

# The Hamer Newsletter



**13 August 2009**

Hello to One and All,

How time flies – the last newsletter ended late June as we were on the way to Alice Springs and since then we have had quite an interesting time one way or another.

## **Wednesday 24 June**

On the way to Alice Springs we phoned to book a van park site and were told the town was full of tourists and there was not a caravan park site available in town, so we stopped at a roadhouse at Stuarts Well for the night – hamburgers for dinner and a free site for the night, and Frans watched the State of Origin match on the dining room TV.

## **Thursday 25 June**

We stocked up with groceries in Alice springs, booked a van park site for a few days ahead and made our way to Glen Helen Gorge Resort to while away the time.

As far as resorts go this one left a bit to be desired, and



they even ran out of water for showers, but it was a good base

for exploring the area. We did a day trip to Palm Valley which included quite a bit of rough road to get into the valley, but the walk at the end was great and the rare Red Cabbage Palms were beautiful (although they are green, so don't know where the name comes from).



On the way back we called into Hermannsburg which has a long history as a Mission town, but is not an attractive place to visit so we did not stop.

## **Saturday 27 June**

A very cold morning. We hitched up early and went to Ormiston Gorge, parked in the coaches car park, had breakfast and set out on the 7 km Pound and Gorge Walk. The sun soon warmed us up and we enjoyed a great walk through some beautiful country, finally reaching the gorge and taking too many photos as usual.





After the walk, we drove to a lookout we had spotted on the road back to Alice Springs, and



He was frustrated at the Board's resistance to change with the times and decided that as he wasn't able to do anything about it, he might as well not be there.

### **Monday 29 June**

Off again and arrived at the Devil's Marbles to meet up again with friends Geoff & Glen. The



temperature was on the increase and it was clear we have left the cold winter weather behind. The camping area was crowded with travellers and people out and about taking photos. Frans set up the satellite dish so we could watch Wimbledon late in the evening. The next day we wandered around taking more photos and having a good look at the "marbles". It certainly is an interesting landscape.

The rock formations in the gorge were quite amazing. There was not much water left in the water holes and the remaining fish were clustered on the surface, easy targets for the kites and herons.



parked for the night with a great view along the valley. A camp oven dinner cooked in the firepot was a great way to end the day.

### **Sunday 28 June**

Back to Alice Springs and do the chores – washing and shopping and cleaning – and pack away the flannelette sheets as it is warming up now.

Frans also made the decision to resign as a Director of the CMCA, after much deliberation.

### **Wednesday 1 July**

We arrived at Banka Banka Station, part of the S. Kidman & Co cattle empire but no longer a



The camp hosts put on an evening slide show with a very down to earth commentary on the workings of an outback cattle station, followed by whip cracking and water divining. Bev had a go at the water divining (with a bit of fencing wire) and guess what – it works!

### **Friday 3 July**

We had been told that the pub at Daly Waters put on a good feed, so decided to detour there and check it out. The pub is old and shabby, but the food is great – “Beef and Barramundi BBQ” - and it was packed. You have to get there early and book in for dinner as they limit the numbers. We managed to find a spot in the very crowded camp ground next to the pub for the night – it was amazing how many people were there – if you are in the area, it’s one of those “must do” things.

### **Saturday 4 July**

On to Mataranka to stay for a few days and have several swims in the Bitter Springs thermal pool. Bev hired a “noodle” – a long foam floaty – and we spent some hours floating around in the warm water. Frans is able to just lay flat on his back and float, lucky thing.



### **Tuesday 7 July**

To Katherine for a few days and another service for Fang. Our van site was under some lovely shady trees, unfortunately home to lots of fruit bats, so when we left we had to wash both Fang and Stopalot again to clean off the droppings.

### **Friday 10 July**

To Gunlom Falls in Kakadu National Park, via 37 klms of corrugated dirt road. It was a rough trip but well worth it and we enjoyed 3 nights there exploring the area and enjoying the falls. It was very warm, dry and dusty and hard to imagine that during the wet season it can be under several metres of water.



### **Monday 13 July**

Back along the rough dirt road to the Kakadu Highway, and on to another camp site at Mardugal. We got all set up, and then drove to Gagadju Lodge to book a trip on the Yellow Waters cruise for the next day, having been told that this is a great way to see the birdlife and crocodiles.

When we arrived back at the camp we found that the fridge had a gas leak, which had caught alight and burnt through the wiring for the electronic ignition – luckily for us as this then cut off the gas flow. If the leak had been at any other point, we might have returned to a burnt out Stopalot!

Running the fridge on 12 volt power soon depletes the batteries, so we had to cancel our cruise and leave the next morning for Darwin to organise repairs to the fridge.

That proved to be most frustrating – no spare parts available in Darwin and it took 2 weeks for parts to arrive from Brisbane, and even then it was only half of what was needed. So, Frans



made some temporary repairs to the wiring and a gas fitter made up a new pipe to replace the broken one, and organised for the rest of the parts to be sent to Kununurra for us to collect when we arrive there sometime during the next few weeks.

## **Tuesday 4 August**

Finally leaving Darwin, we went to Wangi Falls in Litchfield National Park, and met up yet again with friends Glen & Geoff who managed to save a site for us in the very popular camp ground. We

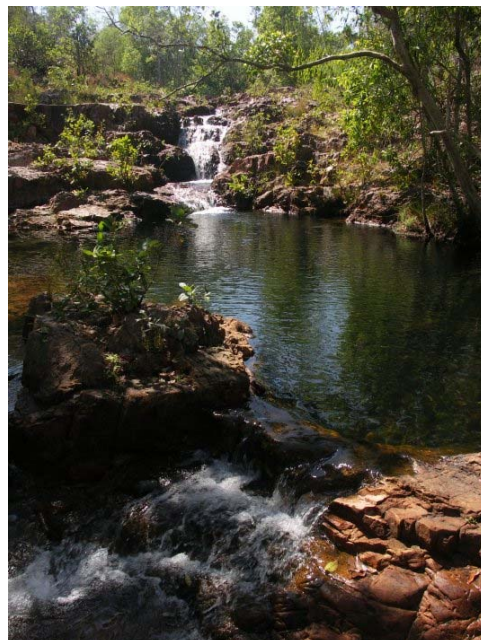


planned to stay for a couple of nights but ended up staying 8 nights – very relaxing, lots of interesting places to see and walks to do, and the lovely cool swims in Wangi Falls pool each day to cool off. We checked out most of the attractions there, including Florence Falls

and Buley Rockholes, The Lost City (interesting eroded rock formations), Bamboo Creek Tin Mine,



Blyth Homestead, Walker Creek and Sandy Creek.





The temperatures were rising each day, up to 36 deg C, we had run out of fresh food, so eventually we made the effort to hitch up and leave.

### **Wednesday 12 August**

We stopped at Batchelor to refuel, buy some groceries and use the dump point, and then drove to Adelaide River showgrounds and a green grass site with power and water – what a change from the dust of the last few weeks. A couple of days here to charge up the batteries, do the laundry and check out the local historical attractions – this was a very important military post in WW2 – and we will be on our way again, soon to be in WA for the next stage in our journey.

Until the next instalment, 'bye for now,

Regards, Bev & Frans





