

Travelling from Denman (NSW) to Adelaide (SA)

Stage 26 NSW and SA

Hill End residence 1

In the last section of our travels we left Brisbane and arrived in the little Hunter Valley town of Denman, NSW. In this report, we describe how we left the Hunter (eventually, you have to!) and meandered our way south to Adelaide, through the Orange/Bathurst region, and Mildura, and finally back in the Adelaide Hills (our new home). We spent a bit of time bushcamping or free camping on the way.

Special points of interest:

- The Orange and Bathurst regions
- Sofala and Hill End
- Mildura



Hill End residence 1

Trip report

The day we left Denman and travelled southwards was a long day and we simply passed quickly through places like Mudgee. This is a shame as I am sure they are beautiful places and worth more than the glance we gave them as we passed through. We always say “next time”....

Greens Point, near Sofala

S33 05 44 E149 43 55

14 and 15 March 2009

I absolutely loved the free camp here. The camp spot was recommended to us by fellow Kogger Peter, and it was a lovely spot. It is 6 kms East of Sofala (you have to drive through the township first) and located on the Upper Turon River. As you arrive, there is a flat area on a rise and near the drop toilets. You can choose to stay here, but more private and secluded spots are down along the river. When we were there, the bush roses (*rosa rugosa*) had just finished flowering and the hips were a pretty sight. We pulled the van into a largish clearing and positioned it so that we could just pull right out with ease. It had been wet weather before our arrival and it continued to rain intermittently so we kept an eye on the river just in case it rose (but it didn't come up discernibly). We enjoyed sitting out under the awning and looking into the river. By this time, I was starting to get a bit tired of the continuously wet weather which had dogged us since the day we picked the van up on 13 February. Everywhere we went, we took the rain with us. Just call us the ‘farmers’ friends’).

On the morning of our second day, however, it fined up and the sunny blue skies were a nice birthday treat. We spent the day scampering around the countryside, and visited Hill End in particular. Lunch was eaten in the courtyard of what appeared to be an authentically old pub and as the weather stayed fine, it was nice to sit outside in the sun.

The towns of Sofala and Hill End are often high on visitors' agendas as they are full of history and tell the interested observer so much of who we were a century ago as a nation. But they are still 'live' towns with residents who live and work in the towns or regions. This gives an amazing perspective on our history. Hill End is the larger of the two towns, and has two campgrounds; the one closest to the town has power and water. I understood it was \$10 a night, but I wasn't able to discover whether that was per site or per person.

In the afternoon, having a coffee at a café back at Sofala we had the wonderful good luck of running into fellow Kedronners, Sue and Rael with their Top Ender. We had met them a few



years ago at the Millmerran Camp Oven Festival and enjoyed their company at that time. So we persuaded them to spend the night back out at our camp site with us. They picked out a nice private site on their arrival, and (seasoned hands as they are!) had their chairs, wine and nibbles ready at our camp within half an hour of pulling in. We had a most enjoyable session chatting and sharing a red wine.

Hill End Main Street

The next day we left Greens Point mid- morning and moved on to a spot we had been to a year ago and absolutely loved. I have found it is generally good to have a mixture of new camp sites and some new places to visit.

Macquarie Woods Reserve

S 33 24 34 E 149 18 44

16 to 21 March 2009

We were last here almost exactly a year ago, with Pelbo and Marlies (fellow travellers from the Caravaners Forum). It was cold back then too, as I recall.

The reserve is one of the best free camps we have stayed at; it is huge (any size rig could fit in here) and there are flushing toilets. The backdrop is a pine forest, and there are a couple of small man made lakes at the bottom of the camp site. Some sites have barbeque facilities and

