

The Hamer Newsletter



20 December 2014

Hello to One and All,

Well, the year is almost at an end and Christmas is just around the corner. We are in Melbourne looking forward to spending Christmas with Frans' daughters Kym (coming over from London) and Karyn, and their Mum & her partner. We are going to a restaurant for a slap up Christmas lunch so no cooking and clearing up for any of us this year!

We have enjoyed our travels this year to new places, plus re-visiting friends and relatives – and meeting a new relative of Bev's for the first time. And geocaching – everywhere we go now there is the hunt for caches! The last newsletter ended with us getting ready to leave South Australia after a cold but enjoyable winter.

22 July 2014

We said our goodbyes to Simon and Cecelia and the dogs and departed the vineyard at Kuitpo and travelled to Murray Bridge where we stayed at the showgrounds for 2 nights, then on to Mundulla showgrounds in very wet and miserable weather for 2 nights.

26 July

To a little place called Serviceton just over the border in Victoria for a night, then to meet up with friends Geoff & Glen at their son-in-law's farm nearby, where we stayed for 3 nights playing a new game (Phase 10) and keeping warm indoors with the cold wind howling outside. Frans had a problem with a sore tooth and a local dentist pulled it out. We did get out to visit an historic railway station which volunteers are trying to keep intact.

30 July



Goodbye to our friends and back to Serviceton to sit out some predicted wild weather for 3 days – it was windy, wet and very cold and definitely not travelling weather.



Once the weather improved, we started heading northwards with stops at Goroke, Lake Hindmarsh and Murray



Sunset National Park where we did a 5k walk around the old salt mine workings with some of the old machinery on display. When they dug the salt out of the lake bed in the dry season the men were working with picks and shovels in 45+ C heat in terrible conditions.

8 August

To Wentworth NSW to a caravan park at the junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers. Lots of history in this area and we did a few walks to find geocaches and see some of the historical sites. We went for a trip in to Mildura and met Bev's new found relative, a 2nd cousin on Bev's father's side. Bev's grandmother was Rachel's great Aunt. Hopefully we can meet up again some day.

13 August

North to Broken Hill. We had been wanting to visit this iconic outback mining



town for a long time, so this was the perfect opportunity. We stayed a week and were fortunate to know a local who insisted on taking us out to see the sights.

He drove us around Broken Hill to see the points of interest including the Living Desert sculptures.

Then out to Menindee Lakes and also to Silverton, another very iconic old mining area with an interesting pub. The weather continued to be cold, windy and some days very wet.

20 August

Time to head east so we stayed at a rest



area one night and then at Newey Reservoir in Cobar for one night. An old pub had burnt down in the main road just a few days before and the road was closed while the scene was being investigated. Tragically a fire fighter was killed during the blaze.

22 August

To Sue & Jim's place in Trangie for a few days. It's great having friends with properties we can stay at. We enjoyed our time with them as usual and hope we can return the favour one day.

27 August

We had organised to do a house sit at a property near Cessnock, so left Trangie and spent a night in a small campground at Cassilis, a tiny town in a lovely rural area. Everywhere was looking very lush and green after recent rains.

28 August

We drove through Cessnock and out to Millfield on one of the worst bumpy roads we have



come across, then on to a narrow, twisting, muddy, slippery dirt track to the property. Frans had to go very slowly in 4WD low range. It was definitely the worst piece of road we have ever taken the van and not something we would do again in a hurry. Once we got to the property it took a bit of manoeuvring to park the van as the whole place was hilly with no level areas at all. Still, when we were finally set up and level, we could appreciate the beautiful surroundings that would be home for a month.

We had 3 horses, 3 dogs, a cat, chickens and ducks and a couple of caged birds to look after. The property was 100 acres and most of it was bush, so plenty of places to walk. We had plenty of time to go out sightseeing and toured around the beautiful Hunter Valley. A visit to the Hunter



Valley Gardens was very enjoyable, especially the Storybook garden where Frans got friendly with the Mad Hatter's tea party guests and Bev sat in the Big Chair.



28 September

To Wauchope for a few days to catch up with friends Andrea and John who were house sitting in the area. We had lunches and coffees and enjoyed their company. We also went for a trip to North Haven to see Warren & Bev who we met in 2009 in W.A. We had lunch with them and a look around their beautiful area.



