

The Hamer Newsletter



31 March 2012

Hello to One and All,

We don't have much for this newsletter as we have not been travelling much, but we thought we had better keep in touch so you don't forget us.

We left our friends in Trangie, NSW in early December and travelled through NSW and into Queensland.

The weather was variable with quite a bit of rain, and much of the road we travelled was badly affected by the heavy rains and floods over the previous few months. There was still a lot of water lying along the roadsides and in the paddocks and bush, and the country generally was the wettest we have ever seen it. There were areas of massive roadworks and repair of bridges and plenty of reduced speed limit areas due to the sorry condition of the road surface.

We stayed at Redcliffe Showgrounds for a few days, before going to Crows Nest to spend the Christmas season with Frans' sister Benny and her hubby Peter. It was good to catch up with our friends and with the rellies after 3 years away. Christmas was a quiet family affair with Benny & Peter, their daughter, grand-kids and great grand-son.

After New Year we spent a few days travelling up to Hervey and Tin Can Bay and visiting friends.

We had decided that when we returned back East we would start looking around for a "base camp" so we would have somewhere to live in the future. We looked at a Retirement village north of Brisbane, a Lifestyle village at Maleny and another Lifestyle village at Hervey Bay. Whilst they are all very nice and would suit us, they did not have suitable sites for us to park Stopalot.



Then we looked at RV Homebase in Maryborough. This village has been designed specifically for RV owners and each house has a large car port or garage attached to fit the RV. We don't want to stop travelling yet, so we opted to buy an existing display home and rent it back to the village owners for 3 years. They will use it to house the village manager so he can live on-site. We can keep travelling knowing we have somewhere to live in 3 years time when we think we might be about ready to stop full-time

travelling. The agreement is that should something happen in the meantime to restrict our travelling, we can move in at a month's notice.

12 January 2012

Next stop was Neurum near Woodford to start a house-sit at a small cattle property. The owners went away for 6 weeks and we were left to look after the dog, the chooks and keep the grass and the vegie garden under control. Of course, the wet weather continued and we had very muddy boggy conditions along with a leaking roof. There was no way to have repairs done until the weather improved and we could get the van to Caboolture.



The only thing we could do was buy the biggest tarpaulin available at the local hardware store and drape it over Stopalot to keep the water off the roof. As the weather was so wet and windy the tarp had to be well tied down and we had 5 weeks of noisy flapping tarp interspersed with a few days here and there of warm sunny weather.

Still, we enjoyed our time there and had

fun driving around the paddocks on quad bikes looking at the cows and giving the very bored cattle dog a run. We even helped the owners' son a couple of times herding the cattle into the yards for spraying for ticks and flies. There were a few calves born – very cute creatures in their first days. Of course with the rain the grass kept growing and there was a lot of mowing to do to keep it under control.

We finally had the leaking roof fixed (the air conditioner gasket had to be replaced) and put the tarp away. We also had a new awning fitted as the old one was damaged in the stormy weather. Then we had more rain and the back window started leaking so the tarp had to go back on to stop the rain running over the roof and onto the window. Frans took out the window to see where the problem was - unfortunately the timber frame under the window was very wet and had a mushroom growing on it! Repairs had to wait until the weather dried up again. We were starting to think we should have stayed in West Australia.



While at Neurum, we took the opportunity for sightseeing the district in all its glory, particularly the D'Aguilar//Mt Mee/Glass House mountains area.

The last time we camped at Somerset Dam there was very little water and brown grass. The difference this time was stark with the dam full and lush vegetation everywhere.

26 February 2012

We left Neurum and moved to Plainland for our next house sit. We had been delayed for a day due to more rain and the roads



leading from Neurum being under water. When we tried to leave the farm, we got well and truly bogged on the wet muddy paddock. Lucky for us the farmer was able to hook his tractor up to the van's back bumper and pull us out backwards. The roads were open again one section at the top end of Lake Somerset still had water across – not enough to stop us but just enough to wash the mud off the wheels.

At Plainland, Frans removed the leaking window and we cleaned off more

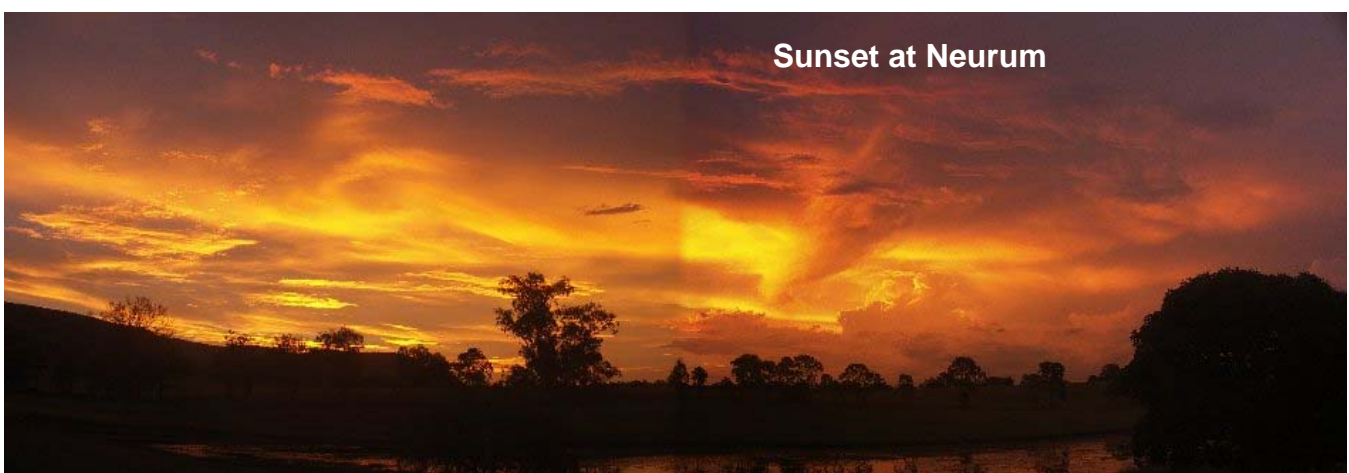
mushrooms and gunk, and after a few days of hot sun on the exposed timber, Bev applied heaps of clove oil which will hopefully kill off any remaining mould and mildew and fungi, and Frans refitted the window with lots of sealant to stop future leaks.

At Plainland there were chooks and 4 acres of grass to mow – and yes the rain continued and the grass just kept growing but at least we had a super-duper fast mower so it's not too bad.

We are leaving here 1st April and going up to Crows Nest again to see Benny & Peter for a couple of weeks until after the Easter holidays. Then we will decide what to do next.

So, not very exciting this time, but maybe the next instalment will feature some new places as we start travelling again.

Regards, Bev & Frans





Helping with mustering



Cooking dinner the camping way at Neurum



Neurum farm



Where have all the cows gone?