

Outback Tag a Long Tours



ph 02 60256494

Remote area 4WD tour specialists

December 2017

mobile 0408 193 443

January of course is the start of a brand new year. It's looking good with our five tours booked and the long range weather forecast definitely not like last year, just some heavier than normal rain in June and July. Lovely for an area of black-clay country. We took off in the caravan to do another run up the Darling for the new tours, seeing rain stopped us last year. Great trip but we hit a week of the hottest weather NSW had had in years. Had a swim in the Menindee Lakes where the top foot of water was hot, (underneath was much cooler and refreshing), called into the stations we were to visit, and camped just passed Idalia Station (who were closed for the season because of rebuilding). Everything was hot, and our generator wouldn't run the air conditioner, because we found later that the hot water unit had been switched to 240 volt and the geny couldn't run both of them. The water in the tanks was already hot, so it didn't need to be heated! Put some yabbie nets in and caught a few, but far more European carp that fed a large ant's nest nearby. It was 38c at 9am. Onto Bourke with 47c in the sun and 39c at 8pm, but on power so the air conditioner worked overtime and the park pool was beautiful, even a small bearded dragon thought so before I rescued him from drowning. Slightly cooler at Lightning Ridge, but another pool and power, then home via Lockhart.

February had Tony doing a run with the Burrumbuttock Hay runners to Muttaborra in Queensland. The area was in drought, and even though the hay doesn't last long, the trucks' arrival is a big morale booster for the local farmers and their families. He is all ready to go again in January '18.

March was just a month at home doing all those domestic things, gardening, repairs, photo books, useless information books for the new trips, etc.

April was the shock month! I had two trips to hospital at 4am, with what seemed to be heart problems. Nothing found the first time, second time went on to an angiogram and that too was clear, so still none the wiser, stressed out maybe. What stress, that came a week later when Tony decided he had been getting tired and felt like he did the first time when they put in stents. (a heavy chest had been happening for a while, he told me later, but luckily no heart attack!) Now that an angiogram can be done in Albury, he visited the same heart doctor as I had. No stress test just straight in for an angiogram. Even though we had ridden 20 kilometres the weekend before, and the week before that he had been with Dale canoeing and fishing on Lake Buffalo, his love of food, and his mother's disposition has caught up with him. Instead of 6 stents it was down to Melbourne three days later for bypass surgery, 6 of them instead! He came home 10kg lighter, and instructions not to do anything heavy for 12 weeks. There went the first two desert trips. We thank everyone who was booked on those two for their thoughts and understanding, and we have now added those two trips to our 2018 programme

May was spent re-cooperating, and paperwork.

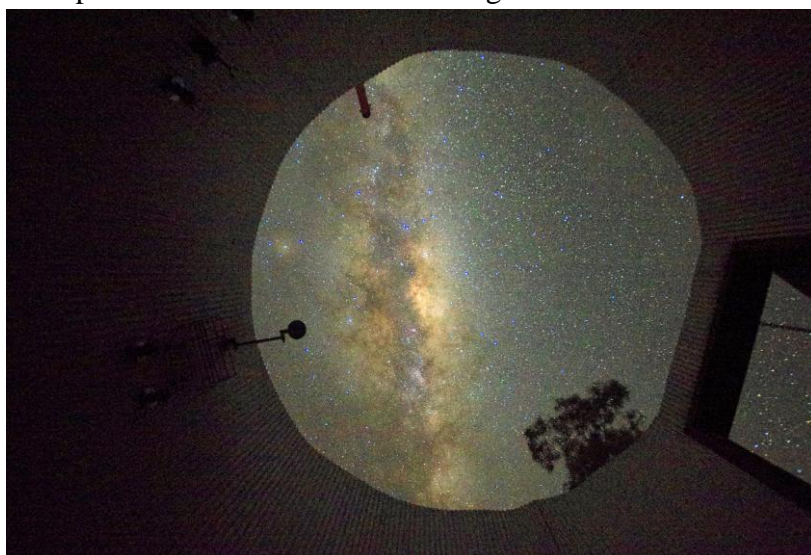
June saw Tony building up his strength, and 9 weeks after the op we were on the first Darling River caravan trip. It was made much easier with the assistance of everyone with firewood, the toilet and anything heavy. Eleven caravans and campers arrived in Wentworth for the start of the trip. *Alan & Linda, Alan & Mercedes, Bruce & Mareea, Duncan & Jan, David & Anne, Gerard & Jan, Graham, Henry & Julie, Jim & Pat, John & Linda, and John & Pat.* A paddle steamer rally was on in Wentworth over the weekend, and it was lovely to watch all the old boats go up and down the river. Our first day started with a light fog but turned out to be a beautiful sunny trip to Renmark on the old coach road on the northern side of the Murray. Morning tea was at Lake Victoria, lunch from the bakery at Paringa and eaten at Lock 5, and back to Wentworth on the old coach road on the Victorian side of the river.



