

## The Hamer Newsletter



**28 September 2011**

Hello to One and All,

Another instalment before we go to the Stirling Ranges National Park near Albany to do our final “job” as campground hosts in West Australia. This will be our 8<sup>th</sup> camp-host assignment in our past 2 years in W.A. and we hope it will live up to our expectations with the wildflowers. The last camp at Coalseam Conservation Park was wonderful, with amazing wildflowers and birds and we are very happy that we picked the best month in the best year for flowers in quite some time. The rains came on time and the flowers grew in their millions.

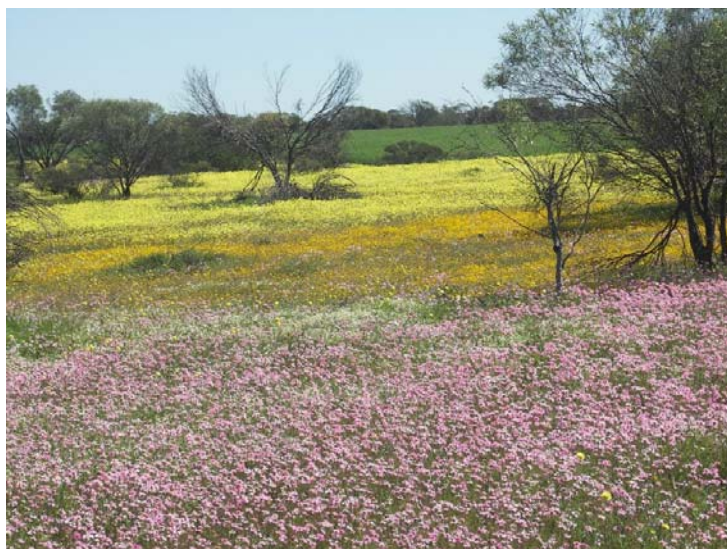
**Saturday 30 July 2011**

We said goodbye to friends Andrea and John and left Geraldton for Mingenew where we stayed in the van park for 2 nights. On Sunday we drove out to Coalseam to check road conditions and meet the departing campground hosts, and organised to go out on Monday morning and take over. The dirt road was still good after rain showers. We went for a walk up Mingenew Hill and found some orchids and everlastings.

**Monday 1 August 2011**

Went to Coalseam, met the Ranger and moved into the campground host site. We managed to get set up just before the wind and rain came. The Ranger showed us the location of various orchids – lots more than last year, including a rare pure white spider orchid. We had a quiet night with no campers, and lots of rain.

**Tuesday 2 August to Tuesday 30 August**



The month started out quietly, with few campers coming in, probably due to the rainy conditions. It was cold, but the flowers were absolutely glorious. Then it was as if a switch was turned on and the camp filled up every day with many having to go to the overflow camp at the Breakaway.

We were kept very busy looking after the camp ground and the day use picnic areas, with hundreds of day trippers

coming in to see the flowers. The newspapers, radio and TV were encouraging everyone to “get out there and see the best flower season in years” and they heeded the call. The Ranger was happy that camping takings were double last year's.



Bev was kept busy taking people to see the various orchids. Tourists were coming in from all directions saying “I was told you had some lovely orchids and the camp host lady would show us”. We found a tiny plant with beautiful miniature pure white fringe lily flowers.

During the month the road through the park

was closed 4 times due to boggy conditions after heavy rain, and that gave us a bit of a breather for a day each time. The rain was great for the flowers though and they continued to grow and glow.

Our friends Mike & Ros came to stay for a few days on their way north, and Ian & Nola from Perth came for a weekend.

Towards the end of the month it warmed up and we had some very dry and dusty days.

We handed over to new camp hosts on 31 August and by the time we left on Monday 5 September the flowers were starting to fade.



### **Monday 5 September**

Leaving Coalseam for the last time, we went to Mingenew to find the caravan park booked out, so went to Carnamah for a couple of nights. We did the accumulated laundry, cleaned out some of the dust and got ourselves organised for the next episode.

