

Cecilia Müntzing and Raoul Kennedy

# Around Australia 2019





# Background

Raoul has a daughter living in Brisbane for many years and 2008 when we were going to Australia for the first time we asked the Austin Healey Owners Club of Queensland in Brisbane if they were interested in getting information about the 2008 European Healey Meeting in Halmstad. There were some members of the Queensland club who were registered and might want to know a little about the European meeting and other things. It resulted in Cecilia and Raoul joining a meeting at Jolly's Lookout have since then met and created relationships with a number of club members in Queensland. We have also attended the National Club's annual "Rallies" on four occasions.

A number of our friends in Queensland travel a lot and bring their Healeys to Europe. During the European Healey Meeting 2018 in Rust Germany we met some of them for the 3rd time in Europe with their cars.

One of the last evenings in Rust, Cecilia and Raoul were offered to borrow a Healey by David Leybourne to drive from Brisbane to Perth for the 2019 National Meeting. We asked if we could come back with answers. We had not planned or decided at that time whether we would go to Australia at all in 2019. This was in June 2018. We pondered and came to the conclusion that it would be fun to have a reason to visit Perth. In addition, the experience of driving from Brisbane to Perth was tempting. We started by signing up for the National Meeting in Perth and answering David that we were interested if his offer was still there. Dave replied that it did. However, the car in question was put up for sale. So if it wasn't sold, we could borrow it. We then started planning travel by informing our other friends that we started planning to come to Australia and the National Meeting in Perth. And we intended to borrow a car and drive from Brisbane to Perth and back.

Discussions with David L continued and we explored how we could calculate the cost and risk of borrowing a car from David. Unfortunately, we ended up not being able to take out rescue insurance that covered the route we were planning. The longest distance we were able to salvage on insurance was 50 km which is a short distance compared to the distance we was going to drive. We felt compelled to refuse the offer to borrow a Healey to drive around Australia. We couldn't predict the final cost. Buying the car wasn't an option for us either.

By that time we had gotten so far into the planning of the trip so we went for the alternative solution, renting a car. We were so determined to make the trip and cancel due to car was not relevant.

During the planning, there were suggestions made that a group would drive back from Perth via Darwin. It is really the only, alternative road, from Perth to the east side of the continent to, the road over Nullarbor and Port Augusta. Now it is not necessary to drive all the way up to Darwin. It is enough to turn right into Katherine 310 km south of Darwin. From Darwin it is 960 km to the take-off road towards Brisbane. Missing it is the next paved road east in Port Augusta another 1750 km south. This is just to give some perspective on the opportunities to get around Australia on paved roads.

A number of our friends have reported an interest in returning from Perth via Darwin. A couple of excursions were added. Some jumped off. In the end there were 6 Healeys and we in a rental car who booked us with hotels and excursions. 12 people. Two drove alone in their Healeys.

When we got away on March 30, two couples had no confidence in their Healeys so they chose the everyday cars instead. In the end, 4 Healeys and 3 utility cars started the trip.

## Preparations

Cecilia and Raoul arrived in Brisbane on March 21 in the evening and the rented car took us to Raoul's daughter, Caroline, in West End. Spent time with her and grandchildren over the weekend. Then we started to prepare for the trip. Complementary medicines and other stuff that is good to have on a long trip. We would be traveling for 45 days and stay in 23 hotels. Drive 14,000 km. Only bitumen roads and with good service at varying distances. We met some friends who would not be on the trip or at the national meeting in Perth.

## Off we go

**March 29th**, 83 km

At 2.30 pm we started from Brisbane to go down to the Gold Coast for an overnight stay with Judy Dooley and Neil Tregaea. They had invited us for dinner.



On our way to the Gold Coast

**March 30th** to Coonabarabran 756 km

The clock rang 04.30 am light breakfast and then departed 05.40 am. The first stop was Bangalow where we meet some other cars at 0700am. NSW daylight saving time. That is, one hour before QLD time. Hence the early start. Quick refuelling and then we set off for Tenterfield where Helen and Noel Standfast joined. We had a cup of coffee with scones. Then on in the rain to Guyra for lunch. Still in the rain to Coonabarabran, the goal of the day. Arrived at the hotel 5.45pm. Two more cars joined here. The roads were sometimes very crooked and hilly. Our rental car had to work hard on the slopes to keep up with Healey's and, before the first refuelling, pulled over 10 litres per 100 km. The gas consumption dropped to around 7 litres per 100 km as the roads became smoother and less hilly.

