

Hi All – Newsletter 4

hope all is well with everyone. We have now been on the road for approximately four months and we are still having fun!

Northern Territory

Alice Springs - cont'd - we stayed in Alice Springs for 14 days during which we went to all the attractions and we were able to catch up with our friends, Jeff and Pam, from Canberra. And, of course, the car was fixed. We also had a big clean of the caravan and car as we had to put up with smoke from burn offs for 12 of our 14 days there. We farewelled Jeff and Pam the day before we left Alice Springs - they were catching the Ghan down to Adelaide. Pam has managed to catch a picture of Norm smiling so I thought I should share it with everyone as it might be the only one!



We stayed one night at Wycliffe Wells on our way north - nice little caravan park out in the middle of nowhere, complete with a Chinese restaurant. Wycliffe Wells is the place where apparently the first UFO sighting in Australia occurred. The park has an interesting theme and welcomes all Maliens, Femaliens, and Kidaliens, some of whom appear to still be around. I slept well so if any new aliens arrived I didn't hear them!



Devil's Marbles - amazing - how did it happen?



Tennant Creek - another 'interesting' place. We went on a mine tour in Tennant Creek with 'Bob'. It was an excellent tour and Bob is very informed on his subject.



Daly Waters - interesting and a 'must do' especially the beef and barra meal at the pub. It was fabulous and well worth it - only \$27.00 each - a large piece of scotch fillet and a large piece of barra, cooked to your liking with perfection together with salads and bread rolls. The caravan park is a bit agricultural with tin sheds for bathrooms, each one containing a shower, toilet and washbasin - very clean though. The pub is interesting with various items tacked up from money to undies and bras and shirts. There is only the pub in Daly Waters so no need to stay more than one night. Note the sign behind the bar - credit given to women over 80, accompanied by their mother!



Katherine - Katherine Gorge is magnificent. We did a dinner cruise through two gorges - the tour company is owned by the local Aboriginal tribe and they have done a wonderful job of it. The first part is a boat ride between the first and second gorge then a walk (easy) through to the second gorge and another boat ride. The 'captain' of the boat is one of the local Aboriginals and he was fantastic - very informative and he had a brilliant sense of humour. The boat then turns around at the end of the second gorge and comes back where you do the walk again to the first gorge and board the dinner boat that is waiting. The dining boat is set out beautifully and you are greeted with a lovely glass of champagne after which a 3 course meal is served. The meal was beautiful and as darkness fell they turned the spotlights on to the sides of the gorge - just stunning. We also saw a freshwater crocodile on one of the banks but it was too dark to take a picture. The cruise was \$135 each and worth every penny - another must do if you are in this area.

While we were in Katherine Norm decided to visit the Emergency at Katherine Hospital - pain in his neck and shoulder. Another ECG etc etc. No heart attack and the doctor believes the pain he has been having in his neck is related to the ongoing issues he has had after the car accident in 2006. The doctor said she was glad he came in because you never know and, Norm did not know



he was having his previous heart attacks – the doctor said she would rather do the necessary tests than have to deal with someone that has been brought in by ambulance. I think if this continues I am going to start running a score sheet on hospital emergency rooms - efficiency etc, etc. Just in case anyone was wondering -

I am fine and other than the sprained ankle at the beginning of the trip, no problems! I did come close to having a 'heart attack' though - once when the green frog climbed out from under the toilet seat - after I had vacated it and, when the gecko used my head as a springboard, as I walked through the laundry!



The only 'real' coffee shop in Katherine is a 'Coffee Club' - the chain outlet variety. This Coffee Club is different in that on the other side of the cafe (but part of) it is a licensed bar and a nightclub - the only nightclub in Katherine! There is lots of history in this area and the museum was excellent. We had a look at Bitter Springs at Mataranka before we arrived in Katherine and we have also had a look at the springs here but we did not go in - not impressed with the amount of rubbish in both areas although

the water looked nice and clean (I like to see that blue line on the bottom of the pool and the smell of chlorine!). The parks and gardens around Katherine are quite green and the mangoes are about a month of harvest time - too bad I am allergic to them.

Kakadu/Arnhem Land - beautiful, magical place - Billy Connolly would say '#@&*+ Brilliant'. We spent a week here during which we went on two Yellow Water cruises to see the crocodiles, wetlands birds, sunset and, we went on a full day tour to Arnhem Land. We saw plenty of crocs on the cruises - one of which was enjoying a lovely fresh lunch of barramundi! In the picture there is less than half of the barra left!