Our day finished with a dinner cruise up the Darling River on the MV Wentworth. It was the boat's last cruise with its current owners, so it was a bit sad for them but everyone had a lovely time, eating, drinking, dancing and taking photos of the river bank until it got too dark.



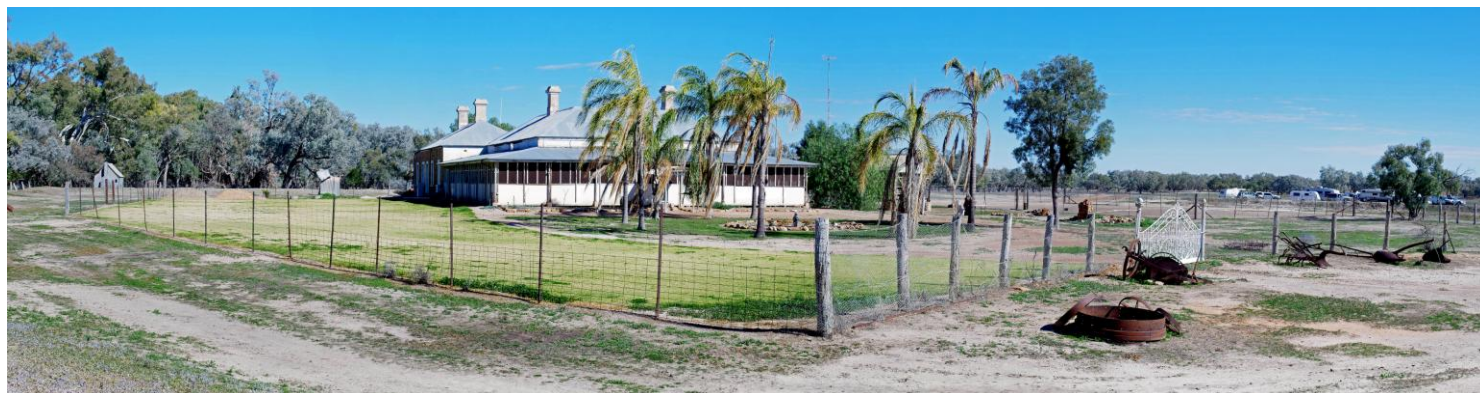
The following day Jan & Duncan of Murray River Salt gave us a tour of their ponds and processing plant, then into the packaging plant. The Murray Chocolate factory developed for the local sheltered workshop and backed by Jan & Duncan is also there, so we all had samples and lots of purchases. Another cold morning and we were off to Pooncarie for morning tea, then on to Bindara Station for two nights. The Darling was much higher than it was last year when we could have driven along the river bed for kilometres. Bindara's owner Barb, took the group for a walk along the river to the old shearing shed, talking about the history of the station, then it was back for some relaxation and a drink or two.



The toilets (and hot showers) are in corrugated tanks with no roof, beautiful late at night with the milky-way shining above, just a little chilly.

Morning tea was at Lake Cawndilla, a part of the Menindee Lakes, and full of water and birdlife (empty last year) before stopping in Menindee for coffee and to change a leaking tyre on our caravan.

