

Travelling from Melbourne to Brisbane

Stage 23

Victoria, NSW and heading to Queensland

This stage of our journey was punctuated by mechanical problems of one sort or another. Our car had experienced problems back in Melbourne, but it seemed to behave itself later. However, only one day out of Melbourne we had battery and solar hassles. All part of the travelling life style.

Special points of interest:

- Catching up with forumite friend Pelbo
- Macquarie Woods Camp ground
- Imbil Campground

Trip report

Marsden Camp Site

S 33 45 46 E 147 31 14

27 February 2008

It was a rainy and cool morning when we left Melbourne. Was I glad to be on the road again, after all the hassles with the car. We wanted to get to just near Orange NSW by the next day, so we powered our way up over the range, and headed steadily north all day, only stopping for short breaks as we needed them.

We stopped at about 5pm, and left the van hitched up beside the river just off the highway. This rest stop is located right beside the Newell Highway, and is found in CAW as site Vic 847. We had noted it the last time we were in the area as a good overnighiter. Waking to the sight of running water and little ducks on the deep pond was magical.

There was even good NextG coverage, so I checked the emails and made a couple of phone calls. A very cold night!

Macquarie Woods Camp ground

S 33 24 34 E 149 18 44

28 February to 4 March 2008

Pelbo had posted on an internet forum that he was camped at this spot, and that it was quite lovely. So we made plans to scamper up there before he left a few days later.

I have seen his postings on the caravanning forums for years now and been in direct contact over the installation of our Webasto diesel heater. It was a joy to meet him and his friendly and charming wife Marlies. Paul (aka Pelbo) had prepared a spot for our van, just up the hill from his, and facing out onto the dam. What a view!

Not only is the camping spot really, really lovely, having cracking good company was icing on the cake. We spent hours talking either over a coffee (with the dam view as a

backdrop) or a wine or two around the camp fire in the evenings. The last night we all went over to Blayney for dinner at the Tatts Hotel - \$15 for two meals!! Unfortunately Paul and Marlies had to leave for Sydney on Monday morning, and I felt very sad watching their van whisk over the hill.

And talking of icing on the cake, Paul baked a pretty damn good carrot cake to welcome us to Macquarie Woods. It was a great effort and a warm, inviting gesture.

This area is cold in the mornings and evenings, and as this was early Autumn, the cold was a force to be reckoned with. The diesel heater made a difference.



As you can see, we enjoyed having that welcoming carrot cake, made by Pelbo in honour of our coming. In this shot, Pelbo is talking, Marlies is dutifully listening, and I am both listening and eating cake.

Less fortunate was the problems we had with our solar regulator

and batteries while we were here. Val tried a number of things to see what the problem might be (batteries not holding their charges) but no luck. We used the generator for an hour a day to charge the batteries and gritted our teeth. More mechanical gremlins!

We realised we had to get it looked at properly in Brisbane, and so we decided to head north, only staying at caravan parks so we didn't have to rely on the batteries. This is no real hardship as we were reasonably close to Brisbane and the parks we could use were ones I really like (Gilgandra, with its lovely RSL; and Moree with its thermal pools).

There was marginal NextG coverage at Macquarie Woods camp site so I was able to keep in touch there with the internet.

Gilgandra

5 March 2008

The Rotary caravan park, just over the bridge and on the eastern/northern side of town has nice, grassy and reasonably shady sites, with immaculate ablution facilities. It is an Oz Park, so we could use our card here, which we took out membership on about two years ago. We walked down to the RSL for dinner in the evening, a nice walk in the late afternoon sun, and not too far to stretch the legs. We have noticed that the weather is noticeably warmer already, now that we are off the heights of Orange. At Macquarie Woods we had the diesel heater on, but here at Gilgandra, we had the aircon in the afternoon after arriving. Weird how the weather can change.

There was very good NextG here.

Moree, Gwydir Carapark

6 and 7 March 2008

We enjoyed the thermal pools here last time, and so we thought a couple of days to relax in the warm waters would be therapeutic. They are as nice as we remembered, but not quite so appealing in the warmer weather. When it's freezing cold in the air, the pools are a joy to step down into.

