



Binns Track (30th July – 28th August) 2011

[By Darryll & Joan, Marie, Bronte & Norma, Bronwyn & Roy, Sandra & Wayne]

30/7/11

The day dawned dark & gloomy with the rain belting down. Ohhh for the sunshine we hope to get to soon. Met at Tarlee, Roy & Bronwyn had mechanical problems & will meet up with us somewhere. The further away we got from Gawler the better the weather improved, sun shining but cold in the shade. Hawker for fuel, Leigh Creek for lunch & looked at the mine.

Next stop Lyndhurst for fuel for Darryll & ice creams in case we couldn't get any along the way, but who should we run into at the shop but Talc Alf. We heard all about what the Australian flag should be and all the other things he is passionate about. Stopped at Marree to camp the night at the pub camping grounds for free being a bonus. A few drinks at the pub to catch up with Lawrie Kalms who Wayne knows from his home town of Murrayville.

31/7/11

Headed off into the wild blue yonder & wondering what we would find!!!!!! Stopped for photos at Alberrie Creek, they have lots of weird and strange looking sculptures. On the Oodnadatta track now, stopped at Lake Eyre South where Roy & Bronwyn caught up with us. Curdimurka, sliding our next port of call. There we found a lone seagull enjoying the sunshine. Swallows have moved into the building. Had a look at the Mound Springs and came across a group of people from a university tracking the water course around the area; they had been out there for a month.

Next was Coward Springs for a look around & this time I kept my mouth shut tight as I swallowed a fly last time here. Photographed a crow that found a bat in a palm tree, but I couldn't see until flying off with it to enjoy for lunch. Along the road some bright spark had decided to add words to the dip signs – dip & cheese, another dip, dip your hat, sheep dip. William Creek for lunch & the place was full of tourists. A plane load had landed from NSW dressed in their good clothes & high heels, boy! did we look scruffy & dirty. The track had some patches of corrugation that shook you so your teeth rattled; the land was green with bushes & water, then nothing, just bare dirt.

Algenbukina Bridge was our next camp and what a sunset from up on the bridge, just stunning. Magnificent pinks, oranges & browns that you will ever see over the water. Wayne & Marie happy as the crows won!!!!!!

1/8/11

I need to stay here (Algenbukina Bridge) for a while longer so I can explore the area, popular camping spot & you need to get in early to camp as people called in fairly often. Came across a grader along the track & now we have a smooth, flat dirt highway. Fuelled up at the famous Pink Roadhouse diesel \$1.98/litre where most things there are \$4 & above. Turned right off the Oodnadatta track on our way to Mt Dare again, the road very good as it had just been graded. It was very beautiful around this area with the green against the red dirt and rocks. Joan found our first lizard, a Central Beaded Dragon. Road started to get very rough again before Eringa ruins with lots of stones & corrugation. This is where we did the shocker on the trailer coming down the hill. It was just hanging when we pulled up & our water tank was leaking. Running repairs were done by Roy & Wayne. Stopped at Mt Dare for a look & a drink then found out about the road ahead.

There were two large sand hills to go over before getting to Old Andado. Before the first one there was this massive lagoon with lots of birds, green trees & bushes and lots and lots of water, & red dirt. In the late afternoon it was one of the most beautiful things you thought you could see. More photos were taken. Over the next sand hill there was the most spectacular sight you will ever see. The road to the homestead was covered with water, ducks, water fowls & birds so we had to detour around to get into the homestead. The sun was getting low and the reds & greens of the land was just breath taking with the homestead in the background. A few more photos before we set up camp & it was dark, then the fun & games started. First we had hopping mice, small, long tails that were bushy on the end & very cute. Then the rats came in



Binns Track (30th July – 28th August) 2011

the hundreds, they were trying to get into trailers, carry things away. They were only small but strong buggers. When we were sitting around, had to keep out feet up as they just kept cruising around to see what they could find. Everything had to be locked away before we went to bed. At one stage Wayne had a broom, Bronte had a shovel trying to get rid of them & Wayne broke the lid of one of Norma's boxes. They were not even getting close to them. Had a very long day and everyone was in bed by 9 pm.

[Sandra]

2/8/11

The group left Old Andado at about 9:15, after looking through the house & surrounds taking photos. Molly Clarke's house was left undisturbed & furnished after she moved onto Alice Springs. Roy spotted a dingo chasing a rabbit & took a great photo. We saw lots of wildlife on the way to Santa Teresa dingos, birds of all kind, lots of Braham cattle & other cows & steers. We passed through the Gibb Plains where wild hops & yellow flowering shrubs were quite lush. This was a reasonable dirt road with some bull dust, corrugation & a few cattle grids.