We set up camp above the weir at Lake Menindee and prepared for a sunset cruise up the original channel of the Darling, now part of the lake. The sunset was not as spectacular as sunrise the next day, but the cruise was scenic and informative. Dark clouds and tiny spots of rain as we departed but it didn't amount to much, lunch in Wilcannia where John & Linda's water tank was found to be leaking, and afternoon at the Tilpa Pub. Camp was at Kallara station where they have a lovely big camp kitchen with a huge steel boiler in the middle and with some fence posts and wood we took in made a very cosy place to have dinner. A bit more of the showers predicted turned up but we were snugly under cover.



A better morning dawned and it was off to Dunlop station, once the largest in the area and the first to do a full mechanical shearing way back in 1888. Kim Chandler & family now own just the homestead area, after the property was broken up and become part of the surrounding stations. We had a tour of the homestead, told the history of the station and enjoyed a delicious morning tea before it was time to be off again. Our three nights in Bourke included a cruise on the Jandra, (a replica paddle wheeler), a bus tour of the town including a cotton farm and the local cotton gin (still ginning the current crops). That was followed by a visit to the exhibition centre and an outback show done by Lockie and his horses which was excellent.



Lunch was a barbeque on the top of Mount Oxley. The weather was overcast and cool but we were allowed to have a fire where we were camped in the park so it was everything as normal. Of course it had to bucket down over night and our van was parked on a rebuilt area of sticky grey clay. We had a difficult job trying to back our vehicle to hook up, it didn't want to go where I was pointing it! A close camper took off with his van at a rate of knots to get over the clay, and I was waiting to hear it slide down the side of our car, but he missed. I suppose an inch is as good as a mile. We all took off gently leaving big clods behind. Morning tea was at the fish traps in Brewarrina, before we took the back way around the Narran Lakes (the recent showers just kept the dust down in an area of black clay) and into Lightning Ridge.



A town bus tour, and a visit to the "Chambers of the Black Hand" (you must go there if you get the chance) and scones with jam and cream for morning tea. For most it was dinner at the local hotel, both nights for some! Gone again, we stopped at the little store in Hebel for morning tea and because we had warned Barb and Ralf that we were all coming, the scones were the size of saucers (with jam and cream), as well as slices, egg and bacon tarts, pies and cakes. The store is for sale and if they hadn't sold by Christmas they were just closing up, so no, you won't be able to have the same unless the new owners are good cooks as well! On through acres of cotton and wheat paddocks, then Dirranbandi and into St George for two nights. We visited the Unique Egg (Stavros Margaritis who does the carving has the patience of Job), then all on board for a cruise up the Balonne River. It was quite chilly and the wrong time of the year for a brilliant sunset, but bottles of wine, a few nibbles and a scintillating commentary made for a pleasant afternoon. The caravan park has a

fire box in the camp kitchen and cafe blinds so tea was cooked and an evening was spent around the fire. Another town & cotton farm tour (family owned & conducted), then lunch and wine tasting at Riversand's Winery, and afternoon tea for most of the group out at Beardmore Dam. Rain was expected the next day and although it started out sunny, the sky was black and heavy. Morning tea of vanilla slices at Thallon, then on to the 1 ton post at Mungindi but we decided against the black clay back road down to Walgett. Lunch (and wood collection) was on the side of the road on Collymongel station, then into the bora trees and onto the Barwon Inn for the night. It is just motel accommodation but we were able to set up under the trees on their paddock and have our camp fire. Two other vans tried to join us for the night thinking it was a free camp and probably weren't too happy when we told them no, sorry. Our last day dawned clear and sunny. Henry's car had to be jump started, but problems wise it was a very easy trip. Morning tea was at Carinda, then down passed the Macquarie Marshes which were very dry, and lunch on the side of the road near Raby station. Just as we were leaving a car stopped and a man came in to talk to us. He was a local who was opening up his property for camping and we were all welcome. John & Linda called in on their way home and enjoyed their time there. Our last night in Narromine was party time inside the park kitchen and thanks to the owners Terry and Joanne we were able to use all their facilities where it was warm and cosy.