In the evening dinner at a Chinese restaurant near the hotel. Nice and tasty.



First break for coffee in Tenterfield



Heavy rain on the way up the dividing range

**March 31st** Wilcannia, 649 km

Departure 08:00 am. We as the last car. The second day we are driving towards common goals. We are now in the outback. There is nothing between the farms. Lots of roadkills, both wallabies and kangaroos. We can't see the difference.

The remains are located both on and at the side of the road. Those on the road are a great danger. They are always too large to run over. Tried to do it once but it slammed into the car so was just drive around. The animals are drawn to the roadside and the green grass there. The ground is very

dry and all other grass is brown. Both the driver and the co driver must keep a close watch on dead and live animals, Sheep, goats and wallabies. When trees shaded the road, it was difficult to see what is in the shade. Sometimes there was a dead animal. The soil seems red on this stretch. We took a short break at a gold mine outside Cobar. It was still in operation. However, they had gone from open cut to underground mining from the bottom of the open cut. In Cobar we refuelled and had lunch.



Goldmine open but far down an entrance to the underground



Wallaby by the road

Today's goal was a hostel outside Wilcannia west of Cobar. For the evening it was ordered a barbeque for everyone as there was no restaurant close. It was really good and we were served by a girl from Scotland and a guy from Canada. Grilled meat and lots of other good dishes.

At the campground, wallabies hopped around and were completely fearless.



Nice dinner under the blue roof



Noel under a car. Trevor's car this time

It is autumn and chilly and the blue woollen jacket comes in handy. Cool in the morning 10-11 degrees but it gets around 20 degrees during the day.

#### April 1st to Port Augusta 623 km

Depart 08:00 am to be able to take a break in Broken Hill to visit the Pro Hart Art Gallery. Wash the cars. Yesterday we had passed a road work a few kilometers with watered the gravel road so all the cars got dirty.

Pro Hart, a miner, had very good touch with paint and brush made himself very famous for his natural landscapes and socially critical paintings. Pro Hart's home is now a permanent exhibition of his life and many of his paintings. Interesting and educational. He liked Rolls Royce cars and painted one of his RRs at the turn of the millennium. It is on display in the gallery.

In the tourist information, a man told us that the number of inhabitants in Broken Hill is now about 18,000 but was previously about 35,000. He also told us that the flowing Darling River is currently

completely dehydrated. Normal rainfall at this time is usually 100mm. They've have received 19mm.



Pro Hart Rolls Royce



A intersection in Broken Hill. Empty.

Very much roadkill on the road before Broken Hill. After Broken Hill less roadkill. We drove on after washing the cars towards Peterborough where we had some tea in the park that Noel and Helen offered.

The route down the mountains to the lowlands below was fantastic. We filmed Helen and Noel in their Healey. The destination of the day was Port Augusta and a hotel in the city. Despite 623 km, there was time to buy beer and other goodies. We picked up Indian food and ate in an outdoor room of the hotel. 11 degrees in the morning and 21 in the evening.



Burnt and brown. Flat and wide views.



Down hill and winding highway. Noel drives his Healey.

Port Augusta is at the far end of Spencer Bay. The city also has a declining population as its importance as a hub is disappearing. In addition to the railways in the north-south direction and west-east direction meet here, so do the main roads. The only paved road to Darwin east of Perth begins here.

#### April 2nd to Ceduna 468 km

After breakfast and moving out of the room, we decided to have a coffee downtown. Pam and Trevor, the older couple, have managed to lose their car key, so they would go to the locksmiths to get their luggage lid open. After coffee we went back to the hotel to see how things were going. The boot lid was fixed, although cannot be locked.



