

The Hamer Newsletter



23 September 2012

Hello to One and All,

It has been about 6 months since the last letter so we thought it was about time we sent out a new one before we forget what we have been doing.

This year started out with maintenance issues (leaking roof and window on Stopalot, damaged awning) and continued with us having to replace both batteries on Stopalot, plus replace the brakes all round, then the ball joints on the F250, a problem with the brakes & steering, and a problem with the automatic transmission. We seemed to spend a lot of time making trips to Ford service centres for repairs, but finally in June all was fixed and we were ready to start travelling again.

During April, May and June we spent a lot more time at Crows Nest with Benny & Peter and another short house-sit at Plainland.

14 June 2012

We finally left Crows Nest and headed to Brisbane. We overnighted at Benarkin, a tiny village with a free camp in a community park setting. Recent improvements to the park include a set of stocks which Frans decided to try out.



15 June 2012

To Dakabin in Brisbane's north, to stay at Watson Park 7th Day Adventist Centre caravan park. This is in a lovely setting, although a bit noisy with traffic on the Old Gympie Road. While here we organised a volunteering "job" in the west. We had to

delay our departure due to rain, which made the roads at our destination impassable. Frans also developed an eye problem and had to see a specialist. Fortunately it was not serious and we were able to leave when the rain stopped.

2 July 2012

We left Dakabin and travelled to Benarkin for the night. It was very cold overnight, down to 2°C so the diesel heater and feather doona were put to good use.

3 July 2012

To Judd's Lagoon between Miles and Roma. The roads were quite awful with lots of bumpy water-damaged sections and frequent road-works. Judd's Lagoon was a great spot to overnight, very peaceful and lots of room.

4 July 2012



The lagoon was beautiful with the mist rising in the sunshine, after a minimum of minus 1°C. We continued on to Morven, with yet more bumpy road and road-works. We stayed overnight at the Morven Recreation ground and were lucky to get the last powered site available. We happened to be parked near to some people we had met in W.A. – small world!

5 July 2012

We woke up to a very cold and frosty morning at minus 1.5°C and travelled to our volunteering job on a cattle property, where we spent the next 4 days helping out around the homestead. We were surprised how green it was and the amount of food for the cattle. The water was from bores so the dams were quite a picture.

It was cool and windy, but sunny until the last day when the weather changed and rain was forecast. Sadly, we had to leave as rain would have seen us stuck there and unable to drive out.



9 July 2012

Back to Morven for the night.

10 July 2012

To Charleville over more bumpy road. The weather changed late afternoon and we had quite a downpour. We stayed at the Charleville Bush Caravan Park – a great place with a “NO Pets and NO Smoking” policy which made for a very pleasant stay, except for the rain showers which continued over the next few days.

We visited the Frontier Services – Outback Links office and met the staff there. (This is the organisation we are volunteers with).

We did a bus tour around Charleville and were amazed at the extent of the flooding over the years and the efforts they have made to flood-proof the town for the future. We also went to the Cosmos Centre which has some samples of different types of meteorite and very interesting

information on the stars and planets. Unfortunately for us the skies were overcast and we could not experience the star-gazing through their telescopes.

15 July 2012



Finally the sun was shining and we set off to Quilpie. On checking the map we found that we were not all that far from the South Australian border – this is the real outback. We stayed overnight at the Quilpie van park and then went to our next volunteering job on a sheep and cattle property – even more remote than the last one.

The owners had to leave the property for a few days so we were there on our own, except for the dog, the chooks and the cattle and sheep. We enjoyed the few

days alone experiencing the complete solitude of being on a huge property with not another soul around. The nights were cold and the days cool, but sunny. We did a few jobs around the place including some fencing, and checking the water troughs each day, and some housework and garden tasks.



Frans checking water trough

When the owners came back Frans spent his time helping out with more fencing, and odd jobs in the workshop. Bev helped out around the homestead and garden, and we sanded and painted the front and back steps to the house. Our hosts kept us very well fed with too many delicious morning and afternoon teas but at least we worked it off!

29 July 2012

After saying farewell we went via Windorah to Longreach where we stayed at the Apex Riverside free camp. This is a very popular spot and there were over 100 rigs of all shapes and sizes camped there. It was a good base for going to see the various tourist attractions which have been on our agenda for some years – The Stockmans' Hall of fame, The Qantas Founders

Museum, The School of Distance Education, and a sunset paddle steamer cruise along the Thomson River with a traditional Aussie dinner at the “Stockmans Camp” on the river bank. Beef stew, Damper, Apple Pie and billy tea by the roaring fire tasted very good. The bush poet completed the evening with his hilarious poems and yarns and a good time was had by all.

4 August 2012

Leaving Longreach we travelled a whole 27 k to Ilfracombe where we stayed at the caravan park for 3 nights. This tiny town has some very well preserved historical exhibits including the Machinery Mile along the highway. There is a surprising amount to see in this town, and the van park puts on a great Happy hour each night with the owners, Kathy & Jesse, providing hilarious entertainment by way of bush poetry and yarns.