We had a week home in the middle of July then it was back to Wentworth for our second Darling River trip. *Barry & Kathryn, Chris & Kim, Colin & Vickie, Doug & Carol, Jamie & Anita, Kate & Karen, Michael & Raewyn, Neville & Liz, and Paul & Kate* did all the things that our first group did, but they had much nicer weather eventually. Neville & Liz didn't have a good start to their trip when someone got into their camper while they were out and took all the money from Neville's wallet. It seems to happen constantly in the park, so be warned if you stay there, especially with a camper. Our drive to Renmark was uneventful and we arrived back at camp just before



the rain started. Because it was too miserable for a fire we headed off to the local hotel for dinner. The overcast weather hung around for our visit to the salt works, then it was onto the paddle steamer Rothbury for a cruise up the Murray to the Psyche Bend pumps built by the Chaffey Bros in 1891. It supplied all the surrounding blocks with water until 1959. Lunch was at the Gol Gol hotel, then it was back down river to the salt factory for more chocolate samples. The nights were cold but the days changed to clear and sunny for the remainder of the trip.

On our walk to the Bindara woolshed Neville showed everyone how to find witchetty grubs in the gum trees, and cooked them later for a sample taste for anyone who was were game enough to try it. By now all the cotton had been

picked and the farms worked up ready for the next crop. The Bourke cotton gin was still working and it was very noisy and dusty watching the cotton going through the machinery. We were told the industry is busy developing cotton that does not use as much water and provides a greater return per acre than other crops. Travelling the black clay road down to Walgett we passed more acres of cotton and wheat farms. It is amazing just how much land is under cultivation



This is the view from the top of Mt Oxley (a little bit sciewiff)

Earlier in the year the tiny town of Thallon had a 'go fund me' to have their wheat silos painted, and when we went through this time (stopping for morning tea) they were finished, and looked very impressive. We were lucky to be in Lightning Ridge for their annual Opal festival. There was a big market with buyers from all over the world, and lookers from all over the country. It was a very busy week, I think one of our ladies was lucky enough to go home with a new opal. Once again we finished in Narromine, and leaving the caravan in the park, we headed home for a week.

Early August Tony had a check-up and the doctor was very pleased, he is fully recovered and back to doing every thing again. Massage, paperwork, weeding and pruning and back on the road, heading back to Narromine to pick up the van. We had a week in the RV park in Casino, inexpensive, excellent facilities and big protected sites. John, and Kim & Chris took us up into the surrounding mountains for a day. Very different vegetation from the mountains around Albury, elks, stags, bird's nests, and ferns, ooh ooh ooh. (no I couldn't have them!) We had a surprise (them & us) visit in the park from Judy & Leigh who have done several trips with us, but we didn't have long with them as we were both departing in different directions.

We met up with *Adrian & Georgina, Bill, Trish & Jake, Charlie & Jill, David & Gina, Geoff & Christina, Graham & Glenda and Jamie & Anita* over several days in Suffolk Park, then all enjoyed dinner at the Byron Bay RSL. Liz had picked up a bug so they stayed behind when we left, catching up with us several days later. *Chris & Kim* were meeting us in Casino when we had morning tea the first day, and John was there to see us off as well, with some chocolate goodies he had made. They lasted me until we arrived home again, only because Tony didn't get his hands on them! It was a cool night at Glenlyon dam but we had our usual fire and a good collection of wood. We watched some large Murray cod cruising around the dam wall preparing their sites for egg laying, then it was off to Texas and the Tobacco museum. The ladies always put on a beautiful morning tea for us, we really didn't need lunch when we stopped at Goondiwindi for fuel. It was a cool night at St George where Neville & Liz caught up with us, but with the camp kitchen all fired up and the blinds down it was just too cosy to go to bed. Wallam Creek at Bollon was very low, the area has had little rain for three years, but we did see a lot of emu dads with