Our day trip to Arnhem Land was such a highlight, especially since if we had known what the trip involved we might not have gone on it. We were told that a moderate level of fitness was required and there was a lot of walking. What they did not tell us was that the walking was actually rock climbing - vertically! It was about 5kms walking all up and required navigation of crevices



and at one point we had to crawl along a ledge! I was petrified but we were really proud of ourselves after we finished it. The tour was with Lords and cost \$185 each for the day which included lunch and it is a must do (provided you are up to it - not for the feint hearted). We picked up an Aboriginal guide before we did the climb and he explained all the rock art to us and we were sitting right underneath it all for lunch - fantastic. Our tour bus driver met us at the place where we had lunch which was in a cave near an overhanging ledge and, she had hiked all the way up with our lunch in a back pack - bread and rolls, about 4 kinds of cold meat, tomatoes, lettuce, capsicum, olives, dressings etc with rockmelon for dessert and lollies! The only problem for me was that I had to crawl across that ledge to get back! We arrived back at the tour bus to icy cold, wet face towels and frozen orange sections - fantastic.

Needless to say, we both slept well that night.



Darwin - nice place and the caravan park - Free Spirit - was beautiful. It is quite hot and humid now as it is building towards the wet period. Yahoo for air conditioning! The park has three swimming pools and the main one has a licensed bar as well. We have been to the Mindil Markets and watched the sunset from the beach and we have been to the museums in town.

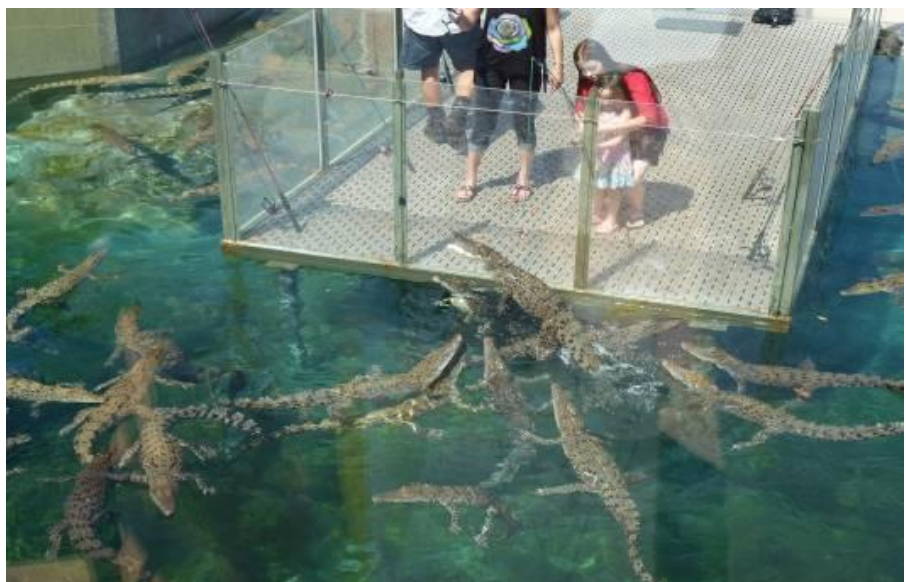
We celebrated my 65th birthday with a dinner/sunset cruise on Darwin Harbour - very nice. And, we went to Jenny's orchid farm - when we get back to Canberra I can see some mail order happening (maybe to go with the great big new glasshouse!). Jenny provides all the orchids for Bunnings stores. We saw all the tourist sites in Darwin - beautiful Parliament House and the great military and aviation museums. We also went to Crocosaurus Cove where we were treated to a croc feeding demonstration and, a movie on Darwin and the bombing of Darwin during World War II.



We did not really know how important Darwin's position was in relation to the rest of Australia during WWII and it is sad that it does not seem to rate much of a mention during remembrance activities. So many resources seem to be directed to places of remembrance overseas.



We had the caravan serviced while we were here - a fellow came out to the caravan park and put new bearings in the wheels. We also had two new tires put on the car. The rear tires were wearing - Norm had been running all the tires on the car at 35 psi as recommended by Nissan but he has now been told he should have been running the rear tires on 45 psi when towing the caravan. So, two new tires on the front and the front ones rotated to the back - so hopefully we will get better wear out of them now.



Well, we left Darwin last Saturday and we have done Litchfield National Park, returned to Katherine for one night, Kununurra and we are now making our way west to Broome. Temperatures are rising as the top end builds up for the wet season - one day was 44 degrees. I will cover these places in the next newsletter.



As you can see we have done so much over the last month! We are really looking forward to Broome and a rest.

*****New pet hate ***** – all motor homes/campers etc that have side sliding doors – otherwise known as WIZZ BANGS! These vehicles obviously come with two major instructions:

The sliding must be opened and closed with as much force as one can muster.

When there are two or more occupants no more than one person at a time can leave the vehicle to go to the toilet at two am. Each occupant must go separately and apply diligently the first instruction. This way the whole caravan park can be awake at the same time!

Cheers to all – TTFN
Norm and Glenda