

NORM AND GLENDA'S BIG TRIP NEWSLETTER #9

We hope everyone has recovered from the Xmas/New Year/School Holidays/Holiday Child Minding etc!

Margaret River – wine, food, cheese, chocolate etc etc – what a scrumptdillyicious place! We really had to pace ourselves here as it is a foodies and wine lover's paradise. Here are some of the things we did:

Lunches – we have enjoyed some of our best lunches in this area: Provodore (fantastic squid and pan fried gnocci); Dome (great Caesar salad); Vasse Felix (barramundi, pork belly; tasting plate – pictures below:



Cape Leeuwin Lighthouse – extreme south west point of Australia and where the Indian and Southern Oceans meet. It was blowing a gale but it was beautiful. We did not do the tour of the lighthouse as we had done the one at Cape Naturaliste. Cape Leeuwin is beautifully maintained and there is a lovely café and gift shop:





The cow above is one of 85 cows in the 'Cow Parade 2010' (more info and pictures on the web – under 'cowparade2010'). It was not only an art exhibition, it also drew attention to the beef and dairy industries. At the end of the exhibition the cows were auctioned off for charity and a number are on display around the Margaret River area. I purchased a small version of a cow – I thought it was appropriate:



Alphadite Goddess of Shopping – Manchester 2004

Caves – there are a number of caves to explore here – we have already done caves in the past so we just chose one because they all involve a lot of climbing up and down stairs. Both Norm and I have bad knees and did not want to aggravate them too much. We chose Calgardup Cave – this is not one of the more popular ones as it is self guided and whilst there are steps and boardwalk all the way through, there are no lights so, it is helmets and miner's lamps:



We visited a number of wineries at great expense! Some have beautiful gardens and restaurants and two really stand out. Vasse Felix (owned by Janet Homes á Court) has a lovely restaurant which we visited a second time to have lunch. The art works outside made us wonder if John Stanhope had maybe had a hand in it!



The artworks inside Vasse Felix are pretty impressive too – they are part of Janet Holmes á Court’s private collection and are changed regularly:



Voyager – has beautiful gardens and a very nice restaurant, as well as a nice shop:



We visited Augusta and Cape Naturaliste in a day trip. I thought Augusta was bigger but it is really only a holiday village and the area can be covered very well in a day. However, there is a nice caravan park there, particularly for those who would like to do all the walks/hikes in the area. We had lunch at The Colourpatch Café and had delicious fish and chips – the fish (bronzie – shark) was freshly caught. The café faces the beach and the dolphins and board surfers provided a free show:



Albany

We initially booked in for five nights but but ended up staying two weeks to allow us to see everything, have nails done (ho hum), hair cut (more ho hum) and to have a rest – this caravanning is very hard work! On the hair cut – I have had some bad ones but this one is the worst, and I paid \$35 for it! Basically, I gave Norm the same hair cut for free oh well, thank goodness there is only a couple of weeks between a bad and good haircut!

We went out to see The Gap and the Natural Bridge – great views:



We did a half-day cruise on the Kalgan Queen up the Kalgan river with a stop at Montgomery's Wines for a tasting. Very pleasant and although the day was overcast and windy, we had a lovely time. Fresh made savoury damper and tea/coffee was

served on board and the 'captain' has a number of local birds trained to come when called to have a feed:



Percy

..... and friends

Percy appears to have a number of lives and has already used up two of them – fishing line necklaces. This requires catching him and removing the fishing line/hook and then providing food until he is able to go out again and catch his own. They do get used to the handouts though and keep returning regularly.

At the wharf (Emu Point Boat Pen – where we caught the boat, there is a bronze statue of Sam the Seal. Sam was a New Zealand Fur Seal who, over the years, trusted and befriended thousands of locals and tourists. “.... He was senselessly slaughtered by a coward who killed him in his sleep in an act of ultimate betrayal in February 2006. Sam’s death was covered by national and international media and even drew comment from the PM, such was the impact of the betrayal “



Whaleworld – located on the site of the once operational Cheynes Beach Whaling Company’s whaling station. There is a free guided tour which gives you an oversight and then you can explore the exhibits on your own, at your leisure. There are over 20 exhibits with the main one being the Cheynes IV whale chaser:



