

Podcast 31 - The Australian Alps - A Trip to Thredbo

by Rob McCormack - Friday, January 03, 2014

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Podcast Number 31 –The Australian Alps – A Trip to Thredbo

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Hi,

Australia is a land of mostly open plains. It does have some mountain areas but they are not very high when compared to some other parts of the world, such as Europe or South America. For example, our highest mountain is Mount Kosciuszko in the Australian Alps. This mountain is 2,228 metres high. In the summer, you can walk to the summit without having to use special climbing equipment. In fact, this is exactly what my wife and I have done just recently. In this podcast I would like to tell you a little about the Australian Alps and about our summer mountain walking adventure there.

The Australian Alps is Australia's only mainland alpine region where deep snow falls every year. It's the place to go winter skiing in Australia. The Australian Alps consist of the Snowy Mountains in New South Wales and the Victorian Alps in Victoria. There are several ski resorts in these areas. In New South Wales, the two main ski resorts are Thredbo and Perisher. In Victoria, the three main ski resorts are Mt Hotham, Falls Creek and Mt Buller. In fact, Mt Buller is only 3 hours travel time from Melbourne, so it is very popular for skiers in the winter months of June to September.

I do enjoy skiing although I am not very good. My wife and I have been skiing in both Austria and Japan, as well as Mt Buller here in Victoria. But recently, during the Australian summer, we decided to go to Thredbo in the Snowy Mountains in New South Wales. We like to walk in the mountains so this was the perfect time and perfect place to do just that. Thredbo is located in the Kosciuszko National Park in the Snowy Mountains. Thredbo is about 550km from where I live. Once you are outside of Melbourne, the countryside is very pretty, with beautiful farming areas and picturesque small towns to visit. We avoided the major freeway so that we could enjoy the countryside and take time to stop at many of these towns along the way. That way we could visit the local bakeries and cafes and enjoy some of the sights.



We started out on our journey at around 8.30am one sunny morning. My wife was driving the car, into which we had packed all our luggage and also some food in an Esky. We had rented a small chalet in Thredbo which had a kitchen, so we would be able to cook our own food. That way we could keep the cost of the holiday down. I rode my motorcycle, because I wanted to enjoy riding on the wonderful country roads on the way to Thredbo, especially once we got into the Snowy Mountains.



Our journey took us through some great places and on some fantastic winding roads. For example, the road from Mansfield to Whitfield in Victoria goes through some beautiful forests not too far from the Victorian ski resort of Mt Buller. I really enjoyed this part of the ride as we travelled up into the Victorian Alps. The views were breathtaking and riding through the many corners was great fun. The last piece of our journey to Thredbo was along a road called the Alpine Way. This part of the Alpine Way is 74 km long and it winds its way through thick forest. I really enjoyed this part of the journey. We arrived at Thredbo, our destination, at around 6 pm. It was great to rest in our chalet in Thredbo and enjoy the view from our balcony.

We had booked for two guided mountain walks during our stay. Having a guide is a good idea, because the guide helps to make your walk safe and they also give you lots of interesting information as you go. The first mountain walk we did was from the top of the Thredbo ski lift,



past two glacial lakes



to our destination Charlotte's Pass, a distance of 19 kilometres. It took us around 6 hours. Our guide's name was Dan and he was an excellent guide.



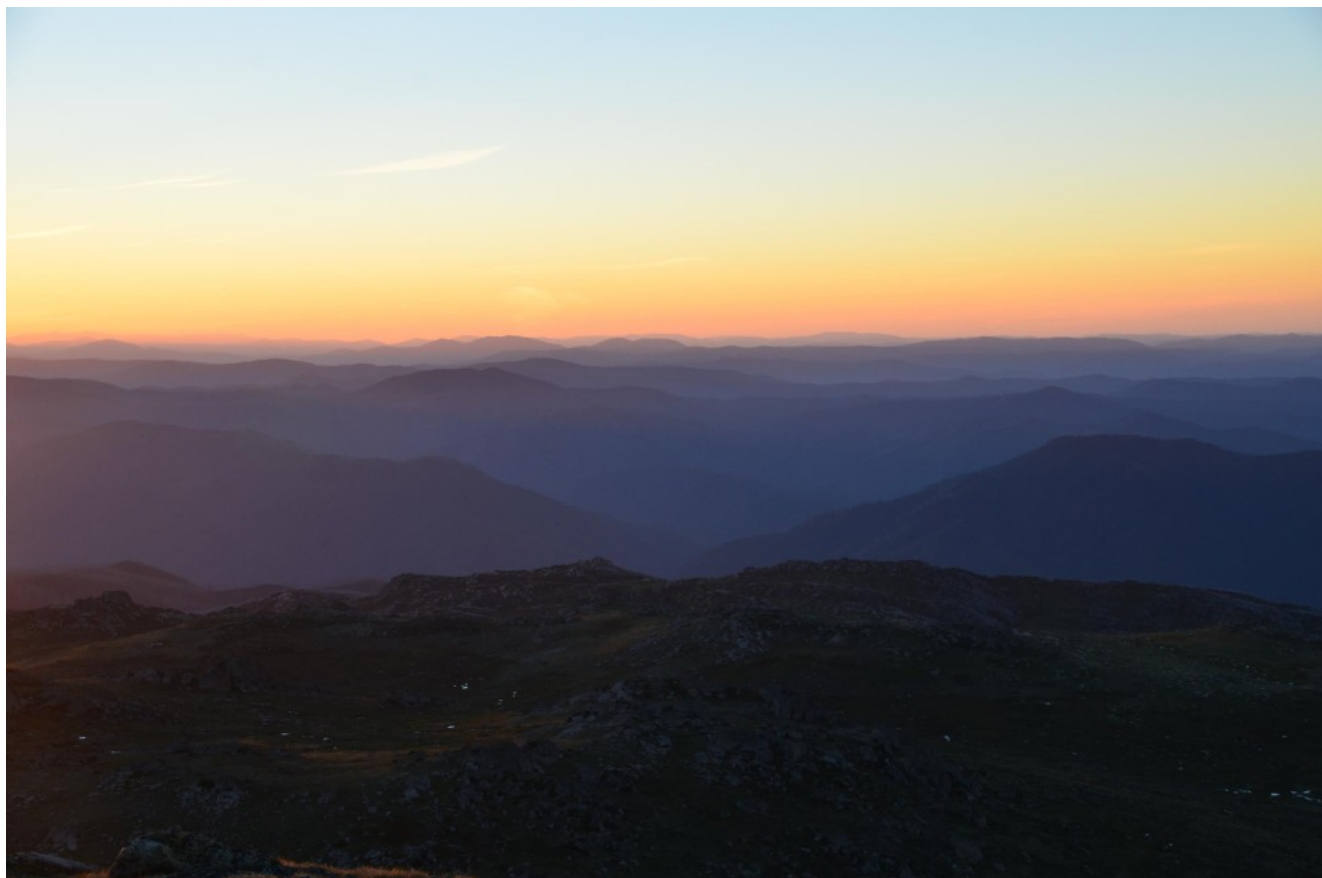
He showed us the lakes and stopped many times to talk about the plants, wild flowers and animal life in this part of the Snowy Mountains.