Iron ore mine in SA



Wheat fields forever

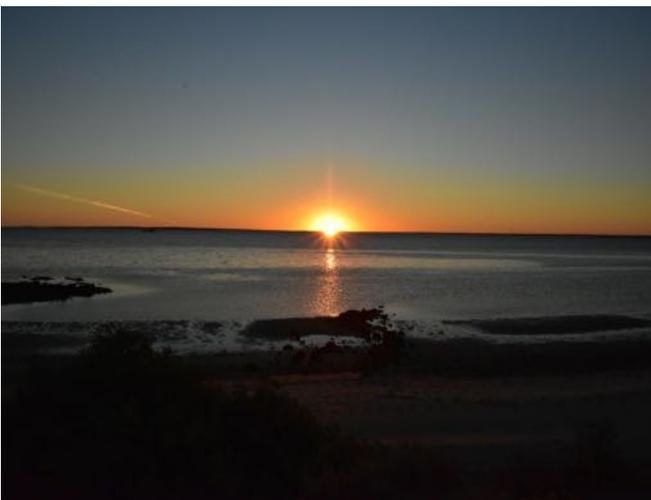
We headed off on the next stage out on the plains west of Port Augusta. Passed a couple of old iron ore mines and saw our first "Roadtrain". In South Australia clearly marked that the truck is loooong. Top speed 80 km/h.

Of all the cars we have overtaken, only a few are trucks. Today we overtook our first highwaytrain. It had a wide load of 5 tyres for mining sites. The cargo was at least 3.5 meters wide and drove slower than other trucks. Cars with caravans is common. 4wd UT and a caravan with high clearance. UT = utility vehicle. SUV with flatbed we would call it in Sweden. Two or 4 doors.

The first stop was Kimba where we refuelled and bought ice cream. We were told that Wayne and Lyn who were driving a station wagon with their Healey in tow, had run out of diesel. Wayne rolled the Healey off their trailer started it and drove to the garage and bought diesel. Lyn had to sit in the station wagon and wait.

During a couple of hours we pass huge fields where the grain has been harvested. At regular intervals about 100 km, we passed huge grain silos. Always at the railroad. All of them we saw was painted white and belonged to Viterra. A Canadian company dealing in grain. The landscape has changed and the earth is not so red anymore.

Arrived as early as 3:30 pm at the hotel in Ceduna. Few hours in the car today. We were given the opportunity to supplement our camping equipment which was, to say the least, inadequate. Now we have equipment and have storage so we can make some kind of breakfast. Wine glasses we have borrowed already. No wineglass.... no wine at sundowner. We learnt that the hard way.



Sun sets in the Antarctic Ocean in Ceduna



The Jetty in Ceduna

The hotel is nicely located on the beach. After checking in, we took a walk out on the jetty together with Neil and Judy. There was a net enclosure for swimming. Sharks and jellyfish is common in the

area. However, there were some boys who jumped from the pier and they jumped in the water outside the net enclosure.

Then Noel and Helen and we went out to the oyster place where we had dinner. Cecilia ate 6 oysters with different accessories, 2 pairs had different flavour and one pair had no flavour. Everyone else ate fish and chips on whiting, a white fish. After that, little sundowner at Fay and Ray's with wine and nuts. It has been very hot again, so those who drive Healey have had a sweaty day. The sun sets beautifully in the southern Antarctic Ocean.

#### April 3rd to Madura Pass 668 km

Breakfast 07:00 am and start 08:00 am. Noels and Helen's car did not start, so Peter and Jan and David and Di stayed to help them with troubleshooting and repair. Shortly after Ceduna we went through a community with a school where a lamp flashed and a sign showed that the speed was 25 km/h. Adrian did not see the sign and was stopped by the police and was fined \$280 for speeding. We passed him and waited down the road. It was apparently not the first time on this trip, he had been fined for speeding in previous days.

We saw a tree full of frying pans dangling. Someone starts and hangs an old frying pan. Then others filling up. Not much roadkill in the morning.



Straight road in flat countryside



Look out for animals the next 340 km. That's 3 hours

After 300 km we came to the village of Nullarbor which is really just a motel with restaurant, petrol and airstrip. The gasoline price was at least 50 cents more than Ceduna. On the other hand, it is there. We had probably done the whole day trip on a tank of fuel, but in the outback you do not take any chances. The temperature was 20 degrees in the morning and rose to 30 at most before it went down to 25 in the evening. Nullarbor mean no trees. It was treeless and is one of many National Parks. It extends 1100 km along the coast and some distance inland. A rain-poor area along the southern Arctic Ocean. The last 50 km there was plenty of roadkill.

Fairly monotonous road and special nature. The signs show that you should watch out for camels, wombats and kangaroos along the way.

