

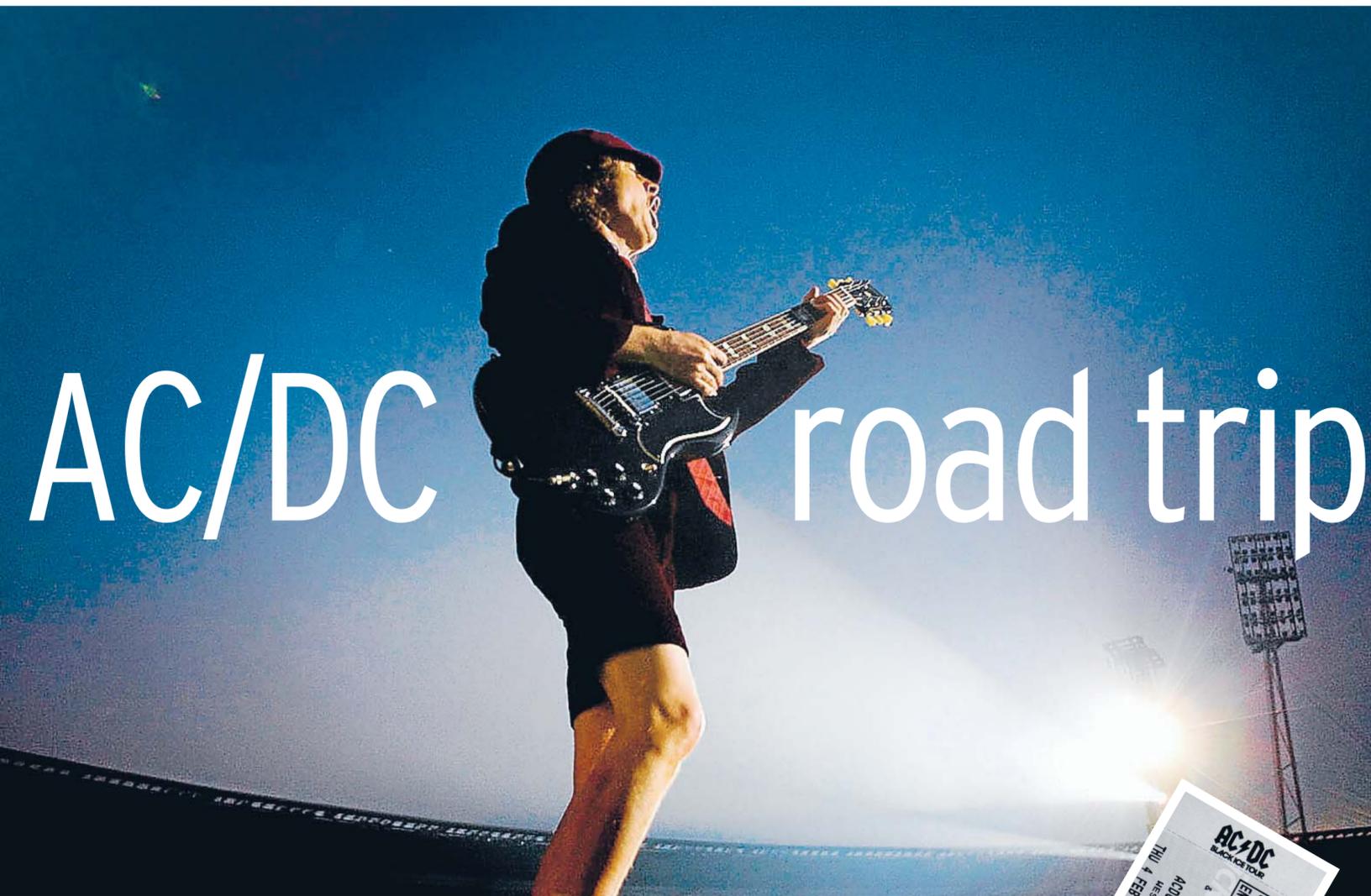
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# The Southland Times Unwind



**PRECIOUS**  
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# AC/DC road trip

**Thunderstruck:** AC/DC's Angus Young on stage during their North Island tour of New Zealand.

Photo: DOMINION POST

The Singh boys and I have been hammering AC/DC's bluesy three-chord boogie riffs for 30 years. When we heard the Aussie rockers were playing in New Zealand in 2010 there was no way we were going to miss it. **Chris Chilton's** bogan road trip begins.

**T**HE omens for AC/DC are all good. The five of us are buckling up on the Jetstar plane out of Queenstown and the captain's cracking Acca Dacca song titles over the intercom.

"For those about to fly, we salute you," he deadpans.

The plane is chocka full of *Black Ice* T-shirts and the little jokes bring a laugh from the expectant travellers.

It's been said before: it's a long way to the shop if you want a sausage roll, and the Singh-Turner-Chilton party of five is making the pilgrimage all the way to Auckland to see what has already been labelled in reviews as the world's last great rock band, AC/DC.

It's been a long buildup. Our wonderful tour director Fiona Singh got our tickets online when they went on sale months ago.

