

The Hamer Newsletter



28 July 2011

Hello to One and All,

Well, 2 months since the last newsletter and although we seem to have been busy, we haven't travelled far.

Tuesday 28 June

We left Goomalling after 6 weeks of "homestead caretaking", headed down to Baskerville in the Swan Valley near Perth in the pouring rain and arrived at Harris Organic Winery to do a "house sit". It was bucketing rain when we arrived and we could not get into the driveway due to a low branch on an oak tree. Frans and Duncan (the owner) decided we would have to go in the back entrance for the night and sort out the offending tree in the morning.



After a wet and soggy night and a lovely roast dinner provided by our hosts, Deb and Duncan and daughter Maddie, the next morning dawned bright and sunny. Frans and Duncan got busy with the chainsaw, cut off a few branches and we relocated to the driveway between the winery building and the vineyard.

We spent the day settling in, meeting the animals, and learning about our feeding duties. The next morning, Deb, Duncan and Maddie packed their car and departed on their holiday and we were left in charge of the place. The following 10 days passed in a blur of feeding and playing with animals, selling wine to some of the people who called in, dodging the raindrops and doing a few chores on Stopalot.



The animals missed their owners so we spent some time with them. Shep the dog is a big sook and loves to be around humans, as does Crookshanks the ginger cat. Lola the 3 legged cat likes a pat now and then and Arthur the outdoors cat tolerates a pat when he is hungry.

Lambie the sheep likes to run around and play, and likes the oat seeds removed from around her face now and then. She was a bit of a nuisance at feed time and Frans had to give her a good talking to now and then.



The ducks are a mad lot and panic every day when let out or herded in to their pen.

We also had visits from several Perth based friends so the time passed quickly until the family returned.

Tuesday 12 July

We started preparing to leave. Daughter Karyn was in Perth again on a business trip

and came up for lunch. We went to The Feral Brewery just up the road and had a lovely lunch and the beer “tasting” rack. This was 6 small glasses of different beers brewed on the premises and the range of flavours was amazing.

Wednesday 13 July

Ready to leave, with a lovely parting gift



of 6 bottles of Duncan’s delightful organic Shiraz wine. A parting photo with Deb and Duncan, and with Frans on the ladder as Bev drove out making sure we cleared the oak tree branch, we were off to New Norcia and dinner with friend Carmel and partner Nick at the New Norcia hotel. As always, a good meal, accompanied by a lovely bottle of New Norcia merlot cabernet made from grapes grown in Nick’s vineyard. We overnighted at New

Norcia next to the oval, a beautiful clear, cold night with a full moon, and left the next morning.

Thursday 14 July

As we have almost 2 weeks to travel about 400 kms, we decided to take it slow and not go far. We ended up at Coorow, another small wheat town, and stayed in the council caravan park. We were the only tourists there so it was quiet and peaceful. There was a storm and heavy rain on Friday, so it was easy to stay put for the weekend and let things dry out a bit.

Monday 18 July

Time to move on, so we went to Carnamah, still in the wheatbelt, to the council van park. Again, a very quiet place and few tourists – they must be all up north chasing the warmth. The wildflowers are starting to show signs of emerging, but only as buds. More rain showers – hope it's falling in the crop areas.



Thursday 21 July

We decided to go to Western Flora caravan park near Eneabba. This is a renowned wildflower area with one of the most diverse ranges of flowering plants in W.A. Western Flora is a privately owned park with some pristine areas of vegetation and a huge range of species, and the host Allan Tinker is a respected

and well known self-taught authority. It was still a bit early for the mass flowering but we did see a large number of various carnivorous Sundew plants, donkey orchids and blue fairy orchids.

Tuesday 26 July

To Geraldton to stay with friends Andrea and John (fellow Southern Cross 5th wheeler owners) at a property they are house sitting. We will stay here until Sunday and then go to Coalseam Conservation Park for the month of August, as camp ground hosts. It is going to be quite muddy as there has been so much rain, and the conditions could be very different from last year. Hopefully there will be more flowers this time, and we hope the baby trees we helped to plant last year are thriving.

Regards

Bev and Frans



Donkey orchid



Blue tinsel lily



Blue fairy orchid



View from window at winery



Kangaroo & joey at Western Flora