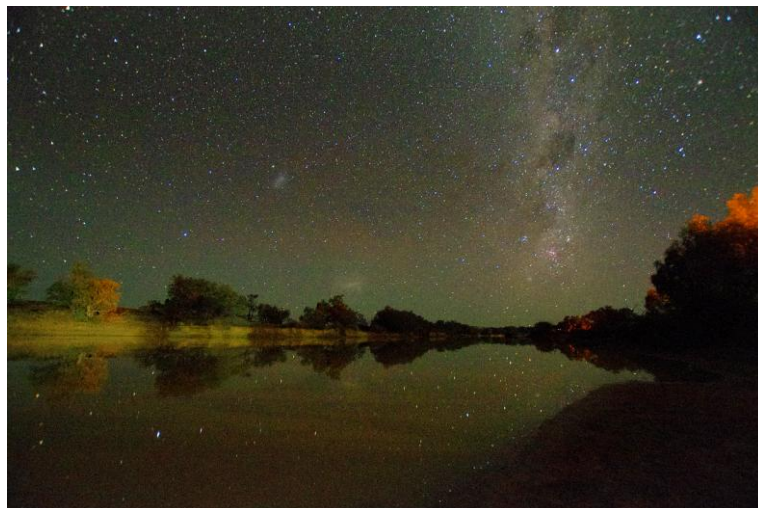
clutches of 2-7 chicks around 3 months old. The mums must have thought the year wasn't going to get much better. *Graham & Julie*, joined us in Thargomindah. They had holidayed from WA across the top end. We were told yabbies had been caught in the Bulloo River there so after we set up camp several nets were put in. The river must have been cleaned out because we weren't at all successful. Jamie and Anita discovered a large crack in their towbar and stayed behind to have it repaired when we departed. It would have been quite a disaster if it had broken at 60kmh. The country was very dry, with just a few wattles flowering, and no

Bulloo River

Cooper at Nappa Merrie



wildlife, and when we stopped at the Cooper crossing for lunch, there were just two tiny green puddles under the bridge, definitely not good for the yabbie nets. There were 2 graders on the road into the Dig Tree, smoothing out all the holes, and lots of camps along the Cooper. With the lack of rain it was just a waterhole and we were almost at the end of it. Neville had no luck with his fishing rod. With two nights in camp we headed into Innamincka for the day, six by the Dig Tree circuit road, and 3three by the asphalt road. Adrian stayed in camp because Georgina had picked up a bug, and Charlie was also not feeling at all well. The back way was an interesting drive, only a





few flowers, but we did see a small group of wild donkeys that crossed the road in front of us. Lunch was at the Innamincka hotel then back to camp. Off to Birdsville via Haddon's Corner. We were all relieved when we got off the stony road and onto the sand, a bit corrugated but you didn't have to watch out for sharp stones. The dunes into the corner were chopped up but all the vans made it. Graham had several tries but eventually worked out the right gear and motion to get over. Later in the day, Geoff lost his Anderson plug, (replaced by Tony) then blew a fuse (the car not Geoff) and Adrian broke the caravan brake handle.

We camped again south of the turnoff to Birdsville and celebrated Chris & Kim's wedding anniversary. Charlie wasn't

getting any better so they decided to return home the next morning. At the turn off we turned west and they headed east, we were all sorry to see them go. Side show alley was set up for the Birdsville races and there were camps and caravans everywhere. As many in the park as there were along the river, and that was just the start of the week. It was windy and dusty, typical race weather. Both Georgina and Liz were feeling better so some of the group went to the pub for dinner, some down to the take away in side show alley, and the rest ate in camp. After a few lessons on Big Red we headed out to Eyre Creek for lunch and to experience the desert. There had been flowers but only the stalks remained. The next day we turned north and headed to Boulia for the night. We had the waterhole nearly to ourselves, and were surprised at the amount of water still in it. Neville put his nets in and caught a few yabbies including one red claw that the locals don't want to be there, because they are not native to the area. We put some nets in the next morning while everyone went to the Min Min centre and collected them on the way back through, for the total sum of one yabbie.