We walked passed Mt Kosciuszko and also Mt Townsend before we finally reached the top of Charlotte's Pass. It was hard work but we enjoyed it very much. Our guide, Dan, had organized champagne, beer, sweets and cheese and biscuits at the end of our long walk. We were tired but felt that we had really achieved something worthwhile.



The next day we went on our second guided walk. This time we started at 5.00pm and walked the 6.5 km from the top of the Thredbo chairlift to the top of Mt Kosciuszko. Because we started at 5.00pm, this meant that we would be on the summit of the mountain, Australia's highest, as the sun went down. What a view!



There weren't many clouds, so the sunset was not very spectacular, but the views were still marvelous. We took photographs so we could remember our trip to the highest mountain in Australia.



As the sun disappeared below the distant mountain tops, our guide told us to put on our extra jumper, coat, gloves and beanie. We soon knew why. It very quickly got cold, very cold. Our guide had also given us small torch lights to put on our heads. We used these to find our way as we followed the guide down the 6.5km to the Thredbo chairlift. By that time of night, the chairlift was no longer operating. We were taken in two 4 wheel drive vehicles back down a long, winding and bumpy road to Thredbo.

All up, my wife and I walked 46 km on mountain tracks in our 3 days in Thredbo. We were tired but happy. It was a holiday to remember.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it by clicking the comments link at the top of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. Perhaps you could suggest a topic for a future podcast. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it below. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

[WpProQuiz 13]

[Vocabulary](#)

achieved = when you do something hard

adventure = when you do things which are fun and different

alpine region = That part of a country which is in the mountains, where no trees grow.

avoided = when you do not use something, or do not do something.

bakeries = a place where you can buy bread and cakes

balcony = a part of your house which is outside your window. You can stand on it

beanie = a soft hat you wear to keep your head warm. Usually made of wool

biscuits = a food

brehtaking = when something is very beautiful

bumpy = when something goes up and down. For example, a bumpy road

cafes = a place where you can go to buy tea, coffee and cakes

chairlift = a lift with seats which takes you up a mountain

chalet = a type of apartment you find in the mountains

champagne = a wine drink which has bubbles

clouds = things high in the sky which bring rain

coat = a piece of clothing you put on your upper body to keep warm

compared = when you decide if one thing is different to something else

corners = when a road goes left or right

destination = the end of your trip

disappeared = when you can no longer see something

Esky = a box which keeps food cold

exactly = when two things are the same

fantastic = when something is really, really good

glacial lakes = lakes which are made by rivers of ice (glaciers) many millions of years ago

gloves = things you put over your hands to keep them warm

guided = when someone shows you the way

journey = when you go from one place to another

jumper = a piece of clothing you put on your upper body to keep warm

kitchen = the room in a house where you cook the food

local = nearby to a place

located = where you find something, it's place

luggage = the things you take with you when you go on holiday

mainland = Australia, but not the islands, like Tasmania

major freeway = a large road which has lots of cars

marvelous = when something is beautiful to look at

open plains = flat land with no mountains

operating = when something is working

perfect = when something is just right, with no errors or faults

picturesque = when a place looks very beautiful

recently = in the near past

rented = when you pay money to stay in a house or apartment

resorts = a place where you can stay on holiday

sights = the things you can see

skiing = a snow sport where you wear two long skis to slide on snow.

special climbing equipment = things you need to climb a steep mountain, like ropes, hooks

spectacular = when something is very beautiful or very interesting to look at

summit = the very top of a mountain

torch lights = a light which shows you the way when it is dark

travel time = the time it takes to travel from one place to another

vehicles = something which carries you from one place to another. For example, a car

winding = when a road has lots of corners

worthwhile = when is good to do. To do it makes you feel good

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