Again we requested site 118, one of the larger sites with an ensuite. They are the same price as the ones up the front, but much, much nicer.

There was very good NextG here.

Lake Wivenhoe (Dam Campground)

8 and 9 March 2008

Those of you who have been reading these trip reports for some time will know that we have stayed at the Wivenhoe Dam before. It is situated about 25 kms to the East of the little town of Esk, and has no facilities other than a toilet block, power and water. But the view is great; perched on sites at the top of the incline, you can look down into the water. The bird life is prolific and there are lots of kangaroos around. This is a peaceful spot and we enjoy staying here. As our charging system was playing up we had to have a powered site, which cost \$17 a night. I believe unpowered sites are \$12 a night.

I can't think of a better place to relax by reading, watching TV, or watching the birds. While we were here, another Kedron pulled in (a Top Ender) and we met the nicest people – Averil and Greg. They were good company over a bottle of something cold and bubbly at night.

And we had quite good NextG here, so I could play with the internet!

Brisbane

Big4 Brisbane Northside Caravan Village

10 to 12 March 2008

Staying here in Brisbane is usually only connected with seeing family (I have an Aunt in Zillmere) or visiting the Kedron factory. Both were involved this time. The van was booked in at the Kedron factory first thing on the Tuesday, to have the charging system addressed) and then we had to do some washing, shopping and get ready for the Kedron van gathering up at Imbil. Val was pretty keen to get there and talk to other vanners about technical stuff.

I have decided that technical stuff only interferes with my more subjective way of looking at the world, and so I am now cultivating an "alternative outlook" uncluttered by more mundane aspects like technological logic. I will let you all know how it goes. Anyway, Val prepared for the gathering by making lists of questions to ask others.

Island Reach Resort, Imbil (5-15 Island Road Imbil, (07) 5484-5427)

13 to 19 March 2008

We drove up to Imbil on the Thursday, a couple of days before the other vans were due to arrive – but some were already there!

What a wonderful campground this is. Imbil is located about three quarters of an hours drive south west of Gympie, and is only a small town. But it has all the necessary facilities, including a pub, a couple of cafes, a Bowling Club, a post office, a medical clinic and a mechanical workshop. And the campground is quite lovely, situated on the Mary River. We got a spot overlooking the river and were very happy there, despite a longish walk up the hill to the toilet blocks. Although you can have one of the limited number of powered sites we chose to have an unpowered spot to be closer to the river, and also to give the newly fixed charging system a try out. Although we were there for 8 days, and half that time was overcast, the batteries were fine.

If you have been to a vanning get together, you will know how hectic and social it can get. But with this group, it is almost like a family; people come and go throughout the campground, chatting with each other in small or large groups, or just go off and do their own thing altogether. We hared off each day and visited nearby towns like Gympie, Kenilworth (oh the cheese factory there!) and the markets at Eumundi. And we spent lots of time just chatting to others too. A highlight of the gathering is, as always, the get togethers at about 4 or 5 pm. Lots of merriment then.



**The
campground
at Imbil**

Val enjoyed his gaining of technical knowledge while I cultivated my new mental state of technological “subjective logic”. It’s all based on feelings, and not on crass logic. I don’t know what fuzzy logic is but it probably describes me well. I might patent it.

Brisbane, Zillmere Road

20 to 26 March

And so back to Brisbane we headed, so we could get the car serviced, and so I could visit a doctor, in order to have a skin cancer on my face seen to. I also wanted to catch up with my Aunt, as she had just had her 86th birthday. Our birthdays are only days apart so we celebrated together over a lunch under our awning.

We decided it would be best to hunker down in a nice city park during the Easter break and while the madness happened elsewhere. It was a good decision. As we left Imbil on the Thursday morning at 8 o'clock, there were early Easter campers already there, and fighting over who would get our vacated spot.

Being in Brisbane for the holiday period was quite nice.