

# The Hamer Newsletter



## 7 September 2016

Hello to One and All,

The last 3 months have flown by and we decided it is time to publish another update. The winter in W.A. has been the coldest for quite some years and there has been frequent rain – the upside of that is the wild flowers are also the best for some years and it has been a real delight wandering around looking at the lush green and the amazing diversity of flowers on the ground, on bushes and on trees. And of course we are finding geocaches along the way.

## 12 June

We left Goongarrie Homestead after a peaceful 2 night stay and drove to Leonora for fuel, then went to Gwalia and stayed at the RV stop next to the mine museum.

Gwalia was established to service the Sons of Gwalia gold mine in the late 1800's. We went to the museum which included a look around Hoover House B&B. This house was built by Herbert Hoover, the first mine manager at the mine, and later the 31<sup>st</sup> President of USA. No expense



was spared, and they even sent a sample of the pressed metal interior lining to England to have some linoleum made in the same pattern. Pressed metal was a feature of substantial buildings of that era.

We had lunch at Hoover House and

then wandered around the old townsite. Although this was our 2<sup>nd</sup> visit, having been there in June 2010, it was still very interesting to see how the workers lived in those early days. Tiny houses built of corrugated iron, with hessian sacks for inside walls and lining the ceiling, some with dirt floors and some with bare wood planks.

## 13 June

On to Leinster for 2 nights, a BHP Billiton mining town where the caravan park was mostly occupied by grey nomad gold prospectors. We geocache, they hunt for gold, and sometimes actually find some.



After getting our washing done and restocking the fridge, we started heading west and stayed overnight at the Peter Denny Lookout. This is a very scenic spot, no facilities at all but a great place to spend the night.

### 16 June

To Mount Magnet for the night in the caravan park, and we spent the afternoon roaming around the area looking for geocaches – we found 11 and saw some amazing scenery. The next day we went to



Lake Nallan to the north and stayed there for 2 nights. There was very little water in the lake but there were a few water birds and a huge area to walk around. After that it was down to Cue for a few nights to sit



out some more wet weather. We did get out to tour around the area and went to Walga Rock and the ghost town of Bell with its famous pub, the old Day Dawn town site and Garden Rock.



During this time we also had big problems with our web site and lost our email facility. We managed to organise to change ISP providers and now have a better web (blog) site which we are learning to use.

### 24 June

Finally leaving Cue we stayed overnight at Yalgoo caravan park and went out to Jokers Tunnel which was hand hewn in the search for gold – don't think they found any. While we were there we climbed the hill consisting of rocks to find a geocache.

We then went to Gabyon Station for 2 nights.



The very friendly owners greeted us with coffee and biscuits and then left us to it after giving us a map so we would not get lost looking around at points of interest – the property is around 272,000 hectares so it would be very easy to lose yourself.



Later in the day we joined the owners for “happy hour” along with another couple who had come to stay.

When we left we went to Mullewa caravan park so we could go to Geraldton to vote in the Federal Election – a very annoying interruption to our trip.

## 28 June

A sunny day so we decided to go to Coalseam Conservation Park where we were campground hosts in 2010 and 2011. The campground has been upgraded and is much better than before with more sites, all fairly level, and with new toilets. We would have liked to stay a few days but it rained overnight and we knew from previous experience the roads could become very slippery, so we left the next morning.

We went to Three Springs RV Stop for 3 nights and did end of financial year stuff, but also got out and toured around. There is a large talc mine not far from Three Springs with a great lookout overlooking the mine and surrounding crop lands. The mine is the oldest and largest talc mine in the southern hemisphere, and the second largest in the world, with recent annual production of 240,000 tonnes, not something you expect to find out here amongst the wheat.



## 2 July

To Wannamal free camp for the night, then to Bindoon the next day to our friends’ farm where we stayed for most of July while they went overseas. We had a mixture of cold, wet and windy weather interspersed with beautiful sunny days, some very frosty mornings and some fog. The cows didn’t seem to mind. All in all a proper winter. We looked after the dog and cat and chooks and said hello to the horse when he came near the house paddock and occasionally accepted a carrot. The cows just looked at us when we walked past.

## 26 July

On the road again and starting to coddiwomple (a new word to us meaning “**To travel in a purposeful manner towards a vague destination**” which we think describes our traveling lifestyle perfectly.

First stop was Dandaragan where we stayed for 3 nights and did a day trip to the Pinnacles Desert in Nambung National Park. We visited there in November 2010 and it was just as good this time although much cooler weather.



The Pinnacles desert covers an area of approximately 190 hectares, is around 60 meters above sea level, and contains thousands of limestone Pinnacles, some up to 5 meters high. It is estimated that the selective erosion to form these structures has been occurring over the past 80,000 years.

We also treated ourselves to lunch at the Lobster Shack in Cervantes.

### **29 July**

To Eneabba where the wild flowers were just starting to appear. We found our first orchids of the season, little Blue Fairy and Greenhood orchids.

We did day trips around the area including Lesueur National Park which covers 26,987 hectares and is recognised for its outstanding landscape. It is home to over 900 plant species – 10 per cent of Western Australia’s known flora – including acacias, hibbertias, leschenaultias, melaleucas, gastrolobiums. Unfortunately we were a bit early in the season for most of the orchids, but did find some.

Frans decided it was time to replace all the tyres on Stopalot and ordered a set in Dongara.

### **2 August**

To Dongara where the new tyres were fitted and we went to 7 Mile Beach to spend the night at a free camp. It was a lovely sunny day but the wind came up overnight and rocked us around a bit.



### **3 August**

Back to Coalseam Conservation Park to meet friends from RV Homebase, Lesley and Erich. The flowers were looking really beautiful and we toured around the area looking at everything. The camp hosts got a fire going late afternoon and we joined the other campers for a drink and a chat. Unfortunately, it rained overnight so once again we had to leave the next morning before the roads became too slippery.



