

Porongurup WA to Barossa Valley SA August - September 2015

(This stage commenced on 17 August 2015)

We had thoroughly enjoyed our four days at Porongurup but the calendar told us it was time to move on, as we needed to be in the Eyre Peninsular by early September.

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In this stage of the 2015 trip we travelled over the Nullabor to the Eyre Peninsular. Through the coastal regions of Western SA and back home.

Interestingly, we found that travelling in the Southern regions in Winter had an appeal. Camp spots were quieter (a lot quieter!) and although rain is a nuisance, the areas we travelled through do not enjoy high rainfall levels. And the colder weather makes for good sleeping at night.



Newman Rocks

Highlights include:

- Newman Rocks
- Eucla Clifftop Camp
- Streaky Bay

Kumarl Rest Stop

S32 47 17 E 121 33 14

On a misty morning we packed up at Porongurup and pulled out. This was going to be a long day as our target was a good six hundred kms away.

After a very long day, dogged with overcast skies and squalls of rain, we pulled in to this pleasant clearing in the bush at dusk. Dusk comes early in Winter but it was about 5.00pm and we were pretty tired. It was a dark night and there was only a couple of other vans, with a light rain all night. There was no reason to linger the next morning and we again left early after breakfast and coffee.

We were now about to launch onto the Nullabor crossing, a trip which I always enjoy. After a hard right turn at Norseman we were off. The wet weather stayed with us all morning but cleared as the day progressed.

Newman Rocks (on the Nullabor crossing)

S32 6 53 E 123 10 15

Newman Rocks is an interesting granite outcrop which is near a rocky indent in the rock which has formed a fair sized pool. The rocks around the pool and up the hill are flat in some areas and so we parked on one of the more flat spots, well away from the water's edge (as animals need to drink there at night). By the time we pulled into the camp, it was only lunch time. Again we had been dogged by squally rain all morning but that cleared up soon after our arrival and we had a sunny, almost warm day for the remainder of the first day.

We knew that in a few days we would be passing through the Quarantine inspection point at Ceduna and we had to try to finish our fruit and vegetables as best we could. I made lemon curd with all our lovely lemons given to us by Deb at Porongurup, and we used up as much fruit as possible. Making the lemon curd was not as easy as it sounds, having no juicer or strainer, so the squeezing was done by hand and a spoon, and pips were fished out as best I could. Or not...the curd had quite a few escapees.

It was at Newman Rocks we were able to sit outside in the late afternoon sun without jumpers on for the first time in months. What a blessing! As the view was so pleasant we decided to stay an extra day.



Moodini Bluff

S 31 54 35 E 127 17 15

We have stayed at this pleasant overnighter before and on this occasion it was just as busy as last time. It is a convenient site, just far enough as a day's drive from Newman Rocks and has lovely vegetation around. But it was so very busy we decided next time we would press on to one of the many other spots around.

The only real advantage of this spot over others is its pit toilet but I was not brave enough to try it out, preferring to use our own. The last time we were here two years ago that toilet defeated me and I was not prepared to give it a second chance.

Just before dusk a couple of cyclists came in, riding from Perth across to the Eastern states. They were not young and I envied them their energy and drive. They had a small tent and carried everything in their panniers, including 15 litres of water each. This trip would not be easy, with roadhouses a fair distance apart and no watering points apart from the roadhouses. We offered them some water and they gladly accepted a top up of all their containers. As we had made the offer of water the night before, this meant they could have a wash using their precious water that evening. They were so happy...all for the gift of water! We also gave them a couple of oranges, the last remnants of the Porongorup citrus.

We had a chat with some nice folk in a camper trailer near us at the Happy Hour timeslot and had an early night before another early departure.

Eucla Clifftop Camp

S 31 38 17 E 129 23 16

This spot was a real find. We turned off the highway to search for a geocache at the top of some cliffs, and realised it was a beaut camp site. All by ourselves, in a peaceful spot with a view straight from heaven, we were able to relax and soak in the views. No one else came in while we were there (not even another geocacher!) and the weather was calm with a sunny sky.

Poor weather was forecast for the next day so we left after a nice peaceful night lulled to sleep to the sound of the waves below. There are so many of these lovely camp sites all along the Nullabor and travellers can virtually choose when they want to camp, and pull off the road at whim. There are just so many places to choose from. Being independently set up with your own toilet and shower is a major plus as it means you don't need to choose a place with a toilet. Those toilets are not always as clean as one could wish....

There was good Telstra mobile and internet coverage here which was a total surprise.

Yalata Rest Stop

S 31 24 35 E 131 36 51

A friend told us about this pleasant spot to stop for the night, advising that not only can you get off down the back among the bush but also the ground is clean gravel. This was a major consideration as we knew heavy rain was forecast and being parked up on an area which would not turn to mud and slush was a high level advantage! It did rain the night we pulled in and was still drizzly the next morning, so we stayed put here a second day to wait out the rain.

It was a sound move to have the additional day to clean out the fridge of fruit and vegetables before arriving at the Ceduna Quarantine station the following day. All fruit and vegetables are inspected or confiscated there, although some are exempt from the ban. As it happens we had eaten just about everything which could be confiscated (it was an effort to deliberately use everything whether we thought a meal needed it or not!) and only had some onions, garlic and ginger when we arrived at the station. And those items were said to be exempt from the ban so all was good. Nothing handed over and nothing thrown out.

There was good Telstra mobile and internet coverage at Yalata and that was a wonderful discovery. Almost all across the Nullabor has coverage, it seems.

Streaky Bay

The town of Streaky Bay, is a neat and pristine town right on a bay (as its name suggests) with sweeping views of the ocean from the main street. Many of the town's houses are situated to capture those views, and with the mediating sea winds, enjoys temperate weather. Even in



Winter which is when we have stayed here, the days have been warm during the day although cold at night. The caravan park is sited right on the bay and there are many spots right on the beach, but with power, water and sullage. This has to be one of my favourite parks.