Geoff & Christina did a tyre just before the N.T. border, and Tony had to put a plug in another one, they noticed was going down, more B! rocks. That evening while I chopped up the yabbies from Thargomindah for dry biscuits, Graham had to put a plug in one of his tyres as well. Fuelled up at Jervois and had lunch then, as we were heading in past major road-works at Harts Range a call came from Adrian that there was something wrong with his van. We sent everyone on to find a place for afternoon tea, and turned round with Jamie and Anita to find Adrian had two broken springs and chopped out a tyre. Tony & Jamie pulled the axles back and tied them up so Adrian could continue on. We picked the group up 30kms down the road then turned into Binn's Track to camp.



It was very basic, with lots of prickles but it was getting late and was the first area we could find that was flat, grass wasn't too high and there was wood.



The following morning Adrian & Georgina (after fixing a flat tyre and Tony tightened the spring up again) went back to the highway to head into Alice for repairs while we went the long way through Arltunga. We collected firewood, but when we got into the caravan park in Alice we found we were nowhere near the fire pit and couldn't use it. It was the Spring NATS week end and the caravan park was full of very thumpy, loud, noisy cars. We had four nights in camp, time for washing, (clothes and vans) shopping, servicing and fuelling the vehicles, and we heard from Jill to say Charlie had been to the Doctor and was starting to feel much better. Adrian got a new set of springs, (then found the centre bolt hole was in the wrong place but we made do with them) and Geoff & Christina a new set of stronger tyres. It was Georgina's birthday and we all went out for roast dinner. The day we departed Adrian & Georgina stayed behind to change the tyres they bought for the van to smaller ones so they would fit with the springs. They met us at Tyler's pass after we had been to Hermannsburg for scones and strudel, then Gosse Bluff for lunch. Camped on Glen Helen station with Merneenie bluff in the distance. No nice colour I thought there might have been at sunset, but there were a few flowers unlike the rest of the area which was very dry. Fuelled at Papunyah, a late morning tea along the road further out, and a later lunch after Jamie & Anita did a tyre. It was also late into camp, the first decent spot we found, a dry swamp covered in nardoo, and the occasional vein of sharp rocks. Adrian's woes continued when he opened the door to find his TV had fallen out, and the following day when one of the water tanks fell down when the straps holding it broke. Fixed it up and headed into Kiwikurra to fuel up. We arrived at 11.45 (they close for lunch at 12), and because the managers are new, and he was very busy trying to find something in his recently arrived order, there was no way he was coming out to serve us. Frustrated we finally left there at 3pm, after our lunch and a visit to Len's ration truck, then waiting in line to pay while the locals pushed in with their purchases. What can you do but grin and bear it! Camped at Jupiter Well under the desert oaks, a mild overcast evening. I noticed a strong smell of gas in camp, but nobody worried about it until the next morning when Graham found he had cracked a pipe and both his gas tanks were empty. Geoff also had problem with his water pump not pumping, (it was soon remedied), and it was David & Gina's wedding anniversary. We didn't leave until after lunch, the weather overcast and heavy to the west. The road wasn't too bad and we made good time to Well 33 for camp.

It was warm enough for Neville to stand under a unique shower head attached to the overflowing tank. It had been made from a plastic drink bottle with holes punched in the side.



I found it a bit chilly even though the weather had been getting warmer the further west we went.





Refuelled the next morning at Kunawarritji then walked out onto a very white Lake Auld at morning tea. Both Graham & Geoff lost their Anderson plugs when they came apart and broke off, and Adrian's woes continued when he found his gas stove was leaking. Repairs were done then camp was made in a quarry within site of the Telfer mine (and phone service!) but it took most of the men quite a while to crowbar a hole for the toilet through rock, it's a pity they didn't discover some of Telfer's gold. From there it was off to Carrawine Gorge for two nights. Last year the gorge was just a small waterhole, it had been very dry, and Woody Woody mine which runs a lot of their excess water down the river was closed down so there was no flow. The big bulls that usually lie around under the trees nibbling the native couch, had lost a lot of condition and had resorted to eating all the bulrushes around the waterhole. When we arrived this year there were several scattered camps so we were at the crossing where the water is shallow and flows down into the main part of the river. There was only a trickle, but earlier in the year the flow through the gorge must have been enormous. The gums seemed untouched but all the paperbark trees had been nearly stripped of their leaves and were lying at quite an angle, looking very dilapidated. The grass where we went to get wood was three feet tall and with the days getting hotter it was drying off quickly.