## 4 August

To Cliff Head south of Dongara for 2 nights beside the water. The weather was good and we had a pleasant time playing games and looking for caches. Then the weather was forecast to change again so we decided to go inland a bit to Lake Indoon and stayed there for 4 nights. On the last day we all went for a walk through the Logue Conservation area across the road and found our first spider and donkey orchids for the season. There were also heaps of other flowering bushes.



## 10 August

We parted company with Lesley & Erich and went back to Dongara to have the car serviced. We stayed at a caravan park for 2 nights, got all the washing done and found several caches.

## 12 August

To Ellendale Pool camp where Lesley and Erich joined us for 3 nights. We went orchid spotting, bird watching, played games and had camp fires – even did a camp oven dinner for a change.

## 15 August

Final goodbyes to Lesley and Erich as they were heading north and we are staying south. We went to Pindar to see the famous Wreath flowers and could not believe how many



there were and how beautiful the flowers. Last time we saw them in 2011 there were about 100 plants, but this time there must have been many hundreds. They are certainly a big tourist attraction and the road has been improved so that caravans can easily drive round the area.

Then we went on to a bush camp outside Canna for the night. We noticed a track going into the bush so as you do we drove down it a little way and were soon completely on our own with a camp fire.





We found several orchids and a bee swarm on a nearby tree, just overnighing like us.

The next day we went into the Canna town site camp to be on power as there was yet another bout of bad weather on the way.

We spent the day looking around the wild flower walk, the Canna Dam walk and the Canna Old Camp. Flowers were everywhere and there were heaps of spider orchids. The following day was wet, windy and a stay indoors day. Frans ordered new window locks to replace some of ours which were loose – especially the back window which has been letting in a lot of dust as we travel over dirt roads.



## 18 August

Good weather again so we went off not knowing which direction to go. We went past a sign which pointed to Bowgada Conservation Reserve, pulled in there and decided to stay the night right next to the wild flowers.

When we left we were heading towards the granite belt and looking for geocaches along the way. One was at Latham in a “teddy bear tree” in an unusual garden area. Someone has built a garden with all sorts of abandoned “stuff” and planted flowers and bushes around. There is a kitchen area, a bathroom area, and all sorts of old rusty metal and implements.

We saw there was a cache at Petrudor Rock so we went there to find it and stayed 2 nights up on top of a granite outcrop on our own. We had camp fires again, found lots of orchids and enjoyed a very quiet and peaceful time there.



## 21 August

To Beacon caravan park where you pay \$25 a night and receive a \$10 voucher per night to spend in the Shire. Not a bad way to get some cash circulating. We did day trips around the area to Datjoin Well, Biliburning Rock and Yellari Reserve. Once again the wildflowers and the orchids were beautiful.

## 23 August

Beringbooding Rock which has the largest rock catchment rain water tank in Australia, at 2.25 million



gallons capacity. A low wall was built around the rock part way up, with an aqueduct to the concrete tank. It was completed in 1937 using “depression” labour and it is hard to imagine the sheer physical effort involved using wheelbarrows to cart concrete up the rock to construct the wall. The water is still used today by local farmers for their crops and stock watering. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> night there we were alone and it was great to have yet another camp fire and a very peaceful night.

## 25 August

To Westonia where we stayed at the free camp for the night. We unhitched and went for a drive around the area, finding more orchids and flowers.

The next day we headed to Mukinbudin to meet old friends Lindsay and Robyn from Cairns, who we have not seen for close to 10 years. On the way we refuelled at a roadhouse and the credit card was “declined”. Fortunately we always carry spare cash so we could pay for the fuel. It turned out that fraudsters had compromised our credit card overnight and we would have to wait for new cards to be sent in about 7 days. Very annoying but at least the bank picked it up straight away and we did not lose anything.

We spent the night in Mukinbudin with our friends, went to the pub for dinner, and they left the next day. We stayed to sit out more bad weather.

## 29 August

We travelled 28 K to Mangowine Homestead and stayed 3 nights. This is a lovely old 1870's homestead and tavern now owned by the National Trust and looked after by a caretaker. The history of the place is fascinating and it is a great place to stay for \$10 a night with power and water. We did our usual tripping around the area looking for orchids – we seem to be addicted!

## 1 September

We spent the night at Minnivale camp ground, another almost abandoned place with an unused wheat silo and a couple of houses. There were masses of sweet smelling freesias and huge gazanias, both are escapees from old gardens and look great, but of course they are not native

plants. There were also heaps of flowering bushes.



## 2 September

To Wongan Hills where we had arranged to pick up our new credit cards. We stayed at the caravan park for 3 nights and did some wild flower walks. This area has a huge diversity of flowering plants and the range of colours and flowers is amazing. We saw our first “flying duck” orchid and “fringed mantis” orchid of the season. Although the nights are still cool, it is certainly warming up during the day so maybe soon we will be shedding the flannel shirts and jumpers.



## 5 September

In Bindoon for 2 nights. We picked up our mail from our friends here and the parcel of window catches which Frans has already fitted to the windows – hopefully no more dust in the back the next time we travel on dirt roads. Tomorrow we do a bit of shopping and then we will be resuming our travels going generally south and east until we eventually arrive somewhere around Albany or Esperance.

One of the main reasons for this trip is to see the coastal National Parks on the south W.A. coast, so hopefully after the school holidays end in mid October we will be able to find camp

sites down there. In the meantime we will coddiwomple around and hopefully catch up with some friends who live in the south west along our way.

Until next time,

Regards from Frans and Bev



Donkey orchid, Ant (or Clown) orchid and Latham Heritage Gardens



