

The Hamer Newsletter

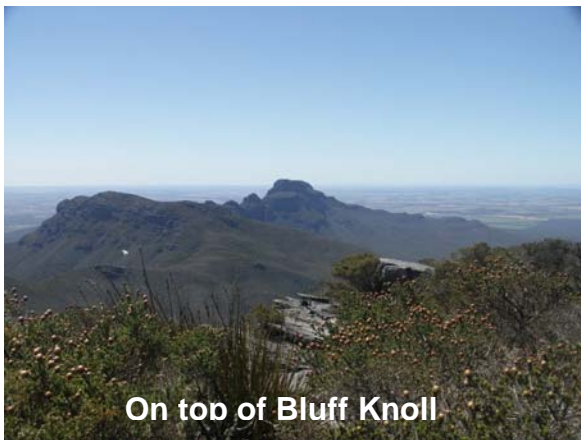


5 December 2011

Hello to One and All,

Another year almost finished and we have now notched up 5 years “on the road”. The last almost 2½ years in Western Australia have been really wonderful, but now we are back in the east and looking forward to meeting up with family and friends again.

Our month in the Stirling Ranges near Albany as camp ground hosts was busy and interesting and the area certainly lived up to our expectations. The weather was very variable with lots of cold, wet days, but the flowers and the mountains were great and we enjoyed our time there very much. Another semi-permanent volunteer there



On top of Bluff Knoll



On top of Mt Trio

showed us some unusual orchids which we would never have found ourselves, including Hammer, Flying Duck, Rattlebeaks and Zebra orchids. There were also various Sun orchids flowering when we left.

Friends Glen and Geoff dropped in for a few days on their way home to Victoria and the weather cleared so that we could do the Bluff Knoll climb one day and Mt Trio the next. Both climbs are very steep but well worth the effort for the fabulous views and the masses of flowering shrubs on the mountains.

Near the end of October, friends Richard and Diane from Perth arrived to say farewell to us. They are also camp ground hosts and took over from us when we left on 30th October to start the journey back east.



30 October 2011

We left Moingup Spring campground in the Stirling Ranges and drove through the ripening crop fields to Hopetoun on the south coast. This is a tiny town located on a beautiful bay and was a peaceful place to stay for 2 nights while we adjusted to being "on the road again".

1 November

To Esperance, with a detour to look at the Stokes Inlet campground in Stokes National Park. We could have fitted in easily, but as



the weather was very windy we continued on to Esperance and stayed at the Seafront Caravan Park. The wind was very strong, but the views were great and we spent 3 days there. It was a good opportunity to have Fang serviced in preparation for the long trip East, and Bev had a dental checkup. We had planned to go to Cape Le Grande for a few days, but the weather was forecast to be stormy and windy, so we decided to leave that for another visit in a couple of years, and start travelling east.

4 November

Leaving Esperance under cloudy skies and muggy conditions, we went as far as Fraser Range Station near the start of the Eyre Highway. This is an old, working sheep station which has developed a good caravan park and accommodation facility. An afternoon storm cleared the air and cooled it down a bit. We are so used to the cool winter climate now that the warm weather is a bit hard to take.



5 November



Up early and on the road again. The weather was perfect for travelling and we stopped here and there to explore – Newman Rock, which is a big flat granite outcrop with a huge area great for overnight camping, and Caiguna Blowhole which unfortunately was not working at the time. It blows air out or sucks air in with variations in temperature and atmospheric pressure, so the outside and inside pressures must have been equal when we stopped to take a look.

We stayed the night at Moodini Bluff rest area along with several other travellers. It is a good spot to overnight, except for the inevitable rubbish all over the place.



6 November

On to Eucla and a night in the caravan park there. We went to see the old Telegraph Station ruins in the sand dunes.



7 November

Crossed the border into South Australia, and stopped at various points to look at the famous Bunda Cliffs. There was sea fog to start with



so the photos are not the best. Later in the day we went into the Head of the Bight lookout, which was half price because all the whales have left for the year. It was stormy and threatening rain so we did not stay long. We continued on to Yalata West rest area for the night, a bit out of sync as we had to wind our



watches on by 2½ hours to South Australian time. The storms rumbled around us all afternoon but mostly passed us by with only a little rain.

