

From the Karijini NP, to Carawine Gorge June 2016

June 2016

In this stage of the trip we headed further North into warmer weather and then positioned ourselves at Carawine Gorge ready to launch off on the Gary Junction Road.



Special points of interest:

- Woodstock Track
- Marble Bar
- Carawine Gorge

Marble Bar (Via the Woodstock-Hillside-Marble Bar Track)

Caravan Park

Again, it was a nice sunny day when we set out from Karijini and that was important as we were to be travelling on back roads of gravel and dust, which were likely to be affected by rain. We went back out to the main road over to Tom Price and at about the Mt Bruce turnoff we headed North onto the track leading to Hamersley Gorge. The road was very good indeed and after recent showers of rain, there was minimal dust. We had morning tea at a clearing just past the gorge and drove Eastwards to Wittenoorn. The country around there is nothing short of spectacular with rolling hills and white gum trees. We drove right into the gorge and the track did deteriorate markedly with lots of washouts and gullies to negotiate. The van just stayed on tightly and bumped its way over the roads. I swear I heard it complain that it preferred we did not go this way again... Anyway, we came to a lovely pool and walking in the track to check it out we were walking over asbestos rocks which were prolific. Before coming out we took careful notice of all the signs which said "Danger: Asbestos", but thought that as many folk do camp here it would be fine. Heck, people still in fact live in Wittenoorn (not many, I grant you...probably most have died of mesothelioma), so we reasoned that it could not be that bad. But those rocks breaking under our feet and all around the camp persuaded us that it was just not wise. So we left this beautiful spot and moved on.



We arrived at the Auski Roadhouse, back on the Great Northern Highway and had a quick break and snack of hot chips (yum!) and refueled with diesel before moving up the highway. About 3.00pm we pulled into a nice spot just in off the highway and nestled at the bottom of some hills. There was nothing except us, some spinifex and solitude.

Bore Camp

S 22 5 28 E 118 48 56

These desert camps are so special. The air is filled with light and the night sky is a huge expanse. And on this occasion, as we had the place to ourselves, it was especially peaceful. The rain came in while we were here, and it rained lightly for a good part of the night, easing off in the morning. As we had a dirt track to travel on again we were keen for there to be dry conditions. Storm clouds were massing on the horizon to the South so we had a quick and early breakfast and pulled out. There was no packing up to do as we had not unpacked the night before.

As we got closer to the junction of the Woodstock-Hillside-Marble Bar Road, we asked some trucks travelling past us for information on the track, as we figured they had come out of that track. The report was good so we were confident when we turned due East onto the track itself. The first 60kms were in fact bitumen (this was in contrast to our Hema maps which showed it was still gravel) and then mid-morning the track turned North East direct to Marble Bar. On this last stretch the scenery was very pretty with ranges on our right to the South and rolling hills with spinifex all around us. The range was very deep red from the iron, and the caps were particularly striking. Our friends Peter and Margaret described it as "chocolate syrup" topping.



About lunch time we arrived at marble Bar and booked straight into the caravan park, which had been very busy each night.

I thought Marble Bar was an interesting town, smaller than I had thought, but located in spectacularly pretty gorge country. The caravan park was small and had tired, outdated facilities but was otherwise pleasant enough. It had grassy

sites and most sites were well spaced apart.

While here (we stayed three nights) we did the usual things like going out to the jasper deposits (underwhelming) and looking at the flying fox across the gorge at the lookout, and doing a day trip out to a Coppin Gorge. We had dinner at the pub one night...the food was great but the atmosphere a tad strange, with only dining seating for about 10 people in a small area near the bar. A large group of camper trailer folk from the caravan park arrived just after us and could not be accommodated comfortably.

Carawine Gorge

S 21 28 56 E121 1 43

On the Saturday morning we left for the drive out to Carawine Gorge. We stayed here last year for six nights, and felt it was a very pretty and lovely spot to enjoy nature up close. We drove in from the Northern end, to avoid those treacherous pebbles, and this time camped up on the thin layer of pebbles above the largest waterhole. Ahh, a delightful spot. In part, we were able to establish that the pebbled area was safe, as Facebook friend Les and Sally were already there with their Bushtracker. They said that if approached from the Northern track it would be safe - and it was!

I had been aware that Les and Sally were coming across the



Gary Junction Road (GJR) before us and coming from the East, so we had been looking out for them at Marble Bar. In fact they were still out here at Carawine and so we finally met them. We put our van down a bit from theirs but were close enough for Happy Hours and coffee each day. So with the great scenery and great company we had a very enjoyable four nights here. By camping up on the Southern end of the gorge we had a bird's eye view of the deep pool; down where we had camped last year had completely dried up. The first couple of days we experienced cold, gusty winds and when they died down it was an absolutely delightful camp.



Val tried again to get the nearby cache and failed - it is simply too dangerous to reach so he admitted defeat. But we did drive out and looked at the glacier polished rock formations nearby, and they were interesting. I must google information on them... They are simply a stand of very polished rocks, not far off the track in.

I did enjoy staying here this time, although we did not have the company of our travelling partners from last year. However, we made new friends and that was a bonus!