

It didn't rain....a positive take on the weekend our team lost...

In Adelaide again:

The weekend of the 15th June 2012 turned out to be a special one indeed. Rina and I were headed to AAMI Stadium for the clash against high flying Crows against the wanna-be Saints, and even the predicted weekend of rain couldn't dampen our spirits as we prepared to support our boys in person in foreign territory.

St.Kilda Footy Club supplied the tickets, they organise the ticketing for the South Australian Members and I was lucky enough to ring the morning they were organising this, so we were to be amongst the faithful. Along with the ticket came the invitation to the pre-match event in the Stadium Room with the promise of a special guest. Hello, we were in, with a party before to add to the excitement of the night. The Almanac Launch in Wynyard two weeks ago had whet my appetite for footy travel, any travel. Year 12 for my youngest is the only thing holding me from being a wonderer now. But I took these two weekends with joy and grace and that will do until next year.

And I'd lived in Adelaide in 77-78 for 18 months, with Rina visiting back then, and now, here we were on the aeroplane hearing Bob Dylans "Blood on the Tracks" track "Tangled up in Blue" which we'd danced and sang to then, and was one of the themes of our youth. I said, here we go to Adelaide, and we're high again and we both cracked up.

Meeting great people:

On the plane, while waiting for the loo, I chatted with the steward, who ended up being a Saints supporter, and before our conversation was over, I'd told him about the Almanac, that I'd write him up in the article (hi JB) and gave him my footy card to see my artwork. Out of the toilet came Gary Lyon, and I'd also seen James Bradshaw, Matty Lloyd and the other Triple M broadcaster. Poor Lloyd was with us in the cattle class, sleeping with head slumped forward into the chair in front. As we collected our luggage, we saw others Sainters, similarly attired (I had my 2011 scarf attached to my back pack for all to see, my advertising, my come say hello). And chat we did. All heading for the game that night.

At the taxi rank, the guy helping us locate a taxi said he was a Sainter and would be there tonight and he'd see us. We laughed and said of course, thinking, how likely was that. Bloody likely it turned out, at half time, when scuttling up to the loo, I get grabbed in a bear hug and look up, and there's our taxi man, David Burford, all dolled up in his Saints gear, standing with his Crow mates, recognising me instantaneously, happily, saying "I knew I'd see you". I gave him a card too, got his name, and told him he'd be in the Almanac. I am a one woman advertising campaign. He was one of the few hundred Saints behind the goal post at one end, with the cheer squad. (When we were leaving Adelaide, we checked in our baggage and then went looking for David. He had worked Saturday, Sunday was his day off, but his co-workers knew exactly who we were, David had told them all about meeting us again, and was telling them about the Almanac and looking up my website as well. He had done that before, spotting travellers at the football when he said he would. Hello David, again.)

We got supplies (food and a \$14 cashmere scarf in Saints colours (with a little purple too) that caught my eye and hasn't been off my neck since), and rested for an hour before heading out to the football. We were staying at apartments on North Terrace, Oaks Horizons, really quiet and peaceful and comfortable. We headed out to catch the footy buses that left every 10 minutes throughout the night. Pretty good, and only just up the road. There, collecting, were Crows and Saints, and I began talking to a family, parents and three kids, all from Geraldton in WA. Four hours from

Geraldton to Perth by car, and then 2 hours across in a plane. They really love their footy. Friends had organised tickets (with the Crows) and a pre-game BBQ in the car park, where many supporters traditionally go before the game. We had other plans so didn't join them. The bus was packed and it took 20 minutes in a double bus to get to AAMI stadium. They stood near us, and so we got to know them well. I gave them a card too.

I'm like my late Dad, he'd talk to anyone too. I'm an embarrassment to my children, but that makes it even better.

At the footy, we got into the ground and asked for help to find the Stadium Room. The security guy helped us, and took us through the Crows members' gate, and up to the Room and it was full of Crows, old, young, eating, drinking, Crows. We were puzzled. We were hungry. The officials were confused. They all looked at my invitation. They called the Senior Security guy, who came, made calls, and finally, we worked out it was a typing error from the Saints. "Pre" should have read "Post" and I knew the Saints would get a call from me during the week to let them know (in that, I am like my mother). Thus clarified, we headed to our seats, ate our sushi and walked to stretch before the game. We did have 1 ½ hours before the game to prepare for an expected drubbing.

We talked to the young chap in front of us, who sweetly protected us from the thousand flying balls as the Crows and then the Saints pretended they could boot them through the centre. You have to really pay attention behind the goals. Bloody dangerous. But the sweet man James House told me he'd been a 13 year SA Saints member, and his brother Henry, not with him tonight, was a member for 21 years, and that members over 10 years were going to get an recognition of some kind from the club. He said his girlfriend didn't like coming to the football with him, he gets too excited. He said it. He also said Darryl Baldock was his mother's cousin and Harry House, a football player, was his Grand-father. It drew a blank from my memory and my Google app on my phone. He got a card too.

We sat with the Cheer-squad:

Many moons ago, my brother was a Saints cheer squad member, spending night he should have been studying making run-through banners, floggers, ripping up paper, getting streamers ready in the days where those were all allowable items at the football. On this night, most of the Squad seemed to be women in their 60-70's, or one bloke, similar age, thumping their floggers in support of our boys or trying to distract those too accurate Crows. We chatted to one, a school teacher who took the day off to drive across, and will mark her papers when she gets home on the weekend instead. Her principal knew she was AWOL, she was worried if her face showed up on the TV, being in the front row behind the big sticks, and it was highly likely she'd be spotted. She said, kids always came up to her and said, "We saw you on the telly Miss, we saw you at the footy". Everyone has a story. They had to drive across with the floggers, as the Saints Merchandise Van did as well, drove across for the day and night. What a palaver.

