

ONE DAY UNDER MELBOURNE WEATHER

Peter Adamis 2 August 2015



I honestly cannot remember the last time the weather in Melbourne was so miserable and yet despite the harsh environment there was a certain raw beauty about it. Mind you I had just returned from sunny Europe and Asia Minor where glorious skies welcomed us every morning. I had with some foresight gathered with me a coat that once belonged to my father in law whom I never had the pleasure of meeting as he had passed way in Toronto Canada. The coat was lined with a number of inner layers which shield me from the cold and the wind shear once we had touched down at Tullamarine airport early in the morning.



We were met with a zero (0) degrees Celsius which did not endear us at all to the local environment and for a moment I wished I was back in Sunny Europe. Suffice to say one becomes acclimatised very quickly to Melbourne weather if you are a local no matter how long you have been away.

That's my take on it and i am sure that there are many that would disagree with me. As I took the taxi to my parent's home t pick up the family car, I wondered how my parents were coping. I knew that being in their mid eighties they would not be coping too well with the cold and dampness that had enveloped Melbourne and encased it into an ice cocoon.

Sure enough, my parent's home was warm and homely with the dual air conditioners on at full blast. My father was wrapped in a number of layers and still complained of the cold, adding that it was the worst winter environment that he could remember and wondered how he was to pay for the heating bills. My mother had gone out shopping with her friend at the nearby shopping centre leaving my father at home. We began a discussion on the weather and when was the last time we had such a miserable experience, swapping old "war stories" as to was more miserable than the other and who had suffered the most. He would talk about his days as a right wing irregular (Hittes) during the Hellenic Civil war and I would counter with my days being stuck out in some shallow fighting pit in the early hours of the morning before the sun had risen. I think in this case my father won as the winters in Greece were indeed far worse.



After our discussion I drove the car home through the sorry Melbourne wintery morning, miserable as I was and not noticing a flash as I sped through one street after another. Later only to find out at the end of the month that I had a speeding ticket for driving 67 kilometres in a 60 kilometre stretch of road. Not much of a home coming I can tell you. The car normally driven by my wife quickly warmed the interior and the road home and i was bathed in the warm area being circulated within the car interior.

I drove past parks all covered in a thin layer of ice, past parked vehicles which had crustaceans of ice sticking on the windscreens and rear of the vehicles, people all rugged up in their warm coats with a number of layers, hands covered with gloves, many with scarfs to contain the heat within their bodies, others cupping their hands and blowing warm air into them and the odd stray dog whimpering, seen sheltering beneath vehicles and in the alley ways. At that moment my thoughts immediately went to the homeless and I hoped that the Melbourne and local councils had taken it upon themselves to provide food, warmth and shelter to the homeless during this terribly miserable Melbourne winter.



Arriving at home, I attempted to drag out the suitcases and hand carried luggage but I gave up as I was just bloody freezing. (Not as young as I used to be where I would put on a brave face and put up with the cold conditions). Mind you it may not appear a big job to some but to me now at the age of 65 it was quite a chore I can tell you. Seeing that the other family car, (The "bomb") which I drove was in my wife's vehicle location which meant I had a longer journey to walk to bring in the luggage made my decision to leave the bloody luggage where it was and go inside the home.



In the street all the lawns were covered in ice as well as the cars parked on the side of the road. All the trees that were not evergreen looked like gnarled trees with branches at hideous angles as wanting to strike out and grasp you by the collar. The few birds that were seen were not on the trees but sitting on the power lines keeping warm as a result of the heat emanating from the lines.

The few that were flying were the galahs trying to find a haven from their exhaustive flapping of their wings, some of which landed on our next doors neighbours TV aerial which was attached to the chimney. I must admit the galahs struck gold as I could see a wisp of smoke swirling in the air and i assumed that our neighbour had a wood fire going beneath.



I walked up the driveway and opened up the back gate knowing that I was to be met with my sons dog named Jasper. I was not disappointed as it was his habit to meet anyone coming through the driveway entrance. If he did not know you he would bark. Little (big) Jasper was now "fatty" Jasper as he had put on weight in our absence as he had not been able to get the exercise that he was used to as my some looking after the home was busy working.

The poor "fatty" Jasper looked up and straddled himself against the gate waiting to be patted. I gave a number of pats and stroked his fur which he loved and was still there a few hours later when I came to bring in the luggage a few hours later.

I had turned on the heating and waited until the house warmed up before removing the layers of clothing. I looked at the steely grey ceiling of what we call the sky and wondered whether it was going to snow. The skies were heavy and dark as if it was like a blanket being lowered above our heads. Sure enough, it began to drizzle and with the drizzle, specks of ice came down followed by hailstones. Hailstones hit the leaves of the evergreen trees and in some cases sliced them in half and others it just rolled off.



The lawns lining the street were covered in a few millimetres of hailstones which nature was clearly demonstrating to us humans that she was still the big "kahuna" of the earth and that she could do what she wanted. Our veranda was covered in hailstones, the back yard the same and my thoughts suddenly went to "fatty" Jasper and if he was all right. I knew that his dog house was insulated and had an "Aussie tin roof" and that he would be safe or would he go within the safety of the front foyer covered by a security door where another area had been put aside for him to cater for the winter months.

Was he smart enough to go there, I wondered? I opened the front door and was greeted by the longest tongue you ever saw, a tail wagging and a body mass that even a polar bear with fur would have been happy with. Good boy I said to him, patting him hiding the bone behind my back. "Fatty" Jasper was a smart one indeed and he was not to be fooled by my antics. He jumped around; frolicking and trying to get at the bone until eventually I relented and gave it to him.



Back inside, I went upstairs and said "stuff it" I am bloody freezing and heating on or not, I am going to bed with all my clothes on. My wife will not know as she was still in Europe and I was not about to "dob" myself in. Anyway, I will change the bed clothes before she came home.

Into bed I went, covered myself in the doonas and turned the TV on. I had not slept for about 48 hours due to the home travel arrangements and I just did not care if it rained, snowed, hailed or even an earthquake, I was not moving for anyone including Mother Nature. The wind howled outside our windows and more so being on the upper level of the house, the tree branches brushing violently against the house, the Australian flag fluttering around as if trying to make a statement that she was still strong and ok during my absence overseas.

As for me, I was feeling bloody miserable alone and "pissed off" at having to come back at this point in time. Oh why did I not stay another two months I wailed as my head nodded off to sleep, not to wake until some 24 hours later. What can I say other than; so much for jet lag, so much for returning home and so much for Mother Nature welcoming me back home to Melbourne.



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