

Stage 6 Flinders Ranges to Adelaide

11 October 2005

It was difficult to leave nice little Quorn (the surrounding countryside was so pretty, all freshly green and the wildflowers had to be seen to be believed) but let's face it, three months have passed and we haven't managed to reach Adelaide yet!

Although there is quite a lot of flexibility in the schedule, we do have some deadlines within this first 12 months of travelling. We want to be in Esperance for Christmas with our daughter; there is a family wedding in Perth early in January 2006; and we fly to Europe from Perth with our daughter at the end of February. After our return from Europe in April we will resume the travels, wending our way slowly north back to Darwin. A stay in Darwin for a space will be followed by travelling on to Queensland and parts south...

We thought a few days in Clare at the caravan park just on the edge of town would give us a good opportunity to sample the wineries' products and so the tourist thing in this pretty town. They have had good rains here and the district around Clare was emerald green, with wildflowers growing profusely alongside the roads and fields. The bright yellow of the canola growing in some areas was quite special. We loved Clare – the town is small enough to be friendly and large enough to have all the services we needed. While here Val had the fridge door hinge welded, and we bought our granddaughter's birthday present and mailed it to her. A first birthday is special. (Oh how we do miss the grandchildren in Darwin, but at another time I will tell you all about how we keep in regular and meaningful contact with the little people. As a psychologist specialising in children I have some ideas...some of them are even good ones).

While in Clare we visited a lovely winery and restaurant called Skillogalee, which was a truly lovely experience. The garden was very English – wisteria, roses, lavender and weeping willows. And the food!

14 October

Still holding our swollen little tummies we lurched on to Gawler caravan park, a small and friendly little council owned park about an hour north of Adelaide. Right on the banks of the sleepy little Para river, and five minutes walk from town, this is a place we have loved before. Additional advantages of being at Gawler include the town being on the edge of the Barossa (see the theme here folks?) and the railway station is only five minutes walk from the park. We can take the train into Adelaide city faster and cheaper than driving in.

More wineries, more little twee coffee places, more shopping, more visits to bakeries and farmers markets, and more of the famous Barossa produce. More surplus on the hips.

While staying in Gawler we flew back to Darwin for a week, as I had to attend a board meeting and for a court appearance which required me to give expert witness evidence. It felt very strange flying into our own home town and staying in a hotel, like a tourist. We

caught up with the little people too and that made the trip worthwhile on its own. Although it was nice to have a break from living in the van, after a week we found we missed it! The van, which we have named Okie, (remember – the ‘Offroad Kedron’) felt good to be back in and has clearly become ‘home’.

A couple of days before we left Gawler, a new van pulled in next door to us. I went over and introduced myself (as one does) and chatted for a while. Then I discovered that the couple (Mick and Joan) are well known contributors to a caravanning internet forum I belong to. Caravan forums are a great source of information and ideas which fellow travellers share. In fact, I had replied only a week previously to a posting of one of their trip reports. Great to meet such a lovely couple. The weather was lovely while at Gawler – cool but sunny. The rain had started to set in when we left.

6 November

We moved on today to the Adelaide Beachside caravan park at Semaphore, one of the northern Adelaide beach suburbs. The park is right on the beach. When we arrived we were happy to note that our old acquaintances from Clare, and then Gawler, Leslie and Lesley, were in the site right next door. Their signature garden gnome, which sits on the front of the van was a give away clue that it was these happy escapees from the rat race. I just have to get a gnome too....

The park is nice; very clean facilities, and it is right on the beach (I can hear the surf from our van). The village shops are only a kilometer away, and the giant Westlakes shopping centre is no more than 5 minutes drive. On arrival it became blowy and has rained fairly steadily for the last couple of days. Each night we have had to put down the awning due to the force of the winds.

No more flat tyres.