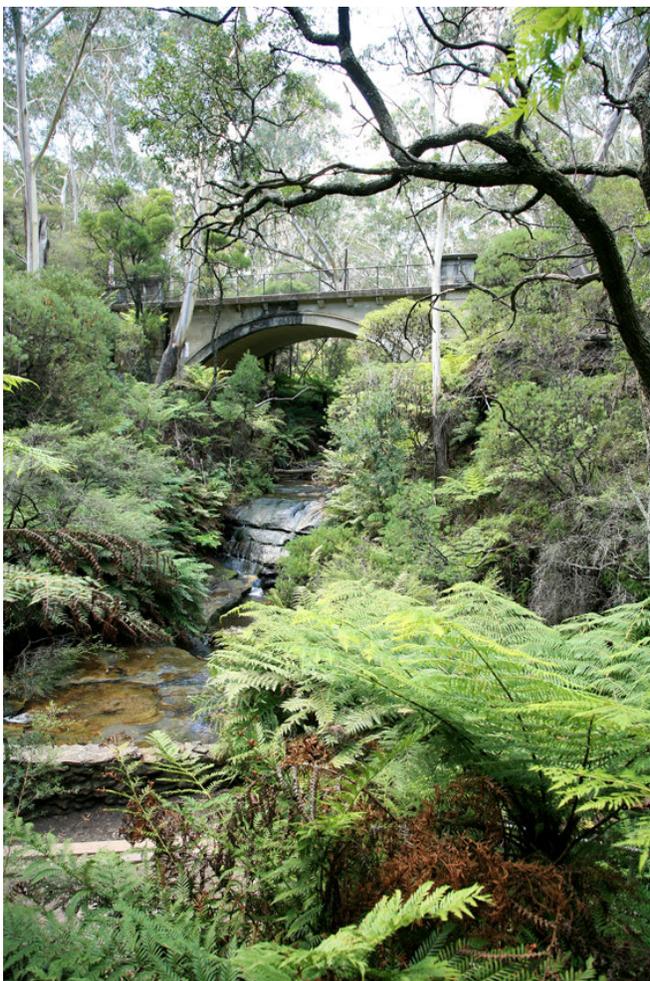
even some wood seemed to have been delivered to each site. There were about 4 or 5 other campers when we arrived and most of them were still there when we left.

We pulled the van into a spot overlooking one of the lakes, and had a great view of the water and the ducks on the lake. It was cold in the evenings, but the days were lovely and sunny. One day it blew a gale and so we put up the annexe wall to block the wind.

The amount of time spent here allowed us to visit the towns of Blayney and Millthorpe and the larger centres of Orange and Bathurst. We had a great time doing touristy things, and feeling absolutely secure about the van back at Macquarie Woods.

As there was good mobile and TV reception, I was able to use the internet and we watched TV every night. The new solar system was providing more power than we needed which was reassuring.

A major delight was the day trip we did over to katoomba in the Blue Mountains. It was a long day but we enjoyed not only seeing the Three Sisters (rock formations) but also the old world atmosphere of the town of Katoomba. The autumn colours in the scenery were a true delight too.



Three Sisters, Blue Mountains 1

Gardens, Leura, Blue Mountains 1

One morning we went over to a free camp near Carcoar, called Carcoar Dam. It was very busy indeed, with people all enjoying what is apparently a well organised camp site, with a toilet block. I think there may even have been cold showers in the toilet block, but I won't swear to that... Overall, I preferred our camp site due to its more

generous space and the lack of crowds.

Carcoar was high on my list of places to visit as I wanted to have a look at some pottery there. Sadly, the potter only opens her shop on weekends and it wasn't the right day. Never mind, I consoled myself with a Devonshire tea at a nice garden café...

Murrumbidgee River (near Nerrandera, NSW)

22 March 2009

The less said about this spot, the better. It was dry and dusty. We simply pulled off the road, at a spot near where Camps Australia Wide 5 said was a free camp, to the west of Nerrandera. As it was a drought period, the area is very dry indeed and you can see the countryside is suffering. This camp spot was merely an opportunity to make dinner, have a bath and then have a good night's sleep. It allowed us to move on the next day, refreshed.

We find that when travelling long distances, it is best to just pull into a free camp somewhere off the road. It allows us to make camp without unhitching, backing into a site etc. You don't have close neighbours. And it's free!

Mildura (VIC)

Rivergardens Tourist Park, Gol Gol

23 and 24 March 2009

The last time we stayed at Mildura we spent a week at the Apex caravan park, and didn't really like it there. It was quite run down and sites were sandy and dirty. We thought we would try a new place this time, and got lucky. This park is right on the river (we had site 70, with a view right over the Murray River, and it was lovely and restful.

After 9 days of bushcamping, we needed to have a nice, long hot shower each (I have longish hair and needed to wash it) and to wash the sheets. All other washing we had managed quite well by hand washing, and spinning it out in the washing machine. (This only used about 3 or 4 amps in total, I think – 10 minutes @24 amps/hour. But the sheets really needed a proper wash. So a park it was. By this time, the new van was quite dusty and dirty (only on the outside!) and the car was so covered in dust, that clouds flew off when we pulled up at each rest stop. OK, a slight exaggeration....

We had lunch at Trentham Estate Winery (I should have shares in that place, I have had so many lunches there by now) and bought more wine. There is now definitely no more room under the bed! There are several cartons of wine, a box of olive oil products from near Denman (Hunter Valley) and some cushions from the bed (courtesy of Kedron). And the two suitcases holding our gear from the trip up to Brisbane in the car.

Our neighbours at the van park went to the Botanic Gardens and enthused about the roses there, so I may head there on a future trip...because there is bound to be a future trip. This is only a day's trip from home.

And that concludes this trip, as we headed back to Adelaide from Mildura the next day.