The water although not deep was very refreshing, and later in the day most went around to the main pool where the water was deeper and cold. David and Gina had purchased an aluminium boat just before we left Byron Bay and were carrying it on the roof of their car. It had its inaugural water experience in the gorge. Graham & Glenda were having trouble with the power to their fridge so when we headed to Marble Bar, they went to Port Hedland to have it seen to. It was just so hot that it was working overtime. Gina had pulled a muscle in her back and wasn't travelling very comfortably so when we arrived in town early she went to visit the clinic. It was 41c in the sun, and not a lot of other caravans in the park, but the numbers grew the next day. We had lunch and drove out to the WW2 airbase on Corunna station, then back for dinner for most of us at Mad Harry's a small restaurant in the old mining warden's building. The choice wasn't huge but it was good not to have to cook and wash up.



Day two was out to the Marble Bar, then Chinaman's Pool for a late morning tea, the Flying fox, then Coppin's Gap where the water was still trickling over the rocks. We had a late lunch at Doolena gorge (that was hot and nearly dry) then along the old Marble Bar to Port Hedland rail line back to camp. A few went back to Harry's for dinner again. After a cooler night it was south through Nullagine and past Gina's Roy Hill mine where the purple mullas were growing in profusion, the most flowers we had seen the whole trip. I think everyone was pleased to be on the asphalt and out of the dust for a while. The Tribute Group who ran the park and mine accommodation had gone broke and only one caravan park was open in Newman, the one we were in. Spotless had taken over and things weren't looking too good. There was no one in the units, the pool wasn't open, the facilities weren't cleaned regularly and things were falling in a heap. There had been complaints from the caravaners because there was no where to stay in the town, when the one park was full. A mining camp further out had opened its doors and we went out to try their mess, it was okay but nothing to write home about. Graham and Glenda met us again in Newman. There was a day in town to do any repairs, go shopping and do some cooking for our ball night. Bill & Trish's caravan air conditioner wasn't working and the weather definitely demanded one so phone calls were made and the young man was to come Saturday morning while everyone was on the mine tour to try and fix it. He arrived but didn't have any success in getting it to go. They tried again in several towns with no luck, I think they went home with it like it was. We turned south again, having lunch and refuelling at Kumarina, then onto three Rivers to camp.



Our camp had lake side views even though the rest of the country was dry and although not very deep it provided a beautiful backdrop for our ball.



There was much hesitation from the men getting dressed up, but once Tony came out resplendent in green and black, everyone else followed. Geoff made a splendid Queen of the Desert. The road to Mount Augustus proved fatal for two tyres, Liz and Neville's camper and a back one on our piecart. Two graders were working on the road, smoothing it out but splitting the rocks into nice big shards. Our groups do two or three tyres on the stretch every year, but there is no other road in that suits where we are coming from.

The weather stayed hot, so it was an early rise (before dawn) for those walking up to Edney's Lookout, then Cattle water Pool for lunch and a swim, and up to the hill for sunset and nibbles. The colours weren't very impressive but it was a pleasant hour or so. Met up with two young German ladies in a 2wd station wagon travelling though the outback roads, we hoped they dodged all the rocks, or knew how to change tyres. We called into the old Cobra ruins, where a trapdoor spider was out sunning him/herself on the rocks. He was very photogenic, but when we came back out and looked for it we couldn't even find his hole. The road around Mount Sanderman for lunch amongst the granite rocks was



very good, but Jamie found another flat tyre; not pleasant changing it in 50 degree c (in the sun temp).



