Geotourism in Australia; perspectives from the field

Carol Simpson
Longer Tours

1997: 7 days, Great Ocean Road to Mt Gambier

Vic Gostin on the Cretaceous rocks

Anne Felton at the “petrified forest”

The School of Earth Sciences at the University of Melbourne presents:

Australia Adrift: the break-up of Gondwana

December 7-13, 1997

A seven day geological tour of the southern coastline of Victoria and eastern South Australia

Tools for Geotourism

- excellent field-based leaders for tours
- experienced geologists preparing guides
- making use of high quality geological data provided by state and federal geological agencies
- geological maps, geophysical images, excursion guides, special interest brochures
Other Geological Survey NSW geotourism materials
Conclusions

- need for continued contribution of geological materials aimed at geotourism by the GSNSW

- tour operators and other agencies e.g. National Parks Service, should make use of this information

- check that published information and signage is geologically up to date and correct

- geological tourism should be conducted by experienced geologists
Thank you

Sunset at Arkaroola
Geotourism

- Guided geological tours
- Geotrails e.g. Brachina Gorge, Broken Hill
- Printed self-guided & web-based tours
- Significant geo sites e.g. Age of Fishes Museum
- National Parks & Geoparks

Promotion of geoscience to the wider community
Guided Geological Tours

- Explaining processes that formed our Earth
- How landscapes formed
- Fill-in the earth sciences education “gap”
- Promote conservation of significant sites
- Understanding contribution of mining to past & present
- Links between geology & ecosystems
- Getting off-track
Where it all started

Earth

Discovery

Tours

1992-97

- Inspired by David Roots
- Aimed to promote geoscience
- Field-based
- Initially week-end activity
- Later view to business and career opportunity
Early Days

TOUR CALENDAR FOR 1996/97

April 20, 1996
HOT SPOTS TO ORGAN PIPES
Some of Melbourne’s finest limestone has resulted from past volcanic eruptions. The largest and most impressive occurred at Mt Macedon 350 million years ago. The more dramatic landforms preserved in this area, however, were produced during the last 6 million years by the eruptions that formed Mt Honeysuckle and Mt Dromedary (Hanging Rock). The tour concludes at the Organ Pipes where young basalt lava flows have cooled to form spectacular columnar and rosette patterns. One day (Saturday) from Melbourne, $75.

May 3, 1996
VICTORIA’S DEEP FREEZE
A fascinating day in Victoria’s Central Highlands, uncovering evidence for the largest period of glaciation to affect Victoria. Ice gradually crept northwards from Antarctica to cover Victoria 280 million years ago. Subsequent melting of the ice left piles of unusual rock derived from Antarctica and subtle effects on the landscape that can still be detected today. This tour follows the path of the ice as it moved northwards. One day (Saturday) from Melbourne, $75.

October 1-2, 1996
UNRAVELLING THE SPA COUNTRY
A two-day, mid-week tour that provides an overview of the diverse events that have shaped Victoria’s Spa country. Mineral springs, fossils, volcanoes, ancient rivers, glaciers, gold and gemstones are related aspects of the diversity that can be seen in the Daylesford area. This tour is an excellent way of seeing first hand the techniques that scientists employ to interpret the processes that have operated on Earth in the recent and ancient geological past. Tour leaves Melbourne Tuesday morning. I night cottage or hotel accommodation, $235. Bookings for this tour close August 28.

October 5, 1996
GOLD PANNING & GEMSTONE PROSPECTING
A day in the country near Ballarat, seeking gold, sapphires, spinel, zircon and ilmenite with a gold pan. We explain the many types of semiprecious stones and how minerals, such as gold, move in streams. You will also learn how to find minerals and what they tell us of the evolution of this area. An interesting pastime, enjoyed by the entire family, learned during a pleasant day. One day (Saturday) from Melbourne, $75.

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- Short tours; 1-3 days
- Within short distance of Melbourne
- Theme-based tours
Our Tour Leaders

- active field-based geologists
- usually mapped/researched geology of the visited area
- explained complex geology to lay people with minimal jargon
Our Geotourists

- invariably interested
- well educated
- widely travelled
- many retirees, empty nesters
- school teachers
- would-be geologists
- great rapport
Longer Tours

1995, 1997: 15 days, Broken Hill, Olary, Mungo, White Cliffs

Modern and Ancient Landscapes: a Geological Tour of Lake Mungo and Broken Hill

An 11 day tour organised by the School of Earth Sciences at the University of Melbourne

September 4-14, 1997

Tour notes written by Jim Bowler, Ian Plimer and Carol Simpson
Longer Tours 1996, 1997: 9 days, Flinders Ranges

In the footsteps of Mawson: a geological tour of the Flinders Ranges
October 30 - November 7, 1996

Tour notes written by Vic Gostin of the University of Adelaide, Malcolm Wallace and Ian Plimer of the University of Melbourne

Ridgetop drive, Arkaroola
Paralana hot springs