Next stop was Santa Teresa to have a look at the Catholic Church, beautiful Australian murals painted on the internal walls. Outside we met up with a gentleman who gave us some information about the town, Molly Clarke & her family. We then headed onto Alice Springs, staying at the McDonnell Range Caravan Park. Norma's sister Chris came for a visit while were there. After tea some of the group went down to the front of the park for a sumptuous dessert of strawberries, cream, ice cream & pavlova. Very filling, but yummy!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

3/8/11

It was a rest day in Alice Springs. Some went out to fill up on groceries or touring around. Roy stocked up on parts for his vehicle repairs. We arrived back to the caravan park mid afternoon where Roy spent some time fixing Marie's camper while others went swimming in the pool.

That night we all went out to the Overlander Steakhouse to tea. On the way into town we noticed a fire under the bridge & not a soul in sight. The meal was enjoyed by all some tasting crocodile, camel & barramundi. Dessert was also very yummy. A group photo was taken, then all returned to the park after a hearty meal.

4/8/11

Our group left Alice Springs at 11am after some mechanical repair to Roy's car. We travelled down the road towards the Ross River Homestead. We stopped to have a look at Emily Gap (where Roy's car had a slight smoking problem). We then drove onto Jesse Gap where some good photos were taken of aboriginal drawings on the rocks & then went onto Coroboree Rock & ended up at Trephina Gorge for lunch. It was a lovely walk through the gorge with more aboriginal paintings on the rocks, the water being quite refreshing.

We then headed back to Alice Springs via the Stuart Highway & to Gemtree via Plenty Highway as we were unable to continue on our way along the Ross Highway due to road works as they had wash outs with all the rain they had had up there. We camped at Gemtree for a couple of nights. Along the way we saw some eagles devouring some road kill & a dingo running into the bush. We arrived at Gemtree at approx 5:30 & camped on the unpowered sites. We watched the beautiful sunset that night, had tea, talked for a while & then retired to bed.

[Bronwyn]

5/8/11

After a quite cool night & morning, the day had proceeded to warm nicely. It was an early start for Bronwyn, Norma, Sandra & Marie who set off to do some garnet fossicking & hopefully find a gem or two. The boys took it quite easy and sat around telling tall tales. Darryll & I took a walk around the park & checked out some nice looking gems in the store – alas I didn't get one. A wood hunt was had to get wood for our evening campfire. The girls returned from fossicking very dusty & a little worse for wear, but had a great day & even got some gems. Afternoon drinks & nibbles were had, then dinner around a superb camp fire. It was off to bed for an early start.



Binns Track (30th July – 28th August) 2011

6/8/11

Not quite as early a start as was planned & a change was made to our itinerary as there was a lot of fires burning in the Davenport Ranges & we were advised not to head that way. So we had to fore go our visit to Policeman's Waterhole. Had an enjoyable visit to the Red Centre Mango farm where we enjoyed a mango ice cream & wine tasting. Some purchases were made of the wine. Darryll & Joan noticed Mike & Annitta Pavey who wrote an article in the camper trailer Australia about their year-long travels around Australia.

After making inquiries at Wycliffe Well, we found out it was not possible to access Policeman's Waterhole, so we decided to make camp at Wycliffe Wells Alien Park, very interesting park with a number of animals & chooks. There were lots of murals on all the buildings & a number of strange statues around the park. Pleased to announce that no one was beamed up during the night.

7/8/11

9.00am start, heading towards Tennant Creek. Morning tea, stocked up supplies & a quick look around the town. Visited the Tennant Creek telegraph station, amazing buildings, still in good condition. We stopped at 3 Ways for lunch. There was a beautiful mural on the wall of the pub. Then we headed out to Longreach Water Hole to set up camp, absolutely breathtaking and very picturesque. An abundance of birdlife and it was very relaxing to watch. Put in a couple of yabby pots to try for red claw, alas none. Dinner then finished the evening with fruit salad by the lake. So ends another beautiful day.

