

# Two People's Bay to Lucky Bay (WA)

## Stage 1 0 January to February 2019

This period of travel was mostly during the school holidays, a period of busy campgrounds and busier caravan parks, which usually necessitate a gritting of teeth and getting on with it. Our usual strategy is to head inland and away from crowds, but there were two factors affecting our decision to abandon that strategy this time. The first was the coolness of coastal areas, and the second was the desire to see some of WA's superb coastal camps and scenery. Good planning was involved in finding suitable and appealing spots to stay and we found, as always, that the WikiCamps app was invaluable. It has a wealth of commentary from other travellers and also photographs and embedded information and detail. On the iPad, you can click on the webpage link for the camp site and be taken immediately to the site, or if you click on the phone number it calls the site for you. Equally importantly it is linked to online maps and will show your proximity to a site on the screen. I am not sure how we ever managed without it.



*Boat harbour*

### Bush camping

This stage started on 24 January 2019.

On the day we left Albany it was raining, a drizzling and cold rain. This is not so good for packing up and stowing things away, like the outside chairs and tables, and matting. Knowing heavy wind was predicted, Val had brought in the awning the night before so that was done. Rain is not your friend when travelling in a van, but it could be worse; we could be travelling in a tent!

Our destination was Boat Harbour, a potentially unwise choice as it was the Thursday before a long weekend (Australia Day) as well as being in the school holidays. There was a gravel road of 37 kms to negotiate but that meant little to us with a van built for such conditions. That is, until we actually met the corrugations! The road is ungazetted and as such is not ever graded by the local Shire. And it certainly shows. There was a good five or six kms of dreadful, bone shaking corrugations, worse than the Plenty and the Great Central Road. Ah well. The van seemed all intact when we got there.

### **Boat Harbour**

S34 31 1 E118 48 13

The campground at Boat Harbour, ESE of the small town of Wellstead, is on the coast and is a bit wild and woolly, as they say. Our plan was to drive in and have a look (see, we didn't know about those corrugations...), and if we liked it and there was a suitable campsite, we would stay.

The camp was small, and set on a tidal inlet with a pretty view of the water and trees, and the sound of booming surf just over the sand dunes. There was another group there when we arrived but the rest of the sites were free. So we chose a spot, a good spot as it turned out, with some



sheltering trees, peppermint perhaps, and a view of the water.

Then about an hour later a large group descended on the camp, with probably four or five cars, and a boat. Tents and a marquee went up, and a well-constructed camp was erected. These guys knew what they were doing.

Everything was neat and tidy, kids were well behaved, dogs mostly well behaved, and peace reigned on the land. There was literally no noise from this group.

No loud drunken laughter, no doof-doof music, no....anything! They all went off fishing and swimming and that was the last we saw of them until dinner. It was a peaceful and quiet night.

When we saw this group arrive our first thought was things could get crowded and noisy so we would only stay one night. But the nice site and the peaceful surroundings saw us staying a second night at this nice freecamp. But to be honest, I would not be coming back for a second visit.

### **Wellstead**

After leaving Boat Harbour, we headed up the gravel track back to the highway to Wellstead. It's only a small town, with a roadhouse cum general store and takeaway kitchen, a nice Community hall and oval, and great public toilets. It even had free showers and a dump point to empty the toilet

cassette. The other feature was a Bush Reserve campground, which at \$10 a night for an unpowered site saw us stay for two nights. We did a load of washing with water from the town tap, and spun it out in the washing machine.

The reason we stayed the second night was to enable a day trip down another gravel road to Cape Riche. As it was a long weekend, the campground there was so busy there wasn't even room to park the car with any ease. But it has a lovely bay to swim in (if you don't mind freezing water straight from the arctic regions!) and we could see why it was popular. The campground back at Wellstead was remarkably quiet though. And we had takeaway hamburgers for dinner. Yum!

### **Ravensthorpe Meridian Rest Stop**

S33 34 26 E120 0 7

Our goal was to stay at Fitzgerald NP and to get there we needed to head South from Ravensthorpe. A nice rest area was found about 5 kms to the West of the town, and with an area down the back among some trees and vegetation. When we arrived it was baking hot, and we put the generator on to run the airconditioner for five hours. Then at four pm, suddenly a cool breeze sprang up and we were lovely and cool.

The next day was cool too and so we ended up staying put a second night, going in to town for dinner at the local hotel. And the meal was of a very high standard!

Ravensthorpe is a pleasant town which is trying hard to attract travellers like ourselves. They had a freecamp in town (alas it was dusty and on a slope so it didn't appear inviting), they had a dump point and water tap, and a great general store. They also have a silo art!

The town has had a nickel mine and lithium mine, but BHP had recently closed the nickel mine, so the town was feeling the pinch.



### **Four Mile Campground in Fitzgerald NP, near Hopetoun**

From Ravie (as the locals call it) we dropped down the good sealed road 50 kms to Hopetoun, a small town with a tantalizing glimpse of the sea at the end of the road coming into town.

We had decided ahead of time that we would camp at the freecamp for a couple of nights (a maximum of 48 hours is allowed) and then we would head out to the nearby national park.

We caught up here with good friends Maryanne and Craig, and their canine princess Jeddah. It was a lovely experience chatting with them over cups of coffee and a few drinks, and saying hello to Jeddah. On our second night Maryanne made dinner. Look, it is always special when someone makes a meal for you, but as Maryanne is a great cook, this meal was extra special. We had a curry to die for.

On the third morning they headed back North and then West while we went out the four kms to the campground in the nearby national park.