During the game, there were moments we cheered all together, there were moments we were very quiet, there were moments we were encouraging our boys, there were moments our heads went into our hands. So many points, the ones that hurt most were the directly in front chances from Riewoldt, Kosi and Milne. Three shoulda's. And Riewoldt off injured within moments. And everyone seeming out of sorts, not their snappy selves from last week against the weaker Suns. Adelaide came to the stadium, stream rolling in and we were squished. Then we showed some spirit and got within 4 points, and all it did was make the losing more respectable, but like our Watters said, unacceptable. And there's always one, a young one, Crowing, too drunk, who had to come into our little cloister to cheer for the Crows, just to annoy. Rina rightly said, don't look and him and don't engage. She was right; he got bored and went away. The cameraman came and took

shots of their group happy (95% of the ground) and then our tiny group happy (for 5% of the time.)

Texting:

I'd texted Almanacs Crows expert and main man, Bob Ubert last week, to let him know I was coming to the game, though I knew he always sat with family. I texted at the ground to say we were there, and said "Hi, hope u r well and hope tonight's game is good (for us) Go saints. Yvette". In return, I got "Hello St.Yvette, we are in Saint Sebastian [Spain]. Yes, Jenny (his wife) did a course with YOU. WOT IS THE SCORE". I responded that they were ahead, at ½ time by 3 goals. He kindly told me, on the cold chilly night, that it was 28 degrees in Spain, and later asked, "What's your final fate Seniorina?" He apologised (sorta) and asked how Number 32 played. I replied: Too Bloody brilliantly for my liking. Him and Tippet killed our smaller defenders and our stars kicked too inaccurately...Here we are, conversing across the world, about weather and football. I never wonder why I love the world of the Almanac.

Bob and I went to the Essendon/Richmond Indigenous Round together, and we discovered I knew his wife, and now she has confirmed that I taught her in a course 10 years ago. How small is this world when we tell stories to one another, find out all the connections that are just there.

I texted my sister as usual, she'd tipped the Crows. We are now equal on the Retirement Village footy tipping competition. Rina texted her foot contacts. We both rang our parents. We were here and we were there.

Post-Game Party:

We were tired and disappointed, and almost went home with no post-game get together, but we are tragic and we came all this way to experience everything, so we did, and Michael Nettlefold was the special guest, and he talked about the four close scored losses, and the improvements of the young new men, and that we could now confirm that the Saints would play one home match in New Zealand next year (Rina and I are already planning, but for longer than a weekend, in our dreams....). Michael Nettlefold is without hope for this year. Not a good sign, but perhaps an accurate one. Looking to the future. There was one drunken supporter who was totally depressed by the Saints, and totally obnoxious. And he had two young children with him. He was a worry. But the Saints family were there, the Geraldton mob, Kevin and Bec Watson who had a business in Geraldton, and came with Dean 19 (who wanted me to write that he lives on his own at the Uni in Perth now) and 17 year old Lara and 15 year old Clare. I may have mixed the ages of the girls, and one of them won a prize in the raffle, and we all were staying at the same apartments, so just before midnight, we headed back to catch the bus, with the kids kicking their new Rooey 500 ball back and forward all the way. On the bus, we headed home, exhausted, sad about the Saints, but happy to have new friends and of course, they got the card....

A weekend away:

For the rest of the weekend, we walked (I walked 6.4 km's to where I used to live in Frederick Street, Mayland, and then taxied, completely stuffed, to Unley, back to Oaks Horizons via Whitmore Square and Hindley Street.) Rina shopped and relaxed, we had massages, and were too tired to go out on Saturday night. So we ordered wonderful Italian take-away, delivered to our door, and did something wonderful.

As a Sainter, we have one joyful year, we have 1966. So I bought the DVD with me from home, and we watched it. I had never sat and watched the whole thing, and Rina had never seen any of it before. A Match report will come next for the Almanac...but we sat and watched, and, knowing that

we won, we got to watch the titanic struggle between two desperate sides, and watch Darryl Baldock, in his Pies jumper, wave the cup in one hand and a single flogger in the other. Such simpler times. We watched and we enjoyed our boys winning the big one, the only one, and as I promised myself, I will watch it every year until we get another one. I will write about it, and I will know it off by heart like other Sainters. It is ours and we will treasure it, until....

We looked at the beautiful buildings of the South Australian Library and saw Donald Bradman's five bats and 5 balls, obviously all played in SA, and the wonderful old building that is the library. We saw "Youthscape 2012 Exhibition" and Rina fell in love with a Digital Painting by Laura Diment that reminded her of Sweden, and trees whose name slipped her mind, and she succumbed to a happy purchase. We looked at the South Australian Art Gallery, 5 rooms of beautiful Australian paintings and we were allowed to take non-flash photos.

In the Library, I picked up two old books and had to laugh, out of thousands of books, the two I happened upon were "Literature and Revolution" by L. Trotsky and "Selected Essays by Karl Marx". Really, truly. I read this from Marx: "Religious misery is in one month the expression of real misery, and in another is a protestation against real misery. Religion is the moan of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a hearthen [as copied] world, as it is the spirit of spiritless condition. It is the opium of the people." (If any of the Almanackers have a copy of Marx, perhaps you can help me with the correction.)

I think Marx was actually talking about the footy...about Saints footy in particular.

And the best of all for the weekend, it didn't rain, from the sky at the footy, and goals in defeat. We lost, but it didn't rain, and we were happy.

Yvette Wroby
Monday 18th June 2012