2 October

Time to head to Brooms Head for our Southern Cross Muster. We spent 2 days in Glenreagh and 2 days in Grafton on the

way.

6 October

We arrived at Brooms Head to find the campground completely filled with campers in the process of packing up after the school holidays. By early



afternoon most of them had gone and we were able to get onto our site. We were the first of the Southern Cross group to arrive but over the next couple of days the others started arriving and we had a great few days with old friends, making new friends and generally having fun. We won a prize

for the best dressed couple in the beach parade.

16 October

Time to leave and we decided to head to Bourke, another famous outback town on our must do list. On the way we stayed at Tingha near Inverell, and at Collarenebri. The weather had been very cool but on arrival at Bourke it was mid 30s.

Frans took ill with some kind of gastric problem and kept vomiting, to the point he became very dehydrated – and our air conditioner broke down so we could not keep him cool. We had to call the paramedics who gave him 2 bags of IV fluids and an anti-nausea drug. We rented a cabin for the night so we could sleep in air conditioning and he was much better the next day.

We went to the Back O Bourke exhibition which was very interesting and to the cemetery to see Fred Hollows grave. *“Frederick Cossom "Fred" Hollows, AC was a New Zealand and Australian ophthalmologist who became known for his work in restoring eyesight for countless thousands of people in Australia and many other countries. Born Dunedin NZ in 1929 and died in Sydney Australia in 1993”.*

Fred was a much loved figure in Bourke for his work in restoring sight to many people, and he wanted to be buried there under the Coolabah trees.

22 October

We left Bourke and went back to Trangie to stay with Sue & Jim again for a few days before going south. We booked the van in to a repairer to have the air conditioning fixed, but then the car air conditioner died. We had to wait for parts to arrive and finally, with it repaired and working we were able to leave Trangie after 3 weeks – thank goodness for friends like Sue & Jim who put up with us for that long.



11 November

We left Trangie and headed to Wallaroo, staying at Eugowra and Jugiong on the way. Wallaroo is the home of friends Rod & Judy where we stayed almost 2 years ago as volunteers to help with the restoration of an original slab timber cottage. They have now completed the project and invited us to come and see the finished cottage. It was

great to see it and all the historical information which Judy has compiled on the original owners. We feel proud that we played a small part in this project.

After leaving Wallaroo we went to Gundaroo but the camp there was too small for us so we stayed at the EPIC showgrounds in Canberra's northern suburbs for a few days and met up with Bev's cousin Anita and partner Ali for brunch on Sunday at Bungendore Woodworks café. The brunch was delicious and the fabulous furniture and wood products in the showroom were just beautiful with some pieces that can only be described as works of art.

17 November

Time to head south with stops at Bombala, where there were platypus in the river, then a freedom camp on the banks of the Snowy River near Marlo, then to Heyfield, Port Albert and Yarram.

26 November

Off to Geelong showgrounds for a few days so we could go to the Geelong



Revival weekend and see Karyn (Frans's daughter) do some sprints in her Prince Skyline car. It was a great weekend with lots of classic and vintage cars to drool over. We did day trips to Queenscliff and Portarlington which are really beautiful areas.

30 November

To Pakenham where we had arranged to have



the van's Al-Ko axles re-rubbed. The trailer place which was doing the work allowed us to park in their car park for the 4 days it took for the work to be done. It was probably the worst camp site we have had, in a noisy industrial area, but at least we could stay with the van.

5 December

With the axles refitted we left and travelled to Rosebud near the bottom of the Mornington



Peninsula. The camping areas along the foreshore go for miles and were starting to fill up for Christmas. We had a week there and explored the area, doing lots of geocaching along the Bay Trail.

12 December

To Chelsea Holiday Park for the festive season and some fun time with Kym & Karyn. We will leave here on 28th December and start heading to Maryborough QLD to organise building our new house at RV Homebase. Hopefully we will be moving in sometime around mid-2015, so we won't be doing as much travelling next year.

So on that note we will wish you the very best for Christmas and a happy, healthy and safe 2015.

Regards, Bev & Frans





Lake Pamamaroo near Broken Hill



Wallaroo slab cabins



Brooms Head



Plover and chicks



One of the murals at Eugowra