[Joan]

8/8/11

An early morning sunrise was enjoyed at Longreach Lagoon which is on the northern end of Lake Woods. There was a lot of birdlife to view and photographs, as the light changed on the water. This is a good spot to remember for future Club trips. We were on our way by 9.00am, along the long dusty track back to Elliott and the Stuart Highway where we headed in the northerly direction. We soon passed New Castle Waters and the historic marker, Sir Charles Todd Memorial. He was heavily involved in the Overland Telegraph. The red ant hills are growing taller as we travel.

After 102ks, we arrived at Dunmarra Road House. It was a chance to fuel up the vehicles, plus pies and iced coffee, at 10.30a.m. We left at 11.15 after more photos and chat. It was starting to get hot. The traffic was busy heading south, travellers with caravans, road trains, and a huge army tank on a transport. At 12.45 we stopped for lunch on the roadside under a shady tree. Roy is in front today. Went a further 8ks from Dunmarra to Buchanan Highway, heading west on a gravel road to our stop at Top Springs (181ks). Because of the dust we were strung out, and Norma and Bronte, T.E.C. was out of contact. The country was mostly thick green scrub with dry long Mitchell Grass, ideal for the cattle grazing in mobs along the way. Another photo stop, wedge tail eagles flew over and passengers were lucky enough to snap one.

We crossed a number of creeks flowing north/south. Some road works slowed us down to 40ks on a bridge construction. At last we reached Top Springs around 2.30. We were introduced to Pauline, the Manager, and set up camp for three nights. Some of us found the pool to cool off, although not the healthiest looking water. Washing machines soon worked overtime on our dirty, dusty clothes after ten days on the road. We all dined at the restaurant and polished off huge plates of barra, mixed grills, chips, etc. The girls helped out by setting up cutlery for the variety bash and the boys played at bashing cane toads. Finally all found a bed for the night.

9/8/11

This was a quiet morning with the aroma of bacon and eggs wafting from the campers. There was more washing and Darryll cleaned his car to gleaming arctic white. Other campers have moved out early. The breeze was cool, but as the day goes on it gets hotter and we are chasing shade as we sat around our tents and enjoy a relaxing day. We checked out our photos



Binns Track (30th July – 28th August) 2011

on laptops. After lunch it was time to cool off in the pool with Bronte already there. During the day most of us made a big effort to complete the census form. How many bedrooms does one camper trailer have??? Tea was split with four in the restaurant and five making their own meal. After tea we viewed Sandra's photos on the lap top followed by a video of outback very rough 4 w driving to be continued in the next newsletter, and so to bed.

10/8/11

We were all up early and left Top Springs at 8.10 for a day trip to Camfield Cattle Station, 92km south/west. Wayne and Sandra's niece, Anna works there with her partner Blue (or Duck). Blue is in charge of the weaners. The property carries 28,000 head of Brahman cattle, mostly for sale, and a breeding program is also under way. Camfield covers 277,000 hectares, with numerous bores and creeks, and grass and timbered grazing land. On arrival at 9.30 Anna met us. In the next two hours we saw living apartments, laundries, sheds, Manager's house on the hill, and had morning tea in the dining area. Glenda, the cook had made a tasty cake. As the workers came in for 'smoko' they were all introduced. Then we drove out to view the new drafting yards under construction. More funds are needed to complete this very professional project.

After a relaxing lunch break we were off again on a 7km drive through creeks and tracks to RaRa Paddock to see very old yards once used for catching bullocks. Then we went on to Camfield River, a concrete water crossing got Blue and our fellows very excited, so a good time was had driving up and down through water and taking happy snaps. Sandra seemed to be a bit close to the centre of the creek and had some drenched cameras as a result.

Back at Longreach Waterhole and bore there were hundreds of cattle plus huge bulls, and some station horses around the water. Another big photo shot, with a group photo taken by Glenda on all cameras. It was time to say goodbye to Anna and Blue and thank them for the great day we enjoyed at Camfield. Then we drove back to Top Springs to start packing, sorting gear and fuelling up for Timber Creek. Top Springs was preparing for a big crowd from a local Camp draft, and 300 from the N.T. variety bash.

