

Bundaberg QLD to Alice Springs NT

Stage 5 August 2017

In this fifth stage of the trip we continued through Queensland, and although we were in more Northern parts it continued to be cold; that is, VERY cold. And then suddenly, it was quite warm. This stage started on 2 August 2017.



Carnarvon Gorge: Sandstone Park

Ban Ban Springs

S25 40 55 E151 48 58

As the camp site at Ban Ban Springs is so handy to Bundaberg, and we knew we could get there nice and early, we headed straight to this lovely spot, only stopping briefly for cream buns and fresh bread at the delightful town of Biggenden. This town has such a nostalgic older era feel to it and their shops could feature in movies set in the 1920's. Fresh bread and cream buns on board, we headed off again to our night's camp.

When we arrived back at Ban Ban Springs, we managed to get a really lovely site near the springs, and as it is a small area, we almost had to it ourselves, in peace and quiet. The springs were flowing well, and the bird life was prolific. We had an enjoyable afternoon and night here before heading off again in the morning.

Wuruma Dam

S 25 10 52 E 150 59 14

It was back in 2014 we stayed here and had an enjoyable few days camped together with Ann and Sue,



our friends who also have a Kedron caravan. On that occasion, we had spots right on the water's edge but this time it was too busy for that and instead we had a site on the hill side overlooking the dam. I actually think it was even nicer being up on the hill. We had a view of the dam and of the hills, but were not too far from the water's edge. It was a very pleasant place to spend a few days.

Wuruma is not too far from the town of Eidsvold and a bit further (60 or so kms) from the town of Monto. We went into Monto on a day trip and did some food shopping, as well as downloaded the newspaper and emails. Wuruma has no phone or internet, alas. I started to get withdrawal symptoms after a day there!

Wuruma is popular with fisher folk who have their boats pulled up on the bank in front of their rigs

(motorhomes, tents or caravans) and they are out there each morning, bright and early, as well as at dusk. We didn't engage in the fishing (our boat sits at home contemplating its nice shiny unused registration every year) but someone thoughtfully gave us a bowl full of redclaws. Well, it was Val who had the redclaws. In return I gave the donor a couple of the excess sweet potatoes we had bought back at Gayndah, only to discover the bait being used was sweet potatoes....

Anyway, we had a nice four days here, and on our last day, enjoyed a refreshing downpour of rain and thunder and lightning. Given it was reasonably warm weather, it felt just like home in the NT! When I say it was warm, we still needed the diesel heater on a couple of nights...

We were ready to go after four nights - there is only so much sitting around and eating, drinking and lazing a person can do!

Monto Self Contained RV Stopover

Railway Yards Bottom of Newton Street

S24 51 46 E151 7 16

So we headed into Monto, the nearby town to the North a



bit, and pulled into the town's RV camp site. It has a dump point, tap and nearby toilets. This proved to be a great stopover and we thoroughly enjoyed our two days here. The rest stop is conveniently located at a site at the bottom of the main street, and is three minutes walking distance to all the shops which include -wait for it - a bakery and a pub for evening meals! My favourite things. The bakery had cream buns, and yummy pies. As you expect of Queensland bakeries...

We went to the pub for dinner, and one of our fellow diners, also staying at the rest stop, was from Kersbrook, a town near ours back in SA. And he grew up with one of our friends from home. Small world.

Monto is blessed with natural wonders on its doorstep and is about 30 kms from Cania Gorge, so we did a day trip out to the gorge, although we have been there before and have done some of



the walks that time.

But on this occasion we visited the Shamrock Gold mine, which was operating back in the early 1900's, because there were two geocaches there. It was a steepish walk uphill but the weather was nice and we enjoyed the exercise. OK I am lying; I did not enjoy the exercise, but I did enjoy the scenery at the other end. Afterwards we headed to the dam, and got another two caches there too.

By the time we got to the dam and the picnic area we were pretty hungry but had not brought our lunch. Luckily we had some cornchips in the car and some mandarins so we did not starve. (Back at the little town of Gayndah we had bought a pile of mandarins, sweet potatoes and avocados from the big truck which is always located on the highway).

The morning we left Monto was a cold, cold start to the day. It was frosty outside and there was still ice on the windscreen hours later. Luckily the diesel heater was working well.



Biloela Heritage Park

11 Exhibition Ave Biloela

The Burnett Highway goes up through the little towns of the region and we went through cattle and agriculture farms, and through rolling hills as well as over a range. I thought the free camp at Lawgi Hall was lovely, with views of the distant hills and a valley, but we really could not afford to

stay somewhere after only thirty or so kms! It was midmorning when we arrived at the town of Biloela, and booked into the Heritage Park.

They charge all of \$15 a night for a powered site, in fairly basic conditions but we found it very pleasant. Each site is well spaced apart and on grass (admittedly a bit dry right now). It was a shame to have to stay at a caravan park at all but we really needed to do some washing and do some housekeeping chores. The washing machine uses quite a bit of water and it is best if we are on town power and water to use it. Sheets, towels, pillowcases and clothes were churned through the machine, and we had nice loooong showers. While travelling and using our water tanks, showers ration the water severely, and we have to manage water usage carefully.

Bauhinia Store

S24 34 14 E149 17 31

Dawson Highway

After the maximum number of nights allowed at this park, (two) we rolled out, heading West now, for the first time on this trip. The roads are atrocious here in outback Queensland, undulating over black soil, and with inadequate road base laid down. On these roads I always pack the lounge cushions securely under the table to stop them rolling around on the floor.

About lunch time we arrived at the small and quaint Roadhouse called Bauhinia Store. I guess the community is called Bauhinia.... We didn't see much evidence of a community though. Anyways, the

store, which sells fuel and a limited range of groceries, (and hamburgers) has powered sites next to the store for the princely sum of \$10 a night. You will probably guess we had hamburgers for lunch. The reason we didn't have them for dinner was due to the huge quantity of curried sausages I had made two nights before. Those curried sausages made three appearances before they were ushered off the stage. I am in no great hurry for more curried sausages.



Bauhinia Store

The next morning we continued West, and the countryside was looking very sparse and dry by now. You will see by the vegetation in the shot taken at Bauhinia Store that it was very dry indeed.

At Rolleston we picked up fuel and it was here we changed direction and headed South and down to Carnarvon Gorge on the Carnarvon Highway.

Sandstone Park

S25 4 26 E148 16 36

Our destination was Sandstone Park. This is a new park set adjacent to the Carnarvon Gorge, and on a ridge. In all our years of travelling I have never camped at a place with such a splendid view. It was truly breathtaking. The sites are all positioned on a ridge overlooking escarpments and a valley. Each site is generously proportioned and there is good separation from neighbouring sites.

And there is a fireplace at each site, as well as access to as much wood as you want to burn.

Happy Hour was in front of a stupendous sunset and view. Here we are relaxing with our neighbours.



The camp had rubbish bins, a dump point and bore water, which looked perfectly fine to me, but we confined it to washing up.

The Carnarvon Gorge is known for its lovely walks and we had visited a few on our last trip through here. This time we confined ourselves to two fairly easy walks, one was into Baloon Cave, and the other along Mickey Creek.

Mickey Creek was just so refreshing, with cool gorges, the quiet murmur of the creek, and all the vegetation we are familiar with from home in the Top End. There were staghorn ferns, livistonia palms, bush orchids, cycads and yam creepers.

My camera got a workout and if I put all the photos here which I think show how exceptionally lovely it was, this report would be a huge file size. But here is a sample. The one of Val writing is of him recording the answers to an earthcache which was featured in the gorge.