We stopped at a lookout where you look out over the Antarctic Ocean called in this spot the Great Australia Bight and the coastline. At this point the road was less than one km from the Ocean.

Noel and Helen and the other two cars came about 1.5 hours after us to Madura Pass. It was the ignition coil that didn't work. They had a spare one. Nice that it was possible to fix.

We and Neil went up to a lookout point just above the motel. Great views of a fantastic landscape. We met a cyclist from UK who had cycled to Singapore from England. However, he had flown over China. From Singapore he had flown to Perth and was now on his way to Sydney. wow! He was accompanied by two cyclists he had previously met in Malaysia.

A local man in Madura Pass told us that the kangaroos smell that the rain is on the way and is they head towards the Antarctic Ocean. As they are heading south many kangaroos are hit crossing the highway.

We had sundowners in the carpark and dinner at the restaurant at the hotel very nice food.

Pam and Trevor found their car key. It was in Pam's purse in another small purse...

When we went to bed, there were some raindrops.

#### **April 4th** to Esperance 745 km

Today we had set the clock at 06.00. Cecilia lit the lamp when the bell rang. Raoul went into the shower. Then the power went and it became pitch dark! The shower worked anyway. We got our morning shower. But there was no tea and Cecilia had to paint her eyes with the help of a flashlight!. Little cereal and milk with cheese and biscuits for breakfast.

The outage occurred when the chef switched on the stove in the kitchen, the big generator should start but the damp night had settled in the switchgear so there was an electrical short. The small generator that supplied the hotel with electricity at night was also knocked out. We left at 0700 hrs. It was a bit hazy and foggy before the sun really warmed.

Some roadkill. A large kangaroo was standing on the highway. We slowed down to await what it was going to do. It turned around and jumped back across the road just in front of our car! A little cool. Since most did not eat breakfast because of the power outage, we stopped in Cocklebidy 91 km. They had no problems with power that morning so got coffee and cake. But one car was missing. Given that there was a lot of kangaroos on the road both alive and dead, Raoul, with Noel as a passenger and scout, turned back in our car to see if something happened. Mobile coverage was only available at the Madura Pass hotel and at Cocklebidy and not in between. Raoul and Noel met the missing car after a few kilometers and turned around. Then we had to brake hard for a large kangaroo. It was the only time on the whole trip we were close to run over an animal. Peter and Jan Cowen had turned around to retrieve a forgotten toilet bag.

Got to the longest straight stretch in OZ which is 90 miles, ie 145 km. Cecilia drove that route!

Hotel for the day was booked and paid in Esperance on the south coast. In Norseman it meant turning left. There is no paved road to Perth, which is due west. One road goes north and one south from Norseman. We went on to Esperance, to be there early evening in order to have a look around the place. After checking in at four o'clock, we took a walk along the waterfront. We didn't Walk very far as it looked like it was going to rain. Once back to the motel it was the Sundowner. A reservation was made at a Chinese restaurant about 300 meters away, so we walked there. Nice and good dinner!



A part of the 90 mile straight



Harbour gardens and the Esperance Yacht Club

#### **April 5th** to Perth 716 km

7th day and last day to Perth. We got off last of all and got a little panicked about not arriving in Perth on time so we missed driving the Twilight Beach Road and have a look at the Pink Lake. The others did it and "cost" them only a quarter of an hour or so. At lunchtime when we thought we were last, we were almost first. Well we stopped and had lunch, first alone then a few more cars arrived.

We were recommended to go back a few km and look at a rock formation in the form of a wave. It cost a few dollars to park but we borrowed a ticket to put in the car. It was an interesting rock formation that looks like a wave that is breaking at a beach.



Noel in his car. But is this the way you drive a car.



The wave is really breaking

Noel's car has problems with the overdrive. It does not work. As a result, he cannot drive more than 80-85 km/h.

This part of Australia has also large grain fields. Rolling landscapes and large plains about each other. Alternating and nice to drive.

Came to Perth in time for the welcome drink and buffet where we recognized a number of old friends. It was tiring with the high noise level in the hall the buffet was in. We went to bed early.

Total from the Gold Coast 4635 km in 7 days. Actually only 660 km per day. 7 hours out of 24hrs in the car. Equivalent to a short working day. New impressions every second/hour/day. An amazing time in a car.

Just driving in the same direction for 7 days. ie: in a west direction and still in Australia.