[Marie]

11/8/11

Today is a sad day as we say goodbye to Toppies (Top Springs) & also Norma & Bronte going straight to Katherine as Bronte was not well & needed to see a Doctor. Headed off along Buchanan Highway, this was dry & dusty with lots of termite mounds, birds & kangaroos. Saw our first snake going through a sandy creek crossing and a 4 foot black snake, thank heavens I was in the car!! Passed through Victoria River Downs Homestead, they had 5 nice shiny helicopters that all looked new!!! Turned back onto the Binns track and headed into Gregory National Park. A flock of beautiful black cockies with red markings greeted us at the start of the park. We had to follow the boab markers through the park to stay on the track. Had a bit of a stop at a creek & a skimming completion was started which Joan won with 6 skims. After Humbert River Station the track becomes a real 4WD track & at times is like a rollercoaster. The Humbert track is named after Les Humbert renowned for his stockman & bush skills. He was also a legend around the racecourse. The track is 62 km long

Plenty of feed in here, the grass is part the way up the doors of the cars & everything very green & lush. Camped at Top Humbert Yard, the waterhole is called Gunbunbu. Great spot but a bit of a tight right hand turn to get in & if it rains while you are there, may not get out for a while. Had roast for tea, we all put together the meal & shared what we had. The smell while the roast meats were cooking was mouth-watering. Fruit salad & custard for sweets then lots of jokes, laughing & tall stories told around a campfire while listening to the mopoke & other birds. Darryll, Wayne & I had thongs on & our feet were black, had to have foot baths before bed.

12/8/11

The track now gets rougher & the vegetation is up to my shoulder in places. If a bush fire goes through, there will be no stopping it. Along the Humbert River there were a lot of little finches. One of the river crossings was quite rocky & Wayne & I went through up & over the rock with a



Binns Track (30th July – 28th August) 2011

couple of great bangs. Guided the rest along the water edge & when we got up the other side & parked, our tow bar was at right angles with a definite tilt upwards. Darryll had a leg of the trailer floor facing the other way. When you get out of the creek & up the hill you are met by a magnificent boab tree.

Stopped at another creek for morning tea where the rocks were flat and the creek had lots of tadpoles & black small frogs. Came across some rouge cattle with the biggest horns you have ever seen & they wouldn't get off the track for ages.

The Humbert track ended & headed for Bullita Homestead. Before the homestead there was the stockyard which was well kept. Fantastic waterhole at Bullita Homestead, just makes you want to run & jump in, but you can't swim because of the crocodiles. Had a really hard life in the early days of the homestead; husband away for days on end wife on her own. Hessie Schulz wrote letters to her mother which they have in the homestead, very interesting to read.

Couldn't stop at Limestone Gorge as road washed away so stayed at Bullita Homestead camping area. Great walk down around the river, seen some dead cane toads and large flat rock like stairs to walk around. Had to drive through the river to do the Bullita stock route, think you might need a submarine to cross at this time in the middle you can't even see the markers. Says you can't take camper trailers & takes 8 hrs. It was getting quite hot during the days now.

13/8/11

On the road heading for Timber Creek, seen some lime green & pale red parrots & some bush turkeys. Road along here was in good condition. Not long before we hit the black top & into Timber Creek. Had a look at Policeman's Lookout, what a terrific place to camp and the scenery was stunning. It looks out along the Victoria River where people camping there reckon they could see the crocodiles shinning eye of a night down in the river.

Can't stay long in Timber Creek just a quick look around as we have to be at Victoria River roadhouse for helicopter rides at 12 o'clock. Headed through the Stokes Ranges, that at times looked like a big gigantic wall. Made it by 11:30, paid & met Andrew the helicopter pilot. He was from New Zealand working his way around Australia. Coolibah Air runs the tours and is owned by someone Jones who was on the TV.

On the trip they are flown along the river, down to see aboriginal paintings, wild donkeys, a palm valley & a Jabiru's nest. The group all agreed this was one of the highlights of the trip with Joan giving it a definite thumbs up. I was the only one of the group not to go on the ride. I treasure my life to much!!!!!! Had a walk down under the bridge to the river and when everyone had their ride & lunch we drove down to the old crossing before the bridge was built. What a beautiful place, the mountains are stunning and would look good at sunset. We couldn't help ourselves, off came the shoes or thongs & our feet were dangling in the river with one eye out for the crocodiles. Darryll was even gamer, he walked across.

Next stop Katherine & to catch up with Bronte & Norma whom we all had missed. Roy & Bronwyn blew into Katherine in a cloud of black smoke surrounding their car & camper. Me thinks something is wrong????????? Camp was set up then lots of hugs & stories to tell about our adventures. Bronte looked much better & was on the mend with medication.