We didn't think we'd have a hope of getting any but she hit the jackpot straight away.

Another good omen.

It's a quick hour-and-a-half flying jump to Auckland and we're shuttling it to Devonport, on

the North Shore, where Fi's navy son Ash Heyrick and his partner Kendyll Armstrong have a place.

The night before the gig we get in synch watching a DVD of AC/DC live at Donington in 1991 over a few cold Speight's.

The picture on Ash's big-screen TV is great but it can hardly prepare us for the epic scale of what's coming the next day.

The southern invasion has left bodies sprawled over almost every available inch of floor space in Ash and Kendyll's two-bedroom unit and the next morning there is much banter over who snored the loudest as Wayne Singh gets a sensational cooked breakfast into us.

It's a bright, hot gig day and we wander down the hill to the Devonport ferry for a pleasant scenic jaunt across the harbour to downtown Auckland.

Queen St is seasoned heavily with people wearing black AC/DC T-shirts. It's been reported in the media that around one in 40 New Zealanders is going to one of the Aussie rockers' two shows in Wellington and one at Western Springs.

Not being gifted mathematically I think that's still something of an exaggeration, but so much

bogan black in the centre of Auckland certainly adds to the electric crackle in the air.

All the way up Queen St to Real Groovy Records and all the way back again our black-shirted brigade gets devil-horn salutes, cheers and even a long blast from some metalhead's car horn.

I manage to buy an official Black Ice tour T-shirt at real Groovy, for 39 bucks 99, but most places have long sold out.

An English woman asks us where we got ours and Wayne and Fi delight in telling her theirs came from Invercargill, where the price was less than half the going rate in Auckland.

The woman thanks us for nothing.

We fill in the early afternoon with a couple of quiet beers and a decent pub feed at a bogan Irish pub called Father Ted's, which is heavily populated with AC/DC fans. Bonnie T reckons the sweet chilli pizza is to die for.

Around 4 we decide to wander down towards the pickup spot over the road from Britomart, where buses are scheduled to ferry concertgoers to the stadium.

Not a moment too soon, as it turns out.

When we get there the queue stretches around the corner from Commerce St half a block down Galway St.

As we shuffle forward inch by inch the queue behind us gets longer and longer, and the closer we get to a bus the more amusing it becomes watching the reactions on the faces of the punters as the



walk round the corner into Galway St and see the length of the line. We luck in again, getting our gang of seven – the five Southlanders plus Ash and Kendyll – standing in the aisle of a massive articulated bus about three people before they shut the door. Security at the Western Springs gates is surprisingly cursory.

A quick pat of my backpack is all I get as I'm hurried through and I'm cursing myself that I didn't bring the camera or a hip flask, especially when I find out the prices for a round of drinks (maximum one RTD and one beer per person, \$15 thanks).

## What is a grown-up?



**MATE**  
Mark Wilson

**N**OT too many years ago, I made a comment to a Southland barbecuer extraordinaire, whose large stature and personality are mirrored by his preference for large consumer items such as trucks, boats and houses.

The comment was: "When I grow up I want a truck like that, Murray" – a "truck like that" being a large white weapon affectionately known as the Land Rocket.

A strange look and possibly a quiet laugh were returned in my general direction, somewhat inferring that at 25 was I not yet a grown-up?

A little more recently on the temporal scale of my life, I was sharing war stories from the Wellington Sevens with a few mates who, it would be fair to say, now lead much more settled lives than me.

Slightly entertaining stories of the lads' moderately inebriated antics – cavorting with scantily clad females under the guise of watching rugby, wearing costumes that would look more commonplace in imagination land than Wellington's CBD and generally running amok in the big smoke.

This, along with frequent comments of me not yet having grown up, got me to thinking – just what is growing up and how do you qualify to be a grown-up?

Is it an age thing? If so, surely I qualify now I'm pushing 29.

Is it a legal thing? Now that one must pay taxes, can vote, own a gun, drive a car and, if lucky enough, legally engage in some form of consensual bedroom activity with another, is one legally grown-up?

Is it behaviour dependant?

If we enjoy the odd Speight's, a naked run or slide on a suitcase down a mountain, don't wear a shirt and tie to work, attend university Orientation Week from time to time and haven't yet managed to be tied down by the throes of marriage or any such relationship – does this behaviour supersede any further considerations and banish us to the realms of non-grown-ups indefinitely?

Does finding a mate, getting married and popping out a few kids earn us the title of grown-up?

If so, many of my mates are recent qualifiers, or does that just mean they are just settled down and are still required to qualify in some other manner? Could your job be a determinant – office jobs, 9-to-5s or trades people, must have to be a little sensible at work? Does this make them grown-up?

Is intelligence a defining factor? I don't think so unless we would deem rioting university students as unintelligent?

I think there is no such thing as growing up.

You can grow old, grow tired, grow wise, be burdened with the responsibility of parenthood and marriage but this just means you are restricted from expressing any of the traits reserved for non-grown-ups, not that you don't long to express them, hence the enjoyment derived from vicarious living and weekend passes for ladies' weekends or stag parties.

On the outside there are many grown-ups – on the inside, not so many.

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