

The Hamer Newsletter



1 March 2010

Hello to One and All,

Well, Christmas and New Year have come and gone and we are well into yet another year on the road. We had a quiet but enjoyable Christmas at Big Valley campsite (on a working sheep farm) outside Margaret River, in company with the other campers, some of them people we had already met at other camp grounds. The owners supplied a home grown lamb and a turkey and we all brought something along for the dinner and dessert.

The new year celebrations were also fun with even more friends arriving. Now we are on the road again and finding new places to explore.

14 December

We left Perth and went to a caravan repairer to finally have the fridge wiring replaced (well, sort of) – having been unable to get it fixed in Darwin or Kununurra, the correct parts were sent to Perth and at long last the wiring was replaced.

Then we had an overnight stop at a roadside rest area before heading into Busselton.

15 December

Arriving in Busselton we contacted our friends there and arranged to meet up. Colin & Linda Groves, who we met on our Canada/Alaska trip, invited us to lunch – we had a lovely afternoon at their place. Then Michael and Henny, friends from Cairns who were visiting their house in Busselton, invited us for dinner – another lovely evening.

After being thoroughly spoilt by our friends, we left Busselton and went back to Margaret River.

17 December 2009

To Big Valley campsite just south of Margaret River town. This is a camp ground in the middle of a sheep farm, a lovely rural setting and a peaceful place to settle in for a while. The small town of



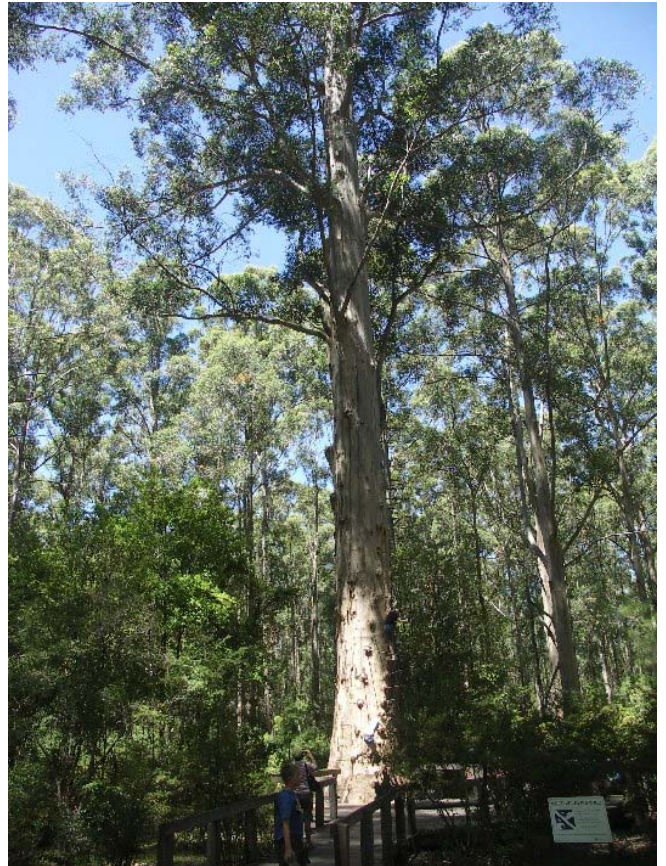
Margaret River is a real tourist centre and was packed over the Christmas January school holiday period. The only real drawback was the flies – thousands of the little blighters, but common at this time of the year here. Friends Dawn and Ray from Perth joined us for a few days and there



were several travellers we had met along the way so there were plenty of familiar faces.

We ended up having to stay here until mid January as Bev had a bad tooth and had to start root canal treatment. We did a few day trips and had a look at some of the stunning coastline and countryside – it really is a beautiful region. We visited Cape Leeuwin, Cape Naturaliste

and various beachside hamlets in between, also the timber town of Pemberton and the Gloucester Tree and Bi-Centennial Tree. These are enormous Karri trees which were used as fire lookout points in days gone by, and which thousands of tourists climb these days for the view from the top. Neither of us were keen to do the climb – going up 50+ metres on steel spikes hammered into the tree was not so appealing!



One highlight was Bev's birthday lunch at the Berry Farm with friends Colin and Linda who drove down from Busselton. Great food, great

company and even some beautiful little birds joined us for the crumbs and spilt sugar.

During our stay on one particularly hot day, the power failed and we discovered that the fridge would not work on gas – seemed like something to do with the electronic ignition which had probably been damaged in the fire. It was just as well we found out before we headed out into the bush for some freedom camping.

Australia Day was fun with a typical "back yard" cricket match although Frans took a tumble trying to avoid a run-out and Bev was caught first ball.

28 January 2010

To Busselton to have the fridge fixed – they managed a temporary fix to keep us going while parts were ordered, so off we went to Nannup, a pretty little town with a pleasant caravan park for an overnight stop.

