

WA Toodyay to Jarrahdene Stage 8 November 2018

In this stage of the trip we once again spent time in a caravan park for a longish period (well, a week is quite a while in our view) and enjoyed not only new places but also catching up with special friends from Darwin. We also met new friends too!



Poppies, St Johns Church Kambalda

Urban and Bush Camping

This stage started on 13 November 2018.

Advent Park Campground and Caravan Park, Maida Vale

A bit of research revealed any number of good caravan parks in and around Perth, but we decided to stay at a slightly quirky spot in the Northern suburb of Maida Vale. It was not far from the lovely satellite town of Kalamunda, near where Kathryn and Charlie lived a few years ago.

I think the park is a real find but it may not be to everyone's taste. As it is owned and managed by the Seventh day Adventist Church, they discourage you from drinking or smoking outside the caravan, although they advised they did not care what you did inside. This really translates as not flaunting it. We drank our afternoon glass of wine but did it discreetly...

Otherwise, the park was just lovely. Nice and clean amenities in a nearby block, lovely expansive gardens with pine trees and gums and nice green grass to camp on. A bonus was the bus stop into town which was just outside the park. We found it very pleasant and were glad we chose to stay there.

Mostly our reasons for being near the city was to catch up with friends who live in Perth and to do

some Christmas shopping. We have grandchildren who live in New Zealand and so the presents need to be sent early if we are to pay the cheaper rate of postage. It still costs an arm and a leg though, as I cannot seem to achieve the happy art of sending something small and light.

We managed to visit our good friends from Darwin (Heather Sjoberg and Sue Freeman) who although both long-term Darwinites have not met, to the best of my knowledge. It was good to see both of them separately and we enjoyed catching up with news of respective families.

Hoffman Mill **S33 O 15 E116 5 O**

This is one of those camp sites you feel lucky to have discovered. On our last stay here, back in January 2006, I was similarly taken with this camp site. I wrote at the time:

There is a central ablution block with flushing toilets (bliss!) and running water taps at most camp site, so we thought we were in campers heaven. The site was quite lovely, as the jasmine was flowering, little roses were twining over the bridge, the blackberries were just starting to flower, and there were apples and figs just ripening.

The weather was quite pleasant; cold at night, but warm during the day. As there was plenty of shade we were able to sit comfortably and read during the day.

Our site was level, and at the top of a rise looking down into the river. There was generally only one other camp group there while we were at Hoffman.



On this occasion there were Spring-flowering plants and ferns all in a happy profusion throughout the area, and the fruit trees were just starting their flowering. We had the same site we enjoyed last time, on a higher area, looking down into the other camp sites, and right next to a tap. The tap meant we could put the washing machine on and do several loads of washing, a great and important benefit.

Phone and internet was very patchy although we managed to get enough reception to download the newspaper each morning and check emails. A

ranger came around and we paid our camping fees to him.

The weather was cool and sunny with lovely nights, perfect for camping. I think we had originally planned to spend a few nights but we ended up staying for six nights as the place was just so nice.

On leaving Hoffmans Mill we headed on Southwards, and aimed for another camp site we had loved when we stayed in this region back in 2006. Canebrake is another Department of Parks and Wildlife managed forest reserve, and a delightful camping area too. It was an easy run South from our last camp.

Canebrake Pool

S33 52 49 E115 16 55

Our previous stay here was so nice we stayed five nights. This time we beat that by staying six nights and enjoyed absolutely lovely weather. Our site (#7) is ideal for sun on the solar panels although it is one of the smaller sites. Not that it is small; like all nine sites it has a wooden table



and chairs and a fireplace next to the camping area and is surrounded by ferns, palms, banksias and flowering bushes and gums. All sites are located on a loop near the waterway, the Margaret River.

It was about 20 minutes drive into

Margaret River township for grocery shopping, cafes and downloading emails etc. What a slave we have become to the internet! I feel deprived if I can't check the news regularly or facebook, or even to do internet searches.

But it is pleasant to sit at a café and download whatever needs to be downloaded, and to then read emails and newspapers later.

From here we did daytrips around the region each day, and that included a trip to Cowaramup, and down to Leeuwin-Naturaliste NP. There are lovely cafes in the region and there is an emphasis on quality coffee and gourmet food and wines. Heaven on a stick, really.

The days were quite cool and nights even cooler, which was a great relief, as it was into Summer now and we had expected it to be warmer. The South west of WA is notoriously cooler and damper than other parts of the state, and our planning had been to head South as Summer progressed. This cunning plan had worked so far.



WA does national park camping so well, and with a concession rate for those of us over 60, it is between \$6 to \$7 a night per person for a camp site. I think that is a reasonable amount to pay, and for that you do get only minimal facilities but in such beautiful surroundings.

I haven't been able to work out their policies on allowing dogs into parks. Some allow it and some don't. While Canebrake allowed dogs, our next camp site did not.

Jarrahdene Campground, Leeuwin-Naturaliste NP

S34 6 40 E115 4 37

This campground was fairly new, having been established about 12 months before our stay. The

facilities were new and immaculate. A national park campground, this was managed well, with a ranger calling in each day to check on the park and making sure all was well.



There were two loops with individual, well-spaced sites set in lovely jarrah and fern forest, and each site had its own table and chair setting and fireplace. Paths led to a day use area with a gas

barbeque and kitchen area.

And there were ferns, palms (Macrozamia), and so many little flowering plants it was a total joy to camp here. Our site (number 30) enjoyed reasonable sunshine for our solar panels, which was helpful, as we had two days of rain or overcast weather. That is of course why it is fresh and cool here, it rains even in Summer!



When we arrived it was for three days but we ended up staying for nine! Most of the time we were there it was very quiet with only a handful of other campers in the area or near us.

We did day trips every day to either Margaret River or somewhere nearby, including as far up North as Canal Rocks. Now that is a special place! It is a very interesting granite formation with

some out of the ordinary features. Canal Rocks has very unusual fault and strata lines and intense colours giving it an almost human made appearance in places. Also, some areas of very attractive wind erosion (see the pictures) makes this lump of rock a must see on the Western Australia geological trail. As you would expect, there was an earthcache there... After looking around



the area at Canal Rocks, we drove back down the coast and enjoyed sweeping views of headlands and ocean. This is a very pretty part of the country.

Once back at Jarrahdene, among the karri, marri and jarrah trees, ferns and palms, we relaxed each day, and enjoyed happy hours each afternoon in the most idyllic spot imaginable. If you were staying at a resort with these surroundings, you would pay a fortune. We paid \$14 a night. It was hard to leave here....