7 August 2012

Next stop was Isisford, another tiny town on the banks of the Barcoo River. Isisford is the home of “The Mother of all Crocodiles”, the fossil remains of the ancestor of all modern crocodiles. It was very small compared to today’s reptiles. The camp on the Barcoo is popular and a very pleasant place to stay for a couple of days for a whole \$2 per night.

9 August 2012

To Blackall, where we stayed at the Barcoo River camp – another great spot for \$5 a

night and a short walk into town to stock up on the groceries. This area uses water from the Great Artesian Basin, which arrives at the surface at a temperature of 58 C and has to be cooled for distribution as drinking water. The hot water is used for showers – they have a public toilet and shower block in the town, free of charge.

11 August 2012

Towards Aramac and our last volunteering job for now. This was on another sheep and cattle property and once again we were able to do new things. Bev helped out in the school room in the mornings and helped with cleaning walls for painting. Frans helped out with painting in the house, did a few odd jobs on the farm and helped with skinning a cow for butchering. We also spent some time on quad bikes herding cows. We parked in the old tennis courts next to the house yard.



The domestic water for the property came from a free-flowing Artesian bore. It is incredible that this water is coming to the surface from 800 or so metres down without any pumping, and is pure enough to drink without any treatment. It is very hot but by the time it gets to the house tanks it has cooled down.

21 August 2012

Time to leave and start heading back east. We had thoroughly enjoyed our volunteering stays and loved the opportunity to spend time on these remote properties experiencing a different way of life.

We went back to Blackall for another 2 nights before heading off south to Wyandra for an overnight stop. Wyandra is another small town with a lovely camp for a gold coin donation.

24 August 2012

To Bollon, to the Wallum Creek free camp for 2 nights. This is another great camping spot, very popular and a pleasant place to stay. There is lots of bird life along the river and plenty of fish too, although catching them seemed to be difficult for those who tried.

26 August 2012

To the famous Nindigully Pub for a night, and lunch in the pub. The meals are huge, especially the Road Train Burger which feeds up to 6 people! There is a large area to camp next to the pub, for free.

27 August 2012

To Goondiwindi for 2 nights, to have Fang serviced at the Ford dealer. Goondiwindi would have to be one of the noisiest towns we have stayed at. It is at a crossroads and there is constant movement of semi-trailers, road trains, cattle trains and railway trains from all directions. The Gundy Star caravan park is very good, with a great Happy Hour with free damper and tea each day, but it really is a very noisy place.

29 August 2012

We had a few days before going to a meeting of friends in Lowood in the Lockyer Valley near Toowoomba, so we decided to just meander around checking out camp spots in little towns in the area.

First stop was Millmerran which has a lovely little park on the edge of town for self-contained RV's. It is only a short walk into the town, and a very interesting local museum where you can easily spend a few hours looking at all sorts of memorabilia.



30 August 2012

To Yarramalong Weir at Pampas, where we stayed for 2 nights. This is a reserve on the Condamine River surrounded by crop fields, and another very pleasant place to spend some time.



1 September 2012

To Pittsworth to have the tyres replaced on Stopalot, then on to Leyburn for an overnight stay in yet another free camp. This camp is close to the General Store, which has home cooked meals at night so we indulged in a very tasty dinner. Apart from saving Bev from cooking, it is a good way of spending money in a small community which provides a safe and comfortable place for us to stay.

2 September 2012

After a very cold night (minimum minus 2.1 C) we headed off to Heifer Creek free camp on the Heifer Creek road to Gatton.

This is a very scenic drive through lovely countryside and through the mountains. Some of the sections of road winding around the mountain are single lane and there are "Give Way" signs

here and there. The camp ground is on a bend in a beautiful location and we enjoyed a great night there with a roaring camp fire. The bird life was interesting, with bush turkeys foraging around and a very aggressive magpie swooping on people going to the toilet.

3 September 2012



To Lowood where we camped with a group of fellow travelling friends in the showgrounds. It was great to catch up with them and spend a week just chilling out and chatting, wandering around the shops and eating too much.

Whilst there we also went to visit the people we house-sat for in April, and were treated to a lovely BBQ lunch.

10 September 2012

Both of us had developed head colds, so instead of going to Benny & Peter at Crows Nest and exposing them to our germs, we parked ourselves at the Crows Nest caravan park for a few days.

We are now at Benny & Peter's before going to another house sit at Imbil

for a month until early November. Then it will be time to start heading down to Victoria to spend Christmas with the daughters (Kym is coming over from London).

Next year is an unknown quantity at this stage. We have no plans and will just see which way the wind blows us when the time comes.

Regards,
Bev & Frans



Bev and Howie the bullock



Dinner for a few days



Dingo fence



Lake Dunn floods every now & then



A bit remote



Stockman Hall of Fame



Swan Vale Lookout view from the door



Wool press Stockman Hall of Fame



Thomson River



Bearded dragon enjoying a joke with Frans