

Australia



OAP's Gap Year

Ray Wooster

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Introduction

Luck is strange thing, it comes in many guises. Sometimes it stares you in the face and you don't recognise it, or it bites you on the bum and you still don't see it for what it is. This is what happened to us.

Some friends of ours wanted to visit their daughter in America and found Heathrow terrifying, don't we all? Brenda and I hatched a plan. I would drop them off on a pedestrian crossing close to the 140 Bus terminus, with Brenda as escort. I would then stooge around passing the crossing from time to time picking the both of them up later, on their return from America, simple. I made up a lead. One end was plugged into the cigarette lighter and the other end, with the bulb, draped over the rear view mirror.

During our feasibility studies, Brenda and I chatted up the ladies on the airline desks, gave out business cards and waited – not for long. We were in business. All our chicks had fledged the nest leaving us with two empty bedrooms.

What with the staying with friends' atmosphere, the full English Breakfast, Devon cream teas and guided tours. Doing the slide shows had given me confidence. Starting at Westminster I would explain Boadecia's chariot, how she was England's first fighting queen. What better opening gambit for a tour guide.

We then catch a Water Bus, one of the crew gives a running commentary. 'Don't forget to put a pound coin in his hat when it's passed around.' Off at Greenwich. They photograph one another straddling the line in the Observatory, through the tunnel under the Thames. 'If you see water dripping from the roof, run!' I noticed that the people around us quicken their pace.

You may wonder what the hell BnB and guiding people around London has to do with a gap year in Australia – money, dear reader, money. We would never have raised enough fixing TVs and doing slide shows, it was hard work but worth it. Brenda was not one to