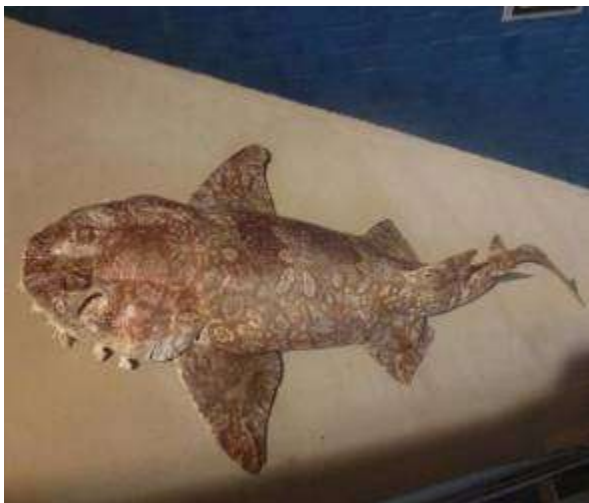
Lunch at Whaleworld was a very nice seafood platter (yum!).

Brig Amity, Albany Convict Gaol Museum - Brig Amity is a replica of the original Brig Amity that arrived in Princess Royal Harbour in 1826, which brought the first European settlers to these shores to establish a military post. On board were Major Edmund Lockyer, 19 soldiers, 23 convicts, staff, crew and supplies and equipment. The replica was built in the mid 1970's to mark the sesquicentenary (150 yrs) of the foundation of Albany. The first buildings of the Gaol were built in 1852 for Imperial convicts shipped to WA as artisans and skilled labourers, with further additions between 1872 and 1875. Restoration took place between 1989 and 1996. I did not take any pictures inside the gaol but it was interesting – and cold!



Brig Amity – Norm does look impressive but a captain's uniform and a tri-corn hat might have helped. He was not impressed that I was taking his picture but I did manage to click it before he pulled a face!

We also visited the WA Museum in Albany which has a terrific display of the local history of the area:



The museum also had an exhibition of photographs from entrants in a photograph contest. Some of the photos are so good I took my own photos and thought maybe I would have a couple blown up and pass them off as my own – but now you would all know the truth!



This was the winner:



Denmark (day trip) tree top walk – I was not sure if I would be able to do this walk because I am not good with heights but I did it (pat on the back!) and it was wonderful.



We also did the ground level walk amongst the giant trees (Norm is 6'4" tall):



Another day trip was to the Porongurup's National Park and the Sterling Ranges. There are a lot of small wineries in the Porongurup area but we did not visit them, instead just enjoying the drive through. The Sterling Ranges are beautiful and we drove up to the Bluff Noll Look Out – the perfume from the trees was lovely (great for the sinuses) and all you could hear up there was the birds and the wind through the trees.



The drive and walk up to the top of Mount Clarence is not to be missed. At the top is the war memorial and museum – we had a great day and lunch at the café was pretty good – home made sausage rolls and other delights. The memorial is at the top of a long climb but can be accessed by car (drop off area at top).



The view from the top is spectacular and along the way I met one of the locals – at first I only saw the head of the lizard and I thought it was a snake – about two feet away!



Wave Rock/Hyden – we stayed two nights at Wave Rock Caravan Park – the park is a bush type one but the amenities were new and very clean. Across the road from the park is a Lace Museum, a Military Museum (toy soldiers), a wildlife park and a café – the ceiling in the café is decorated with dried flowers collected locally. We walked the rock – the climb up is a bit hard on the knees but there is a chain to hold on to – the view from the top is pretty spectacular. We also visited Hippo’s Yawn and Mulka’s Cave:



The cement wall that runs along the top of wave rock is to catch rain water which then runs along to the dam that has been built at one end of wave rock.



This is one of the 'freestanding' rocks at the top of wave rock – needless to say I did not stand in front of it for long!



Hippo's Yawn



Mulka's Cave

We are now in Esperance – I will cover this area in the next newsletter – the beaches are as spectacular as they say in the brochures and Esperance is a lovely seaside town. Of note – the Centrelink Office is located in a new building on prime real estate with views of Esperance Bay/beach right across the road – our tax dollars at work! We commented on this to a local – she told us they also have showers in that office – she did not say whether these were for the use of clients or employees but, the fact that the office has showers has obviously been of important note to the locals! Not bad working conditions!

Regards to all until next time.