14/8/11

Roy, Bronwyn, Darryll & Joan were up early as they were booked to go on the Katherine Gorge breakfast cruise. When they got back they raved about their cruise & breakfast was top shelf. We all left & went out to Edith Falls for a swim. The waterhole is awesome plus you can camp out there as well. Only thing there are so many people there. Swam across to the other side & when you hit the current from the waterfall it is like hitting a brick wall to swim against. I made it & climbed out to sit on the rocks for a rest & the next minute Darryll was there, he had walked & swam around the edge of the waterhole.

Headed back into Katherine & found in the car park of Woollies a car with two large metal boxes bolted to the roof of a station wagon. They will do anything up here.



Binns Track (30th July – 28th August) 2011

Back to camp & some of us went down for a swim in the hot springs at the back of the caravan park. Last time I was up here at around sunset the sky was black with the flying foxes by not one this time. BBQ for tea & was talking to this guy travelling around with his wife & dog with caravan & car 4 ton. On our travels we saw some big money on the road with the grey nomads.

[Sandra]

15/8/11

We rose at about 7.00am but I managed to go back to bed to read. We lazed around most of the morning while Roy went with Wayne to get what he needed to fix his car. When he was doing the repairs Bronwyn, Marie, Sandra, Darryll, Joan & I went shopping. We took way too long (surprise, surprise) and brought back lunch which was eaten quickly. We left at 2.15pm. to go to the Cutta Cutta Caves. Going through the caves was quite humid. The stalactites & stalagmites were really beautiful. We were told there would be abundant nocturnal life down there & I was worried about encountering snakes, but we didn't see anything. After leaving Cutta Cutta Caves there was more shopping to be done then back to camp for another swim in the hot springs and yet another late barbeque tea. We all went back to our camper & had coffee & cake after tea. Most of us thought we would not be ready to leave in the morning by 8.30 because we had so much mess to sort out after all the shopping we had done. Bed was early.

16/8/11

Well we almost made it. Marie & I went and filled up and everyone was ready to leave town by 9.00am. On the road again and we went past Edith Falls and on to Emerald Springs where we had morning tea. What a lovely spot. We need to remember this one for future trips as a place to stay. The pub had been renovated mostly by hand and the owner's wife did it. The bar is made out of old railway sleepers which she cleaned up & polished. Out the back was camping grounds and a dam. Further up the road and we turned onto Daly River Road. Then before we turned onto Reynolds River 4WD Track (start of Litchfield National Park) we picked up some fire wood to cook tea.

We stopped at a water crossing for lunch where we all cooled off our feet. There were heaps of gecko's scurrying around under the leaves. On the road again and came across the Reynolds River where I got out & walked across. It was deep. You could go straight through and the water was thigh deep on me. Bronte decided to go this way and got through OK but got a bit of water inside. The other way meant you came out of the water & around on sand then back in again & straight out.

Marie came next and got badly stuck in the sandy bottom, going the same way that Bronte went. She had about 6" of water in her car. Roy pulled her out with his winch and pulled her backwards until she could take the other route. Then it was Roy's turn and he decided to go the same way & he got stuck as well. Out came the winch again and he pulled himself out. While he was doing that Darryll & Joan went around him and got through OK. Wayne followed as well. This was our first real bit of 4WDing and we all enjoyed it.

Further along the track and we found Surprise Creek Falls. This was a lovely quiet spot and you really needed 4WD to get to it. It was a beautiful, short walk with 3 pools of water. I couldn't see the full picture because it was too steep to climb. Sandra, Darryll & Bronwyn went for a swim, they just couldn't resist. After leaving Surprise Creek we came across a Flat plain where the flat magnetic anthills looked just like headstones. It was really strange to look at. By now we needed to start looking for a camp site. We came out of the 4WD section and tried the 4WD campsite, then the 2WD site but they were both full. The Buley Rocks campsite was good and had room for all of us. It was a quick set up and then sit around the fire (which we didn't need, but had anyway) and enjoyed the night. What a great day of 4WDing.

17/8/11

It was Marie's birthday, Roy's cars 21st birthday and celebration night. We were rudely woken up by workmen with their rowdy car, truck, quad & bobcat. They were making a new path from the rock hole to Florence Falls. We all had a leisurely breakfast then went for a swim in the rock holes. It was a beautiful spot and very refreshing. We came back & had lunch before we went



Binns Track (30th July – 28th August) 2011

and had a look at The Lost City. This is just rock formations but they are so pretty. The shades range from black through different shades of brown then to cream. You can also make out shapes, if you used your imagination, took lots of photos.

