

### 13 April 2010, Tuesday



Gary Noel took us to Perth airport from 6pm, the beginning of 26 hours of travelling (although I was not to know that). Having e-tickets and confirming the registration ensured that the luggage was processed smoothly.  They did not even weigh the backpack and just waved it through. The laptop was not weighed and went on as cabin baggage.

The downside of having to be at the airport 3 hours before the flight is the waiting. Emirates do offer a later check in 90 minutes before departure. Will have to use that to avoid the long wait!



The airport lounge filled quickly and we passed the time with coffee/cake at the Dome café.

Customs waved us through as their checks are random. We must have looked safe.

The flight left at 10.30pm and I was quite excited about getting on the plane. Travelled Perth to Dubai overnight – very difficult sleeping when sitting up.

Travelling in economy is a bit of a squeeze.

Great entertainment screens and huge choice of movies, music etc. Did not read the book I brought with me for the flight. Food was good and Emirates looked after us.

### 14 April 2010, Wednesday

Arrived at Dubai around 5.30am. The next flight left at 7.50am. Huge terminal. Lots of walking to get to our departure gate. Toilet facilities at Dubai need attention – totally insufficient to meet demand. What were they thinking when they designed the bloody terminal. Imagine having to queue to use a toilet.

Emirates used buses to transport us from the terminal to the plane. I thought this was a bit strange and we had to walk up a set of stairs to get to the aircraft. I wonder how Janice Harwood will cope when she is in a wheelchair.

Another long flight – seemed to take forever. Tiredness had kicked in. Sat next to bloke from Aberdeen (Pakistani) who is training to be a doctor.

Arrived in Glasgow around 12.35 pm. Long wait to have the passports checked. They need me to do a time and motion study – can be better organised. Very friendly especially if they were speaking to a fellow Scot (Sandra).

Bags were not checked by customs – once we told them we were from Australia, they waived us through.

Sandra looked her watch and noted that from the time we left home to the time we arrived at Glasgow, we had travelled 26 hours – all of it sitting up. We were met by Linda Martin and her daughter Dianne.

Travelled to Avonbridge which is located between Glasgow and Edinburgh. The village of Avonbridge is near Falkirk (Sandra lived there). Look at this Google map for a reference.

[http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?f=q&source=s\\_q&hl=en&geocode=FRtxVAMdOQq\\_y\\_nrzlYgVhWISDEeUe8FulPmcQ%3BFVI-VQMdp-PG\\_yk5gnkm33aISDFBmhO2zAckfQ&q=glasgow+to+avonbridge,+scotland&sll=43.197167,29.53125&sspn=52.147145,111.269531&ie=UTF8&ll=55.919969,-3.746338&spn=0.631014,1.738586&z=9&saddr=glasgow&daddr=avonbridge,+scotland](http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=FRtxVAMdOQq_y_nrzlYgVhWISDEeUe8FulPmcQ%3BFVI-VQMdp-PG_yk5gnkm33aISDFBmhO2zAckfQ&q=glasgow+to+avonbridge,+scotland&sll=43.197167,29.53125&sspn=52.147145,111.269531&ie=UTF8&ll=55.919969,-3.746338&spn=0.631014,1.738586&z=9&saddr=glasgow&daddr=avonbridge,+scotland)

### **15 April 2010, Thursday**

Drove into Shieldhill and met Brian Martin's brother (Ronnie) and family. The name of the business is called Moreland and Martin (<http://www.morlandandmartin.co.uk/index.html>).

Willie Moreland did not remember Sandra and had to be reminded it was her.

Drove into Falkirk. Walked through Marks and Spencers. Car park is underground and Linda took the opportunity of having her Mazda detailed. There is no real street parking in Falkirk and people are forced to use paid parking.

Had lunch at a bar/restaurant and used GBP 20 to pay the bill. People are very friendly in Scotland particularly when they hear an Australian accent. Bit of a surprise to get used to pounds, shillings and pence. I have forgotten all of that since Australia was converted to decimal in 1966.

Went to 3G bought a dongle in Falkirk. Does not work where we are living in Anonbridge, Stirlingshire, a few miles from Falkirk. The coverage afforded by 3G is not great and I suspect that is the same for most country areas on the edge of the town envelopes.

Met a guy from Nepal in a shopping mall in Falkirk. He sells mobile phones and told me that he wants to work in the hotel industry. Took a job in Scotland because he could not get a visa to Australia. The only thing he does not like in Scotland – the cold. He was connected to the internet using his own 3G dongle. We were in the middle of Falkirk but the dongle took forever to connect to my website.

Wore the Gortex jacket for the first time and needed the warmth. The wind is really chilly.

Visited a park called "Dollar Park." Sandra remembered it from her childhood and spoke of her Dad taking her there



to look at the lion statues at the entry. The lions are unique in as much they have a ball in their mouths. Dollar Park used to be a private estate and the old house is certainly magnificent but it has not been maintained. Imagine a family owning the house and the surround gardens (now the park) in its heyday.



Callendar House is located in Falkirk and has quite a history. Magnificent building which was once a private estate. Can be found on the web – [www.falkirk.gov.uk/cultural](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/cultural)

This is one of the lakes in the estate and they have white swans. I suspect that the swan (you can just make out at the end of the image) is a descendant of the one that attacked Andrew Miller when his Mum took him to

Callendar House for a visit.



There is a palace (now in ruins) in Linlithgow where Mary Queen of Scots (a favourite of Sandra's) and her son James (King of England and Scotland) lived.



The Falkirk Council is working on the restoration of the palace but what a job that will be. There is no roof for a start. Sandra and I walked around the whole palace. It sits opposite a loch and the views are stunning.



Imagine walking in the steps of Kings and Queens (not poofers). The whole place reeks of history and you have to be in awe of what has gone before you. We are just here for a time and we each have a part to play.

### **16 April 2010, Friday**

Stayed home today – not planning to go out. Brian Martin still not here – held up over the volcano eruption in Iceland – planes not flying – airports in UK are closed until the dust cloud dissipates. Went to Hopetoun House (<http://www.hopetoun.co.uk/>) after lunch and

what an experience. My notes do not do it justice.



We had afternoon tea in what were the stables. The three persons are sitting at the same



table that we sat at. Eat your heart out! We had scones, cream, champagne and strawberry jam.



Visited the bridges at the Firth of Forth. There are two – one for trains and the other for vehicles. Drove across the bridge on the left. There are no toll bridges in Scotland (according to Linda Martin). The railway bridge is on the right.



### **17 April 2010, Saturday**

Brian Martin is still not home and is being held up by the volcanic ash that has clogged the skies over Europe. Stayed home for most of the day and decided later to go out for a

meal of fish and chips. Had haddock for the first time (not bad). Could not resist trying two of the local ice cream flavours.

The sun goes down very late in this part of Scotland; hence we went exploring looking at some of the places that Sandra stayed at. We saw her parents home, her own home in Lauriston and Sandra even managed to say hello to her pal (Barbara). Sandra had to tell her who she was.

### **18 April 2010, Sunday**

We hope to meet Brian Martin at 4.00pm at the Forth Bridge. It has taken him 5 days to get here from Azerbaijan (west of Uzbekistan) via Frankfurt, Calais, Dover, Heathrow and hire car to Forth Bridge, Scotland.

<http://maps.google.co.uk/maps/mm?ie=UTF8&hl=en&ll=43.197167,29.53125&spn=52.147145,111.269531&z=3>

Bought two Sunday papers today and had a long conversation with the shopkeeper (very interested in everything Australian).