There is a reasonable town centre with a bakery and a couple of supermarkets and banks. And the Streaky Bay Hotel is a great place to have dinner. The early settlement built a stone walled cemetery which was quite fascinating. We stayed three nights which allowed us to drive around the nearby areas which is always sure to please. There are some lovely cliff outlooks and sweeping bays which can be quite spectacular. Although there are some camps near to Streaky Bay none really appeal to us and so we would always prefer to stay in the caravan park.



One of the most interesting areas was found near the small community of Yanerbie, and was signposted as "Yanerbie Sands". There are huge sand dunes which would delight the heart of children of all ages. The drive in through close vegetation and over rocky tracks was well rewarded by these sights.

Walkers Rocks

S 33 33 34 E 134 51 20

About 120 kms East of Streaky Bay is this gem of a camp site, which is managed by the Elliston Council and is located in the Lake Newland Conservation Park. They provide a (cold) shower and clean flushing toilet and a neat little camp right near the beach. Three separate individual sites are available to tuck into, or a larger area can accommodate a small group of say three vans together. Although it is in a conservation park, pets are allowed, which is interesting. They are required to be on a lead but of course folk totally ignore the rule. Another camper's two dogs were running freely while we were there....



We set up camp in the larger area as it had nice shell grit as a base and this made a nice clean area to put out our chairs and table.

A white sand beach was right near the camp site and Val found some lovely shells on his long afternoon walk. The nearby surf was a pleasant background noise especially to go to sleep with at night. While camped here we made a day trip over to

Elliston which has clifftop views and a drive which can rival the Great Ocean Road - but



without the crowds! A number of statues is dotted around the cliffs and give a nice focus to the drive.

Although a distance from Elliston (about 15 kms) there was good Telstra mobile and internet coverage. So we had all the benefits of a lovely bush camp but with the benefits of a larger community.

Coffin Bay's Little Yangie Camp

About 16 kms out of the Coffin Bay township is a national park campsite on a shallow bay. The drive out is narrow and windy, and a maximum speed of 40 kms an hour is necessary. Vegetation close to the road means it is hard to see kangaroos or emus, which are numerous, before they are in front of the vehicle. It was about lunchtime when we drove out and a brilliant sunny day, so the camp was looking its best. Recent good rains meant the park was lush and green and there were many flowering plants and especially wattles.

A motorhome camped at the site had an uncomfortably close encounter with a swarm of feral bees (of the European persuasion) which set up in their van's fridge vent. The occupants were panicky and not sure what to do about it. Val had a flynet and heavy duty gloves and offered to remove it but they took off into town at speed, hoping to dislodge the swarm. We didn't see them again....



One of the nice things about the township of nearby Coffin bay is the walk which meanders around the headland and there are nice little picnic rest areas at regular intervals to stop and rest. This is a very scenic place indeed. And an additional welcome feature is dinner at the Sailing Club which is so reasonably priced as staff are all volunteers. We had a lovely meal on the Sunday night, overlooking the harbour at sunset. Very special.

We had reasonable internet and mobile phone reception at our site at Little Yangie which was up on the higher area. I do prefer to be in the higher areas but agree the sites down in the bottom area are appealing with the vegetation making for a more private camp.

Lincoln national Park, Surfleet Cove

About 30 kms from the small city of Port Lincoln is one of Australia's most delightful national parks. Now, I know I have compiled a list of about 70 or so "favourite" camp sites but Lincoln National Park would have to be in my top three. Generally we stay at a smaller and more intimate spot in the NP but because of the weather (it was scheduled to rain and rain it did) we camped up at Surfleet Cove. The great advantage of this spot is that the sites are all sited on gravel and with individual drive through bays on the side of a sloping area with views of the bay below.

We discovered through some research that you can have a generator between 9am to 9pm but we didn't need to use it here as the solar panels were unobstructed by trees and we managed to get good power input each of the four days we camped here.

Because it was Winter there were not many other campers in the park and each night there would have only been one or two others in the camp site. This is a great advantage of travelling in

the cooler off-tourist months, it is quieter and more peaceful.

We had very good phone and internet reception here.

Rest Stop, Orroroo

S 32 44 02 E 138 32 13

Just 8 kms to the West of the small town of Orroroo is an appealing rest stop which we have stayed at previously. This is a spot which lends itself well to a stay of a couple of days although most people use it as an overnigher on their way elsewhere. There are some areas where you can pull off a bit further from the highway although those places are limited in number. Most sites are level and some have a nice view of the hills nearby.

We arrived latish in the day after a long drive from Lincoln NP and we were happy to get one of the nicer spots off by ourselves and with a good view out over the hills. It was a cold day and although it wasn't raining we had a quick afternoon 'Happy Hour' drink before making dinner and having an early night.

The next day we were joined by our friends Sue and Ann in their Kedron van and we went out to dinner at the Orroroo Hotel Restaurant for dinner. The meals are always lovely here and we thoroughly enjoyed the chance to catch up and chat before driving back to the van for a good night's sleep.

One final point about Orroroo; there is a great coffee shop in the main street (The Rendeazvous) which has handmade cakes and goodies as well as excellent coffee. What a find! From the outside this café looks nothing special but inside is like an Aladdins Cave of goodies.

Homewards

And on a fine sunny day we set off for home, knowing the trip would be at an end. It is always a strange phenomenon that the closer we get to home the more it pulls at us. Even though we could have enjoyed spending more time around Orroroo we found we looked forward to being home again.

And as we got closer to home, the rain started and we were welcomed back home by squally rain and wind. Sigh.