We drove to Wangi Falls for a quick look and see. They were beautiful and you could spend a whole day there in the picnic area and swimming. Because we were going to cook a community stew we needed to get back to camp. On the way back Wayne's car started making very loud banging noises which we thought was a flat tyre. We stopped and nothing was flat but the tread was coming off. We changed the tyre while Darryll & Joan went on & started the fire. Everyone pitched in with donations for the stew. While we cooked the men went for another swim in the rock holes and cooled off. We just stayed hot and cooked. We all got dressed to our formal dinner, everyone in drag. What a Site. We drank the Mango wine we had brought at the mango farm and ate the stew. The stew filled the camp oven and was absolutely delicious. After a lot of joking, laughing and carrying on we were very nicely asked to tone down because kids were trying to sleep. This was at 9.00pm. What a good night was had by all.

18/8/11

After a leisurely pack up we went for a look at Florence Falls, absolutely stunning. We went for a swim & spent a lovely 1 1/2 hours enjoying the water & scenery, many photos were taken. We then proceeded on to Bachelor where we had lunch. There were a few mango smoothies consumed, then the last leg into Darwin & our campsite. The Shady Glen Caravan Park is to be our home for the next 3 nights. Nice caravan park but alas in the Darwin Airport flight path, not so good.

The girls managed to escape for a few hours & headed off to Mindil Beach sunset markets. Had a nice meal & caught a truly amazing sunset, then into the shopping. Some purchases were made then into the city for a walk around. Sandra, Bronwyn & Norma got propositioned. The boys stayed back at camp & enjoyed the left over stew from our formal dinner. Back to camp for coffee & chat then off to bed.

[Joan]

Up early again due to the workmen coming back at 7.00am. The plan was to pack up, swim and leave for Darwin. We had breakfast, packed up & were asked by the workmen what time we would be leaving. They wanted our camp site to put gravel in. It was so hot we decided to look at Florence Falls and had to climb down 135 steps to get there. I sat in the water where black fish were swimming around and nibbling my feet. Everyone went for a swim and cooled off.

When it was time to go Bronte stood there with his arms crossed and refused to leave. While climbing out we saw some rock wallabies feeding their young. We then drove to Bachelor and had lunch and a Mango Smoothie. It was lovely & green at the park, & the kids were having their sports day. We rang ahead to the Shady Glen Caravan Park for 3 nights. When we got to Darwin we set up & the night market in Mindil beach was on so the girls went to the beach & watched the sunset and did the market shopping. It was a good market. Highly recommend it to anyone. We found lots to buy and it was exhausting.

[Norma]

19/8/11

Today everyone decided to do their own thing. Darryll & I went into Darwin, parked at the top of the Esplanade & walked for 3hrs, checking out the sights & had lunch in the mall. Darryll did the rounds of the auto shops for some parts, then back to camp. All of us went to the Darwin wharf precinct for dinner, drinks & to watch the sunset. Took a drive out to Cullen Bay to see how the other half live. Then back to camp & bed.

[Joan]

We woke up gradually and did washing etc. We all went our different ways. Bronte, Roy & Wayne got a new alternator for Roy's car. This needed to be fixed today. Sandra & Bronwyn went to shop at Casaurina. Everyone needed something. Joan & Daryl went sight-seeing. Marie went by herself sight-seeing and Bronte & I ended up shopping at Casaurina as well.



Binns Track (30th July – 28th August) 2011

Bronte needed new shoes, his blew out. Casaurina is a very big shopping centre and we had a good look around. Everyone met up at the Darwin Wharf for tea. After tea we went for a drive around Cullen Bay (very upmarket), got some great night photos of the bay and on the crocodile statue. Bronte decided to buy some Mud Crabs so we waited for them to be cooked for us.

[Norma]

20/8/11

So starts another glorious day. Again off to do our own thing. Into Darwin, went to see Government House only to find it was not open until 3 o'clock. We went into Parliament House & the Supreme Court building. Then we went to woollies – yah stocked up on supplies. Took a drive out to the George Grown Botanical Gardens & had a picnic lunch. Drove down to Fannie Bay & Lake Alexander, very pretty, looks back to Darwin city. Drove around to Casuarina shopping centre for a bo peep massive complex. We went back to camp to catch up on notes while Darryll went to the BF2 bomber museum. Had a final BBQ altogether before we left to continue our travels. See you all back in Gawler.

