

The Hamer Newsletter



30 September 2010

Hello to One and All,

Just a short letter this time to tell you about our experience in the Kennedy Ranges National Park at Temple gorge campground. We arrived there on 29th August and after a quick tour with the departing hosts we settled in and started work.

The rains had not been enough to make for a good flowering season, but there were quite a few flowers here and there and wherever campers had thrown water the parakeelya flowers had sprung up.

The campground was certainly in a spectacular location and the daily changes of light on the escarpment from sunrise through to sunset was a beautiful sight.

The first couple of weeks were relatively cool and comfortable, then it started to warm up and we had some very warm days.

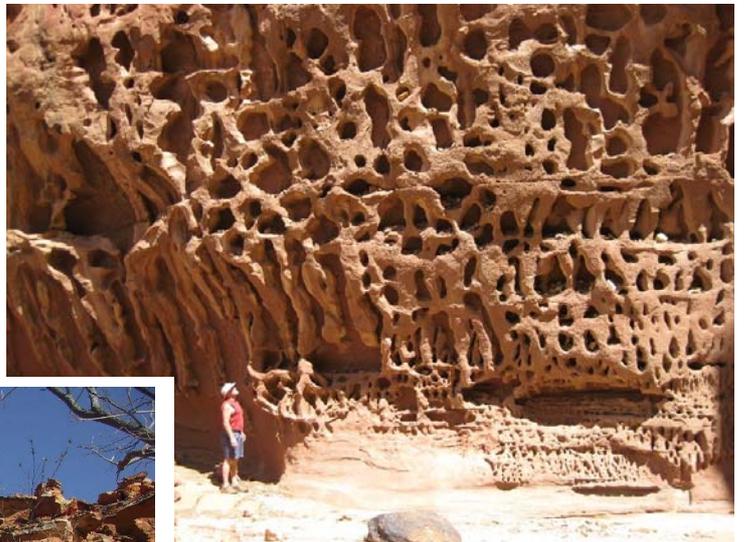


The wind was almost constant, changing direction several times a day and after the first couple of days we decided not to have the awning out at all. The wind was too gusty and the noise of the awning flapping and clattering was unpleasant. Luckily our site gave us afternoon shade so we were quite comfortable.



The number of campers varied from 17 sites (34 people) at our busiest to 2 sites (3 people) at the slowest. The daily ritual of lighting the communal camp fire late afternoon and sitting around chatting with the campers soon led to us having our main meal at noon and just a snack at night.

We did all of the walks – 3 gorges and the escarpment – and Bev did them a second time with a young woman who was camping alone and welcomed a companion. The geology of the area fascinated everyone, being an ancient seabed (250 million years old) with all



sorts of fossil evidence of marine life.

It is certainly an interesting place to visit and we thoroughly enjoyed our time there – apart from the bush flies which greeted everyone at first light and finally disappeared just before dark. Bev wore a fly-veil hat for the entire 26 days we were there, and even Frans was forced to wear his much of the time.



There was very little wildlife as it was so dry, but some lucky campers saw echidnas and we watched a small lizard foraging and digging up a grub.



We had rain on one day, widespread over a large area in the region, only 3.5 mm but enough to close some of the roads as the hard clay roads become very slippery and dangerous with a little water on them. That slowed down the arrivals for a couple of days, and

Frans had to dig out some channels to stop the water accumulating around our van.



The only disappointment was the non-arrival of the Dawson's Burrowing Bee which inhabits the area and only emerges if there has been enough rain to stimulate the larvae to develop. These bees featured in the David Attenborough-

narrated "Life" episode on insects and was filmed right there near the campground. The Ranger asked us to keep an eye out for them but they just did not appear this year. The photo is a bee in its burrow, taken last year.

One day we went for a drive to the western side of the range with one of the rangers. It is a four wheel drive trip involving some deep sandy crossings and a lot of rough, stony road. The track was very narrow in places and poor Fang is now very badly scratched on both sides from the thorny bushes. The trip was great though as the western side is very different with some natural springs and old wells, and some lovely old white trunked gum trees. There is a



quarry mining "Mookaite" (so called because the mine is in Mooka Creek).

Unfortunately there are still a lot of cattle roaming there but the station owners will soon be made to fence them in and keep them away from the National Park areas.

We departed on 23 September and now we are at Osprey Bay in Cape Range National Park. From hot, dry, dusty red dirt country to the beautiful blue ocean at Ningaloo Marine Park, the contrast could not be greater.

The following photos are all of the Kennedy Ranges, the gorges and the campground.

Bye for now,
Bev and Frans



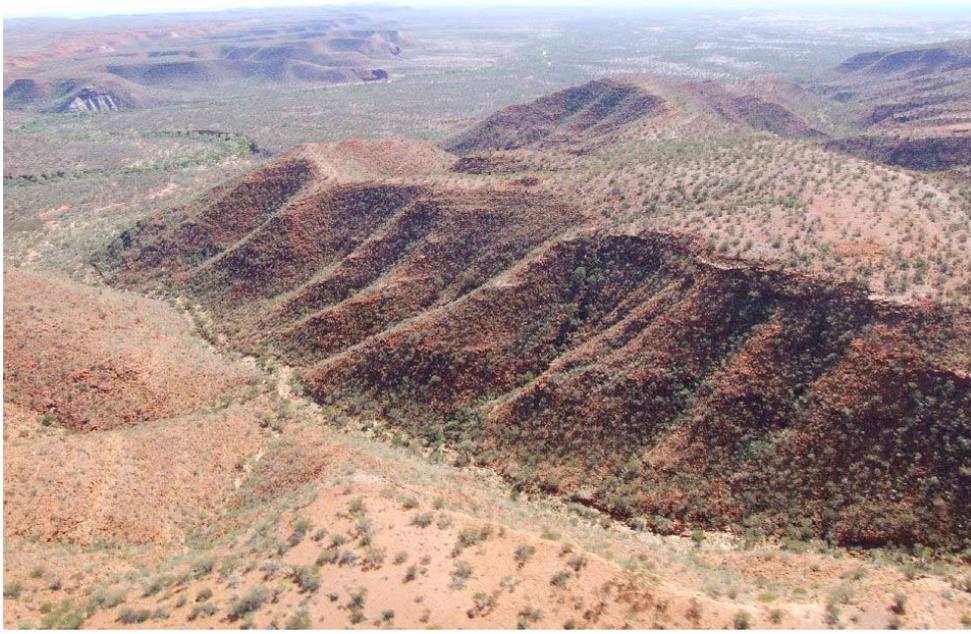
Mookaite (amongst other things decorative, used to make genuine, authentic American Indian arrow heads)



Shells, 250 million years old



Aerial shot of part of the top of the range



Our camp

