into the evening.

We are a competitive lot. We play "words with friends" on our iphones and computers, even mum is addicted now, and so we keep in touch with many messages over the miles. Now, we are here together, annoying each other in person. I love how now, Andre being here for the first time since 2009 on his own, we are spending time helping him relive his Aussie experiences.

The seafood feast was just another example of us feeding him his favourite foods or stuff he hasn't eaten for years. On arrival, on the way back from the airport, he stopped with Denise and bought dim sims and potato cakes. Only one hour in the country and his cholesterol count went up. He's had Tim Tams, Violet Crumble, Pavlova, Vanilla Slice (he's just remembered he hasn't had Lamingtons) banana fritters, VB, Carlton Draught, Boags, Veal Schnitzel, lamb chops, meat pie, pasties, sausage rolls, pickled onions, chicken soup with matzo balls and kreplah, two of our childhood favourites, rissoles, falafel, lamb shish kabab, vegemite toast for breakfast (although I post him vegemite so he's never without), cakes and biscuits coming out of his ears (all the relatives also want to feed him up). He has had steak on the Tram Restaurant ride yesterday with my sister Denise, Jon and myself. He had kangaroo as an entrée too. He has had Australian cheese and wine, he's watched the Dogs and North at Docklands with Denise. He's watched the Boston Bruins Ice Hockey on Foxtel and they had an amazing comeback. He's been on trams, trains and taxi's, and has Mum's car for the time he's here. He's been feted and loved. He's been to the Australian Post Stamp exhibition and came out of it with stamps with his face on it, one of the mother's day presents for Mum. He got postcards of Melbourne with his face as stamps too. In heaven.

So when Andre went to Docklands with Sue and Fran on Monday night, he was taken to the Medallion Club where he again was spoiled and fussed over. After the game, the people sitting behind Andre tapped him on the shoulder. He expected a punch in the nose for his noisy barracking

(at least he's aware that he's loud which had been made worse by the head phones he was wearing) and the two Carlton supporters said "It was great to hear all the Aussie words and barracking with a Boston accent". He was very happy, especially when there was happiness and humour and not an assault.

We sat in our normal seats, it was wonderful to be back together with my footy family, at our Docklands seating. We'd only been there once this year, what, between sitting up on the 3rd tier or being at the G or watching our boys play in New Zealand or in Qld. Amanda was wearing the Saints jacket Rina and I had bought her for her 21st, she loved it, hadn't taken it off since I gave it to her at 5.15 in the afternoon. She liked it that much.

We're Saints supporters, we had not much expectation of a win against Carlton, but we were hoping for a red hot crack. And that we had.

What a game, firstly, the jumper symbolizing 140 years of Saints history, with every player who ever donned the Saints colours named on the jumper. They were also scattered around the fans. And in those jumpers (we've worn 4 different jumpers this year which is some sort of record I hear) we rocked and rolled. Riewoldt goaled first in what proved to be an awesome performance where he was not only the most brilliant half forward, but also super captain. Carlton answer with two quick ones, and only then get a goal in each of the next two quarters. It was unbelievable, we just took the ball. Mind you, it didn't help Carlton that they lost poor Yarran and Ellard in the first 10 minutes. It was like the Saints were coached to run the Blues ragged. And they did.

All Saints got a tick. Love the work of Robertson who is proving a breath of fresh air for our depleted backline, and will make it hard for Simpkin to return. McEvoy played out of his skin, he was just everywhere, rucking, marking. Saad goaled two. Milne goaled two, one gifted from his Captain trying to get him back into form. Riewoldt kicked three, Siposs, Armitage, Milera all one each. Milne played great defensive football and was found defending and running the ball from the back line.

Fisher was great, Hickey played well. Steven played the game of his career, almost 40 touches, he has learned from the master Lenny about giving all for his team. Gwilt, Ross, Geary, all very good. Dal Santo, well, the coach was right. He had something to show this night. Nathan Wright was good until Eddie Betts broke his jaw (Betts is out for 3 weeks). Stanley is getting better in defence, Webster came in for his first game for the Saints when Wright left the field in pain. Ray showed form, Montagna worked very hard and looked good. Hickey is settling in. Newnes showed maturity, especially at the end.

What happened to Carlton? Was it just the injuries, but 2 goals in the first 10 minutes (Simpson and Walker), then one goal in each of 2nd and 3rd quarter (McLean and Garlett) just wasn't enough (for them, though it was fine by us). Carlton supporters were very quiet...until the final term. IN that final term, Saints stopped and suddenly it was the Sainters who got very quiet. The next five goals (Henderson, Hampson, Henderson, Henderson and Garlett) saw the Blues surge to within four points of the Saints. We couldn't believe the speed of the first two goals, and were shocked by the next three. Thank the Saints and the footy gods, that Saad snapped a beautiful goal in the dying minutes to give the Saints the breathing space and the 10 point lead that meant victory and another win over Carlton. We will take it, 2 out of 6 for 2013, but it was a win. We needed the win. We sung the song 4 times. We were happy.

And we travelled home happy, in a crowded train where we contemplated the evening and the win and how good the boys had played. And then we got to our cars, to find that they'd been grafitti'd, mine with a phallus, and Rina and several others with great long marks all along the length of the car. As Rina and I were both stopped at a red light in our separate cars, we wound our windows down and I said, "Well, I now have the opportunity to write the word penis in an Almamac article for the first time" and we both cracked up. See, there's a positive that can be found in just about everything.

A final afterthought: Everyone talked about how successful Monday night footy is, but the biggest thing I notice is that there aren't any of the young fans with their families. There are less numbers because the family cannot bring out the school aged kids and so they all don't come on a school and work night. Just saying....

A second final afterthought: as Andre and I watch the replay, at 157 minutes into the Foxtel recording, with 2.04 minutes to go, as clear as day, the camera shows Amanda, me, Gary, Uncle Bob and Rina, all watching, all waiting for the siren. We've paused it and rung Uncle Bob.

OK, there's one more...this week my interview with Barry Nicholls from Western Australia Grandstand Radio was put on the radio. This is the link to the interview done during my Wonderful Obsessions Art Exhibition, now all on line. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-08/110-per-cent-ep-6-2013/4677662>. How about that.

Yvette Wroby

15th May 2013