[Joan]

Off sightseeing with Sandra & Wayne, we went to the Parap Markets, then onto the Esplanade along Darwin Harbor. This a very historic place with lots of monuments, viewing areas for sights of the harbor from different angels, beautiful seats to sit on which represent the 42 guns set up to protect the harbor during the war (the guns were never fired). From here we had a look at the outdoor theatre area and then on to the WW2 Oil Storage Tanks which were built to store oil for the ships during the war but peace had been declared before they were actually filled. They are now a memorial to the war. Lunch in Smith Mall (the main street of Darwin) and then drove around Fannie Bay, Lake Alexander and saw where the War Memorial was, Roy & Bronwyn were there. Back to camp for tea and we all ate the mud crab. That was delicious.

[Norma]

21/8/11

All packed & ready to go by 10am, goodbyes to Darryll & Joan with wishes for safe travel as they continue with their holiday while we start heading for home. Bronwyn organized us to go & see the Original Jumping Crocodiles which should be interesting. Can't say I was a fan to go & see them, but I have come away with a new understanding of the power & might of the reptile. One minute you see them then you don't, not a ripple or bubble anywhere. I have to admit this was one of the highlights of the trip for me.

We got to see Brutus which they think is around 100 yrs old & weights about 800 kg give or take. He was massive & to get ¼ of his body out of the water was no mean feat. Norma really got up close & personal with him when he hit the side of the boat with his massive jaws. Morgan the guide kept telling us to keep inside the boat as they think if it is hanging over the side of the boat it is food. As one German tourist found out when the crocodile took his sound device & camera on a tour once. The young crocodiles can bring their whole body out of the water; it was pretty amazing to see.

Also he has a Whistling Kite that was taking meat in its claws when thrown in the air or swooping down & taking it off the railing. His name was George & he just showed up. The river was on high tide & choppy, Morgan told us that because of all the rain that the river had flooded the banks & wiped out the crocodile's nests so no baby crocs this year. Thank you Bronwyn it was fantastic.

We went back on the road to go as far as we could get. Skipped Kadadu because time was moving on to have a proper look around so took a short cut along Old Jim Jim road. There is a military area called Mt Bradley training area. We made it to Goymarr Tourist Pack, Mary River Roadhouse. It was a pretty rundown part in the unpowered site area and had to walk a mile to go to the toilet, but looks like a new shower /toilet block. All into bed early as no fire tonight.



Binns Track (30th July – 28th August) 2011

22/8/11

Got woken by a crow so loud he could have woken the dead. After packing up, we went to look in the shop which is run by the aboriginals from the area. Very good & found out lots of information in there. Stopped in Katherine to see if we could maybe, get into Policeman's water hole but no go. Next stop Mataranka for their famous pie & again missing from the menu, chef on holidays. Not bothering anymore, I think they just made them up. Went down & had a swim in the hot springs, me in my clothes so they will be alright for the next few days. Next stop Eley cemetery for a look.

Camped at Larrimah for the night as we couldn't get into any rest areas, all were full. You need to be there by lunch time to get a spot. What a great spot, a zoo full of birds, wallaby, couple of crocodiles, snakes, rats, emus & lizards. Has a pink panther & Darwin stubby out the front of the pub. They had the highest bar in the territory, set up camp tea then Bronwyn & I went over to the pub for drinks & talk to the locals. Bronwyn & I could have had jobs if we wanted. Told everyone we were not leaving, they told us to go to bed as we had to be up early tomorrow to go to Tennant creek, what a let-down.

23/8/11

I think Larrimah would be alright to stay at if you were in a motel room but not the campers' right by the road as all night the road trains kept whizzing past. Not much sleep. Had a break at Newcastle Waters rest area & met up with Dinky the singing dingo on his way to Darwin to have an operation for a growth. Dinky's owner & his wife are going to retire soon, so no more singing dingo.

We stopped at the Outback Caravan Park in Tennant Creek. What a wonderful time listening to the Bush Tucker Man @ Gum Tree 69. Thin as a pole, long hair but bald on top but what knowledge he passes on. Told us about wobble boot, kicked out of home at the age of 11, can't read or write much & he kept saying "how good is that" he also loves Slim Dusty but I won't hold that against him. We got to taste grubs from the blood wood tree, taste like coconut, drink lemon grass tea & taste kangaroo tail. He makes up his own poems. Showed up plants from the bush, Jaray – Native bush vicks, Misitole berries you can eat. The best thing is you can go out with him for a day in the bush, I am going back!!!!!!!!!!!! Best \$5 spent ever.