8 November

To Fowlers Bay caravan park, in a tiny beachside hamlet. The road in was badly corrugated and when we arrived we discovered we had lost a hubcap from one of Fang's wheels. The



temperature climbed to 36 C, then a thunderstorm came, blew like mad, dumped heaps of rain and dropped the temp 10 C. The next day was very windy and the fishing was a useless exercise, but Frans tried anyway.

10 November

We left Fowlers Bay, looking for the missing hubcap along the way with no luck, and headed to Streaky Bay for a few days. A day trip around the area including Cape Bauer showed some beautiful coastline and interesting features such as the "Whistling Holes"

where the waves force air up through holes in the rock. There was a lot of land for sale, big rural blocks overlooking the bay – very tempting, but the thought of the cold winters put us off.



13 November

Left Streaky Bay and drove via Port Augusta to Hancocks Lookout off Horrocks Pass road. After 7 klms of bumpy road through the hills to the lookout, we parked for the night with magnificent views across Spencer Gulf to the Eyre Peninsula. After dark we could see the lights of Port Augusta and Whyalla.

14 November

On leaving Hancocks Lookout we had to wait for a flock of sheep to clear the track before we could drive out. Then it was on to Burra to stay at the showgrounds overnight. We had a look around Burra at the beautiful old buildings and the old minesite.



15 November

To Mildura and a caravan park just across the Murray river in Buronga, NSW for a couple of days. The Murray has lots of water still and the whole area is green and lush.

17 November

To Nyah where we stayed at the Harness Racing Club free camp for 2 nights. When we arrived we had Stopalot inspected for the registration renewal. The weather was hot and humid and the next day was much the same, but the area is lovely and we enjoyed a peaceful time. We had a great pizza from the local pizza shop.



parked in the car park overnight in the rain. The mineral water is available at a hand pump and is fizzy and strongly flavoured – supposed to be very healthful.

19 November

On to Kyneton Mineral Springs and



20 November

To Carrum Downs where Stopalot was installed in son-in-law Sean's warehouse where he keeps his tow truck and assorted cars and equipment, and we spent the next week staying with them in their house in Skye. We washed Stopalot and had it professionally polished so it looks almost like new again.

We sorted out our old files stored in the warehouse and dumped 5 years worth of old company and tax records. We also cleaned out the cupboards and offloaded quite a bit of excess "stuff". It was great to spend time with Karyn & Sean although it was very strange for us sleeping in a house again.

27 November

Leaving Karyn & Sean we started on the journey to Queensland. The first night we stayed at Beechworth Lake Sambell caravan park, a beautiful peaceful place. On the way we went through Bonnie Doon, which now has water in the lake (Lake Eildon) and looks beautiful. The lake has been dry there for many years but the last 2 years rains and floods have revitalised the area.



28 November

To Arianh Park (the town of Wowzers, Bowzers and Peppercorn trees) which we visited early in 2009, and just as good as we remembered. We spent 3 nights there, very peaceful except for a thunderstorm which gave us a spectacular lightning show for several hours one night.



1 December

To Trangie to stay with friends Sue & Jim at their property. We met them in WA over 2 years ago and it was great to meet up again and spend some time with them. We went to a little place called Albert to have lunch at the Rabbit Trap Hotel – highly recommended for a very nice meal, and a free camp for those who are travelling through.

We will be leaving here and travelling to Brisbane before going to Crows Nest for Christmas with Frans' sister Benny & hubby Peter. In the new year we have organised 2 house (more like farm) sits which will take us through to the end of March. After that – who knows?

So far our travels from WA and through the eastern states have taken us through beautiful green and lush areas that were dry and brown the last time we here. It is just a pity that crops are now rain affected and many farmers will not have a good year yet again.

We wish you and yours a safe and happy Christmas and New Year and look forward to catching up with more friends in the near future.

Best wishes

Bev & Frans



king hammer orchid (*drakaea glyptodon*)



flying duck orchid(*paracaleana nigrita*)



rattlebeak orchid (*lyperanthus serratus*)



zebra orchid (*caladenia cairnsiana*)



Tin People at Terowie



Fowlers Bay on a miserable day



Tin People at Terowie



Pygmy possum at Dryandra Woodlands photo taken while we were there by Ian Milinovich