

Kids' stuff

Chock-a-block with opportunities

There's plenty to do within a stone's throw of Hobart, **Briar Jensen** writes.

"YUMMY was the unanimous verdict from the kids after our Cadbury factory tour, though the words smelly and hot also got a mention. "Shocking" was the unexpected response of their 16-year-old cousin to Australians eating about 10 kilograms of chocolate on average a year. Facts like these that made the tour so interesting for our group of varying ages (plus the free samples, of course).

The Cadbury Schweppes factory at Claremont, about 10 kilometres north of Hobart, was constructed in 1921 and was the first Cadbury factory built outside the UK. It is the largest one in the southern hemisphere and the only one in the world that conducts tours on the production floor.

Getting your head around the figures quoted by the guide can be a bit daunting, even for adults. It's almost impossible to visualise the 100 tonnes of chocolate the factory makes a day or the 20 million blocks of Dairy Milk produced a year. (Cadbury's most popular block turned 100 this year.)

But getting our mouths around the free samples was no problem. Fresh, unwrapped chocolates have to be

eaten on the spot, but wrapped ones can be kept for later. You can't take plastic bags into the factory, so my husband's cargo pants pockets were soon bulging with melting chocolates as the kids demanded he carry their loot while they collected more. At least they were safe with him – he's one of the few Australians who doesn't eat chocolate.

The shot tower

If you think the kids need some exercise after all that chocolate, then send them up the shot tower. Located at Taroona, 10 kilometres south of Hobart, it is the only remaining circular sandstone shot tower in the world.

It was built in 1870 for the manufacture of lead shot for firearms. Molten lead was poured through perforations at the top of the tower. As the lead fell it formed tiny spheres before landing in water at the bottom. A small museum illustrates the manufacturing process and includes displays of shot and the types of firearms they were used in.

The 58-metre tower, now classified by the National Trust, is built of



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freestone, with all 8000-plus blocks curved and tapered by hand.

Climbing the internal spiral staircase is a great way to get some family exercise (though not recommended for adults with a hangover). Kids love counting the steps and are rewarded with a certificate if they get the number correct. Hint: there are more than 300, including the landings.

It's pretty windy up the top, but the view over the Derwent River estuary

is spectacular and well worth the climb, so take your camera, because you won't want to go back for it.

The tower craft shop is crammed with interesting souvenirs, gifts and jewellery at reasonable prices – a great place for children to spend their pocket money.

Antarctic Division HQ

If your kids have an assignment on Antarctica coming up, then a visit to

the public display area of the Australian Antarctic Division is a must. But even if they don't, it's still worth a trip. Not only is it free, its interactive displays and hands-on exhibits are great for stimulating young minds.

Just down the road from the shot tower, it's the headquarters of Australia's Antarctic program. The workplace of scientists, engineers and support teams, it includes a public display area for those

VARIETY: The shot tower, right, Cadbury's, far left, and displays at the Antarctic Division HQ, left. Pictures: BRIAR JENSEN

interested in the Antarctic environment and the centre's activities. It includes historical information as well as current scientific programs.

There are information panels and touch-screen displays where you can watch scientists describing their work. There's a model of Mawson station, information on wildlife and various Antarctic samples and artefacts.

There's even a sample of an Adelic penguin's stomach contents, just in case you wondered what partly digested krill looked like.

Then there's the dress-up area. A huge crate contains an array of clothes needed in the Antarctic climate, from overalls and jackets to furry boots and gloves.

Our kids had a ball clomping around in the cavernous clothing.

And if you have little ones who love all things soft and furry, they'll adore the cuddly stuffed huskies (but you might have to prise them away when it's time to leave).

There's also a magnificent collection of photographs in the cafeteria, paying a stunning tribute to the frozen continent.



TRIP NOTES

Cadbury Schweppes Chocolate Factory

Cadbury Road, Claremont. Phone 1800 627 367.

Tours run from 8am on weekdays, except public holidays. Bookings are essential.

Adults \$12.50, Children (5-15 years) \$6.50, Family \$31.50, Concession/student \$9.00. On-site cafe and chocolate shop.

Tour includes some stairs, but wheelchair access is available. As this is a working factory, health and safety laws apply, so wear closed shoes and be prepared to don a paper hat.

The Shot Tower

Channel Highway, Taroona, Hobart 7053. Phone

(03) 6227 8885. Open every day from 9am. Closes 5pm in winter, later in summer. Closed Christmas Day. Adults \$5.50, children \$2.50 (under five free), family \$15. On-site museum, gift shop and tea rooms.

Australian Antarctic Division

Channel Highway, Kingston, Hobart. Phone

(03) 6232 3209. Open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm except public holidays. Admission free. On-site cafeteria.