29 January

To Maranup Ford, a working farm with a lovely small camping area – lots of green grass made a very pleasant change from the dusty dry conditions we had come from. We were surrounded by trees and bushes and lots of blue wrens and honeyeaters. We spent a few days here and did some sight seeing, and had Fang serviced at Manjimup. (There are a lot of place names ending in UP in this area – very confusing at times). The “..up” means “place of” and the first parts are aboriginal names, eg Manjimup said to be derived from "Manjin", a broad leafed marsh plant, Boyinup, is said to mean "a place of quartz" - Boya means "rock" or "stone".



2 February

To Shannon National Park camp ground, a very beautiful place to stay. It was the site of Shannon township in the old days



when it was a timber-getting town. While there we met the park Ranger and arranged to act as campground hosts over the Easter period. This will be our first hosting “job” and we hope the first of many.

While at Shannon we did the Great Forest Drive through beautiful forest areas full of old growth Karri, Marri and Jarrah trees. Some of the oldest specimens are truly magnificent. The diversity of the plant life and bird life is also amazing. We also drove to D’Entrecasteaux National Park and looked at Windy Harbour, which lived up to its name, and the various beaches in the park. As usual, the beaches and the coastline are pristine and beautiful as with most of the coast in WA.

During our stay at Shannon some familiar faces arrived – it seems that everywhere we go now we bump into people we have met before.

5 February

To Denmark on the south coast, another beauty spot, and day tripping to lots of places we had been told about as good places to stay – Parrys Beach, Cosy Corner, Torbay – none of them big enough for us which was a bit disappointing.

7 February

To Mount Barker van park, and day trips to the Stirling Ranges and Porungurup Range, both very impressive landscapes surrounded by farmland, but all very dry at this time of the year. We visited the “Lily”, an authentic Dutch windmill used to grind flour.



We did a walk up to Castle Rock in the Porungurup Range, a long hot slog but



worth the view at the top. Frans actually climbed the last section up a steep ladder and to the very top to see 360 degree views of the surrounding country. Meanwhile Bev rested under the balancing rock.

While at Mount Barker we had a fierce thunderstorm and lightning struck a power pole nearby cutting the power. The sunset on the storm clouds that afternoon was spectacular.

We also visited St Werburgh's Chapel, a beautiful place on private land, with a family burial plot still in use.



11 February

To Nornalup, to stay for a couple of days



and do the tourist trips in this famous area of Karri and Tingle trees.

We did the Valley of the Giants drive, and the Tree Tops walk high up in the canopy, also the Ancient Empire walk. These beautiful old trees have to be seen to be believed, especially the Tingle trees with their hollow bases. The Giant Tingle Tree is an amazing sight – one wonders how long it can survive with so many tourists tramping around, although the boardwalk around it now protects it from the worst of the

damage.

We also drove to Mt Frankland national park and climbed to the summit – a tiring climb up very steep concrete steps and ladders but well worth the effort for the 360 degree views.



Another great drive was to Peaceful Bay along Ficifolia Road, which showcases the beautiful red flowering gum (ficifolia) which is native to this small area. The colours range from pink through red and orange and are quite stunning.



13 February

To Quinninup and a camp ground we had been told about, surrounded by masses of fruiting blackberries.

As we could only stay one night Bev was kept very busy for the afternoon picking the berries and making jam and freezing cooked fruit.

14 February

Back to Big Valley at Margaret River where there was another “back yard” cricket match in honour of Valentines Day. We both had more success this time, both scored a few runs. It was a lot of fun especially trying to explain the rules to back packers from Korea and Europe, who had never seen cricket before!

Next day was the dentist, then again on Thursday.



18 February

To Canebrake Pool conservation park, near Margaret River. This is a lovely spot, a bush camp with no facilities except a pit loo. It was good to be back in the bush for a change, but the weather was cloudy and cool so the solar power wasn't much help. The main entertainment was catching March flies and feeding them to the blue wrens – it is surprising how many big flies a tiny wren can eat.

22 February

To Busselton to have the final repair done to the fridge, and then

on to Donnybrook for a few days. Donnybrook is touted as “the home of the Granny Smith apple” and is a big fruit growing centre. It has a lovely little “Transit Park” for short stays, next to the cricket ground.

It is a very pleasant place to spend a few days, with the added bonus of being on the spot to watch the local cricket team beat their rivals in a one day match.



We drove out to Wellington Dam national park, and visited the King Jarrah tree – there are a lot of big trees to visit in this part of the world.

1 March 2010

To Kojonup to stay for a few days. This is a huge farming area – grains, sheep, wine & fruit. At the moment it is all golden brown and hot after the hottest summer on record in WA. We are planning to go to the Wagin Woolorama in a few days, an annual sheep shearing and wool festival – hoping it cools down a bit before then.

Well, the last couple of months have been a bit less hectic than before, as we stayed so long in the Margaret River area. Now we are on the move again and finding that this huge south west corner of W.A. has so much to offer, it will be impossible to see it all before it is time to start moving north again.

This year we are planning to focus on the wild flower country and we hope for good winter rains to grow the flowers. We are booked as camp ground hosts at Coalseam Conservation Park near Geraldton in July, the start of the wildflower season, and also at Kennedy Range National Park east of Carnarvon during September, so with any luck we will see lots of wildflowers and take lots of photos.

That's it for this instalment. We hope you are well and enjoying life,

Regards, Bev & Frans