24/8/11

On our way to Alice Springs today, a long & boring straight road. Had a few stops along the way and again could not pass the mango ice cream, the car just turned in. Lots of fires along the way or black burnt out area of where they had been, very smokey in places. Made Alice Springs in good time & booked into the Wintersun Caravan Park, staying for 2 nights. It gets cold at night & in the early mornings.

25/8/11

I got early to do some washing & Wayne could hear this talking & rattling of bottles, looked out and an aboriginal man was going to take Roy & Bronwyn's drinks off their table, he yelled out & he took off. Wayne thought about chasing him then realised he was naked & it would not have been a good look. I had a good laugh with that image in my head. Had to keep all things locked up now. There are signs around the park.

Norma & Bronte went to catch up with family, Marie went out to Standley Chasm, Wayne & I went to the Desert Park which was fantastic. We stayed for 5 1/2 hours just looking around it was so interesting. Lots of information & when you watch the film & they drop the screen the view of the ranges is breathtaking. You walk through all different areas of the territory wet lands, woodlands, sand country & you see the different plants & animals that live in that area. Out the front was the biggest display of Sturt desert peas I have seen.

We met up with everyone at the markets in Tod Mall, lots of jewellery, candles & hand-made soaps. Back to camp BBQ with all & bed.

[Sandra]



Binns Track (30th July – 28th August) 2011

26/8/11

We left our campsite at the Alice Springs around 9am. Heading towards Coober Pedy, we saw a couple of dead roos on the roadside & a few cows in the paddocks. The scenery & trees have changed (more native vegetation). There is an abundance of wild crimson hops scattered on the side of the road. We crossed over the Palmer Bridge and this bridge was meant to be built higher than the Finke River to avoid flooding, but this failed. Stopped at the Desert Oaks parking bay for morning tea & crossed the NT/SA border @ 12:30.

We stopped at a parking bay for lunch then headed towards Coober Pedy. The native hops were very abundant in this area. We stopped at the Cadney Homestead for a rest stop & ice cream a nice caravan park to stay at for future reference. We drove into Coober Pedy at 5:30pm set up camp then headed for the pizza restaurant for tea at the caravan park. Delicious pizzas were enjoyed by all.

27/8/11

We left Coober Pedy @ 9am after a quick tour through the main street & refuelled. We are now heading to Pt Augusta for the night. On our travels there were a few dead animals on the roadside. We arrived at Glendambo late in the morning & some needed to refuel & there was a family of emus in a paddock along the way. After leaving Glendambo there was a beautiful array of wild hops scattered all along the edge of the road with Sturt Desert Peas in between. We decided to stop for lunch at Lake Hart a great spot for photos.

After lunch we decided to travel along a 4WD track. We were up front when we got a message that Marie was in trouble & to come back. A couple in a caravan noticed that Marie's wheel on the camper was wobbling & yelled out for her to stop. After investigation Roy determined that the wheel bearing was shot. There was some difficulty getting hold of the right parts, between Roxby & Pt Augusta & as it was late on a Saturday afternoon. After lots of phone calls to try & get a part we all made the decision to set up camp for the night & Roy & Wayne would set off to get a wheel bearing or a car trailer to tow the camper early the next morning. We had a camp fire with the couple that were camped at Lake Hart & shared stories of our travel.

[Bronwyn]

28/8/11

Up early the next morning so Roy & Wayne could get away. Norma & Bronte had to leave as they had commitments back home & couldn't stay. I explored the area a bit & walked out a fair way onto the salt lake. Lots of good camping areas around the lake & the sunset over the lake had magnificent yellows & browns. Bronwyn, Marie & I had a lazy day waiting for the boys to come back, which they did around 2pm then it was all go, pack up, fix the trailer wheel & head for home. Only stops were Pt Augusta for tea & Pt Wakefield for a rest stop. We all said our goodbyes & headed off. Wayne & I got home around 10pm.

I would like to say a big thank to Roy for all the repairs he carried out not only to his car but to all others. Thank you to everyone on the trip for a fantastic time of fun, laughter & friendship. We all pulled together when needed to help one another & still talked about our next trip to where ever. We would just like to say that it was the best & most exciting formal dinner we have ever been to.

[Thank you Sandra & Wayne]

[\[Publisher: Unfortunately the trip pictures \(and I know Sandra has lots 😊\) had not yet reached the editor so the picture have not been include them in this article. Once they re-appear, this article will be updated and replaced on the web\]](#)