Afternoon tea was at Honeycomb Gorge in the Kennedy ranges. It was a windy evening, but it did settle down overnight and we woke to dew in the morning. Gascoyne junction for fuel, morning tea just west of the town, and an extended lunch to fix the wiring in David's car. The road was in good condition and we made good time to the highway including getting wood for the night. Refuelled at Wooramel RH and into Hamelin station to

camp, along with a lot of others. We did have the back area to ourselves and were able to have a cooking fire, it was a cooler clear night. We left early the next day heading out to Steep Point, except Graham & Glenda who were heading home. Road works are constantly being done on the road out to Useless Loop and the asphalt is creeping gradually west.

What the blowholes can look like.



Our drive took us to Thunder Bay (the blow holes were only puffing), along the tops of the Zuytdorp cliffs, through sandy blowouts, side slopes and ooh more sharp rocks, but we made it without mishap. There was a good display of wildflowers and three passing whales, and they have replaced the Steep Point sign where all the photos are taken. We stopped in one of the camp sites for a paddle then it was back to camp for party night.

The following morning everyone headed to all points of the compass and we turned onto the highway into showers and gale force winds. It was blowing the caravan all over the road, and got worse the further south we went. We stayed in Geraldton for four nights with Bill Trish & Jake, and joined later by Jamie & Anita. The park is very open and we were blasted by rain, salt spray and sand. Jamie & Anita went into Kalbarri National Park and stopping to look at some flowers, sunk into the very soft, wet, roadside. They got out with much difficulty because of the van on the back.

October - Saying farewell again we headed to Eneabba to see Fay & Ian (originally from Carnegie station on the Gunbarrel) and Tony helped to load a road train of cattle for the abattoirs, then on to Moora where we went looking for wildflowers and came across the famous wreath flower in a stony quarry. Down through Southern Cross, Boondi rock (where we got some yabbies and ripe quandongs) and across the Nullarbor in the wind and rain, dodging kangaroos drinking water off the side of the road. Most of them were sensible but others just stood (in the middle of the road) and looked and we coopered one who turned the wrong way. There was a few more after Nullarbor RH but nowhere near the same amount. Blowy and overcast still at Fowler's Bay (2 nights), Ceduna, (Tony picked up a bug and wasn't very healthy) Smoky Bay (2 nights) including some activities out on an oyster lease (plus eating quite a few) Kimba, Port Augusta (where we were given some crabs), Winkie to visit Bob & Pam, Mildura (to see the family) and home, bringing Tony's bug with me) Reads quickly for nearly 12 months!

November Tony had a check-up and stress test with the cardio who passed him with flying colours, and he could get his B Double licence back. He had several weeks on a property at Boree Creek carting canola, barley and wheat, but they didn't get a good go at it with wet weather holding everything up for several weeks.

December saw the finish of the wheat carting, and a visit to have his right carpal tunnel fixed. That was done this morning, (Tuesday) so his hand is very yellow and all taped up. Time also to start on another couple of photo books, useless info for the gulf trip next year, top up the books for the other tours, keep the garden watered, the house clean, clothes washed, husband fed etc etc etc. Might just find a good book to read and a cool drink!

Our thoughts go out to those who lost loved ones this year, anyone with health worries and those who have things not going the way they wish them too. We wish you all a very merry Christmas, and a happy, healthy 2018.

We look forward to seeing you all sometime in the future

Brenda & Tony

*Tours for 2018 are

13 day Simpson desert camping - Broken Hill to Coober Pedy April 2nd
vacancies

13 Day Madigan's Line camping - Coober Pedy to Broken Hill 18th April
vacancies

21 day Cape York Caravan - Atherton to Cooktown May 21st
vacancies owing to cancellation

21 day Cape York Caravan - Atherton to Cooktown June 18th
Fully booked

22 day across the gulf Caravan- Mareeba to Darwin July 14th
vacancies

*and plans are on the books for a caravan trip in South Australia in 2019
don't know where or when, but includes the coast, Maralinga & desert country and
early in the year, say around April-May