We have stayed at a lot of national parks over the years, and at many I have announced that the latest is my firm favourite. But Fitzgerald NP is outstanding. How have we missed this wonderful place before this? There are great sweeps of white, white sand and blue ocean. There are headlands with expanses of sky and beach. And the vegetation is unique. They have plants here which are found nowhere else in the world. The plants Quaalup Bell and Hakea Victoria are specific to this national park. That Hakea is so unusual, the first



time you see it you are struck dumb.

I can see why they have an annual wildflower festival here every Spring.

The campground was new, and very neat and clean, with gravel paths and individual camping sites, all well spaced. Hot showers and toilets are provided as well as covered barbeques and seating. What wonderful facilities.

The town of Hopetoun is a very welcoming place, and after visiting the Information Centre, we found that there are free films held every now and again, and we were welcome to attend. So off

we went and enjoyed a cup of coffee and biscuits as well as a film at the Community Resource Centre on the Friday. It was a Western film, quite modern, which Val especially enjoyed.

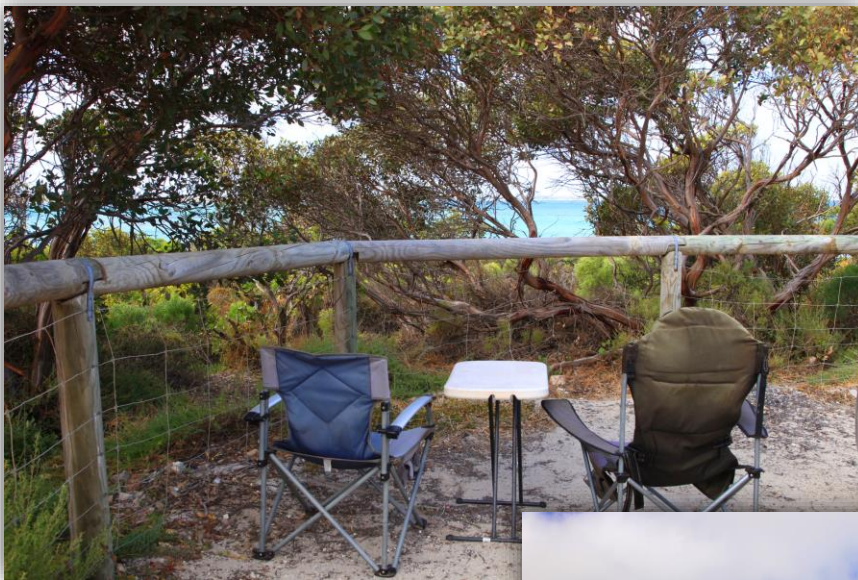
Anyways, after ten days camped at this lovely spot we finally packed up and headed off, even if somewhat reluctantly. We took the Springdale gravel road Eastward to Starvation Bay, about an hour or so away.

### **Starvation Bay.**

S33 55 8 E120 33 19

What a great camp! There were two main camping areas, both alongside the beach. The spot we chose had a few sites free and was smallish, but we had a view of the nearby beach from our camp,

and to go for a walk on the beach was a matter of walking about 50 metres. People were friendly and we ended up having drinks with our neighbours the second night. The first night saw us abandon drinks in the interests of fixing the car batteries after the car unaccountably left its headlights on. It took Val only a short time to sort it out but the sun had gone down by then and it was too cold to sit outside. Sigh.



On the positive side, we managed to find a geocache which was hidden in scrub nearby, and add it to our list of finds.

There was an honesty box for camping fees and we were happy to discover that most people seemed to have been paying.



We were equally happy to discover that we had phone reception here, altho' quite weak.. Amazing! I have no idea where the signal was coming from but it was appreciated.

This camp was nice and relaxed and we had such a good site I was reluctant to move on, but we had

a booking at Lucky Bay in Cape Le Grand NP. There are two campgrounds in the national park and we had found that bookings needed to be made at least two weeks ahead for both campgrounds. That of course means a commitment to be at a certain place on a certain date - which we dislike. But it meant that we would have a guaranteed spot when we arrived.

### Lucky Bay, Cape Le Grand NP

Well, again, this was a drop dead gorgeous spot. There are 53 individual sites all well separated from each other, and some with great views, other not so great. We had an upper site (there are two main levels) and had a pretty much uninterrupted view of the whole bay. Of course this meant

we also had a view of most of the other vans too. Afternoon drinks and morning coffees were fascinating times watching others arrive or unpacking etc.



The beach is literally squeaky white sand (it squeaks when you walk on it!) and the ocean is the bluest colour you can imagine. There were cars driving along the beach all day every day, as the sand was like concrete, quite firm. Despite one day being

warm, I did not go in for a swim. Seawater leaves you all salty! And that water is freezing cold. I know as I dipped a toe in it.



We spent eight days and nights here and enjoyed the view and the bracing sea air. There is a heap of things to see and do, with other bays to visit, as well as walks on the beach.

Naturally, time is spent sitting and chatting to fellow travellers as well! We met some really interesting travellers from Switzerland in one two day period; one was camped in front of us and the others were behind us. They were particularly interesting people to chat with. One was a teacher in a primary school combined with secondary school, and she said she was required to teach in High German. And the woman in the other group was a lecturer in psychology (my own profession).



As there was no dump point in Lucky Bay, we had to empty the toilet cassette in Esperance on day trips there for shopping etc., a round trip of 120 kms. On the brighter side, there was good Optus mobile phone reception. By tethering the mobile phone to the computer or iPad, we were able to download emails etc.

Esperance and Lucky Bay were our last camps on the WA coast before starting the trek across the Nullarbor. Which we will cover in the next trip report.