### **Wednesday 7 September**

To Western Flora Caravan Park at Eneabba. We had been told by friends that they needed some help as their busy-season helpers had to leave due to illness. So, having a week to spare we offered to do what we could for a short while. It was a busy time but Frans managed to do a Tag-Along tour with Alan Tinker (the owner) and took loads of photos. For anyone with a glimmer of interest about flowers and plants, this place is a must and the daily wildflower walk with Alan (during the season) is not to be missed.

We saw the beautiful SHIRT orchid near the camp ground.





## Tuesday 13 September



After an early morning walk during which we saw RABBIT and SPIDER orchids and heaps of other beautiful flowers, we left Western Flora and headed to Perth. Daughter Karyn was on a business trip to Perth and we organised to have dinner with her the



next day. We went to our usual site at Perth Vineyards van park at Caversham.

## Wednesday 14 September

The highlight of the day was dinner at the Rose & Crown pub in Guildford. Lovely food and wine and a chance to catch up with Karyn's news.

## Saturday 17 September

Time to get moving. We decided to go to Narrogin and check out Congelin campground which has been on our must-do list for the last 2 years. On the way we came across a tiny little town called Wandering, with a tiny caravan park in a quiet spot next to the sportsground and rural bush fire shed. The weather forecast was for windy conditions and rain as a cold front crossed the State, so we decided to just stay put and wait for better weather before moving on.

## Monday 19 September



To Congelin campground in the Dryandra Woodlands. This is a lovely spot and has a very well laid out caravan camping area with 7 sites, each with a fire pit, cut logs supplied, and a picnic table. We booked to go on the night

tour at Barna Mia animal sanctuary where we saw 4 species of endangered animals (Brush tail Bettong, Burrowing Bettong, Bilby and Rufous Hare-Wallaby) although it was difficult to get good photos in the red light used to see the animals. Frans managed to get a good shot of the Bilby in black and white.



Over the next few days we spent many hours wandering around finding orchids, many of which we had not seen before, and doing walk-trails in the woodlands. In Spring this is an orchid-lovers paradise and we really enjoyed our time there, especially the camp fire at night to keep warm.

### **Friday 23 September**

With time to spare before going to the Stirling Ranges, we decided to meander around and stay in small towns. The next stop was Dumbleyung where we stayed for 2 nights, and went to look at Dumbleyung Lake where Donald Campbell set the world speed record on water in 1964. There is an interesting memorial stone which has a hole bored through it, and at 3.43 pm on New Year Eve each year the sun shines through onto a plaque on the ground, to commemorate the exact time he set the record.



### **Sunday 25 September**

Our 28<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, although neither of us remembered until late in the day. We drove to Lake Grace, quite a large town compared to most in this area, and then on to Pingrup to stay the night. Pingrup has a population of 62, a roadhouse with no fuel, a pub which opens at 4pm each day where we had a drink to celebrate our anniversary. The caravan park is tucked behind the shearing shed on the main street, and although power and water was available the amenities were locked up and we were the only people there.



### **Monday 26 September**

To Broomehill Village via Katanning, to a lovely little Shire caravan park with modern, very clean amenities and surrounded by grassy parkland. We were again the only campers and had a very quiet night. The weather was still cold, windy and often wet, but the crops were looking great and the farmers must be feeling much more confident than the last few years.

### **Tuesday 27 September**

To Cranbrook, a tiny town close to the Stirling Ranges. The weather was again very cold, wet and windy, more like winter than spring. The overnight minimum was 3.1C.

### **Wednesday 28 September**

Today we drove to the National Park campground to check it out, and organised with the Ranger to go there tomorrow and establish ourselves. The crop fields around the National Park are looking really good, and the wildflowers in the park look prolific. We are looking forward to exploring and taking many photos of flowers unique to this area. So, until the next instalment, probably close to Christmas, we wish you well.



Regards, Bev & Frans