We had the sun back of us in the morning and did not drive late so we never had the sun in front of us in before we reached the hotel in the afternoon.



## In Perth

### April 6th In Perth

Raoul got up early to avoid morning rush. Went on his own with GPS to find a car wash. Although we would not show our rented car. We wanted a clean car to mount the rally decals on.

Today it is show and shine in Kalamunda. But first we had to show up for taking a photo at 0900 on an address to be photographed with Perth CBD in the background. Then to Kalamunda, a suburb of Perth. It was market day and the Healey Club had their show and shine. It was a warm and sunny day. The Healey cars were ordered to drive in colour order from the hotel. Everyone with the same colour leave at the same time. We with a tin top car drove among the last. When we arrived, most cars were presented by colour regardless of model and vintage. A nice way to present the cars.

Driving with a road book is not always easy. Especially if the roads are new for you and the signage does not exactly match what the road book shows. Starting the GPS and the road goes down a tunnel it became difficult to know where the road is as the GPS update does not work without a heaven above. The result was that we lost orientation and hooked on two Healeys who we thought knew where they were going. But they appeared to be as lost as we were. Finally we got on the right path.

At an intersection after exiting the motorway, we came to a two-way road for right turn. The Healey in front of us was driven by a man from the US. Driving on the right side of a one-way road and stressed, he only looked to the left then turning right. (In right-hand traffic you do not have to worry about traffic from right at right-hand turn. Now it was left-hand traffic and then you have to cross the lane for traffic from right.) There was a collision. Ironically, with a left-hand vintage half ton truck US made. Well no person was injured. Two drivers and one passenger were shaken. Cecilia and Raoul, too. Realizing that it could have been one of us making that mistake. After that we were very carefully with right turns. Looked and checked properly that no one coming from either side.



Pushing casualties away



The cars on parade in Kalamunda

We arrived at Kalamunda and looked at all the cars. There were a lot of people there due to the market day. It was possible to vote for the best Healey.

The market was big and versatile. Cecilia ordered a dress from a lady who sewed them herself. A classic straight dress in a very nice fabric. The Lady didn't have Cecilia's size made up, so she would sew one up for Cecilia and send it to Raoul's daughter in Brisbane. We were also saw Vinnies, second hand shop where we bought each checkered shirt for tonight's theme, Wild West. Back to the hotel we took it a little nap and prepared the evening's activity. Drinks at half-past six with photography. Then buffet and dance to a western orchestra. Cecilia got a talkative man next to her who talked continuously. He told everything about his Healey which he built from the ground up for 22 years and just finished the other day! Also about his career in the mining industry in various international companies.



People in the market



Cecilia at the market

### April 7th In Perth

It is customary for ladies and gentlemen to split up one day at each national meeting. The ladies had the chance to see other things than cars and technology, Cecilia went with other ladies on a trip on the Swan River to a vineyard and tasted wines.

Raoul got a seat in a Healey and went to 2 museums. The first was Western Australia Motor. The Museum has a large collection of cars mainly made in Australia of course. The museum has cars from all over the world and for all types of use. Everything from private cars to racing cars of all kinds. The main number was Daniel Riccardo's Red Bulls Formula 1 car from 2014. It was interesting and fun to see all the different cars saved for the future.

One of the finest vehicles was a very nice replica of Daimler's Reitwagen. A motorcycle made in 1885 driven by a steam engine.



Replica of Daimler's Reitwagen



Ladies passed under the Matagarup Bridge



Collection of new and old cars



On the route to the Aviation Heritage Museum



### 2014 RED BULL RB10

Designed by Adrian Newey for the 2014 F1 season this car was driven by Daniel Ricciardo. The car did not perform to expectations early in the season but was later driven to 9 podium finishes including placing first in Canada, Hungary and Belgium. The body is a composite monocoque structure with the suspension comprising aluminium alloy uprights, carbon-composite wishbones with springs and anti-rollbar, front and rear. The engine is a Renault Energy FI-2014 1.6 litre (98 cu in) V6 with turbocharger driving through a Red Bull 8 speed semi-automatic transmission and the car weighs only 691 kg. The fuel is an F1 mix of mainly 102 RON petrol and 5.75% biofuel. Both wet and dry tyres are supplied by Pirelli.

The car you see here is on long-term loan to the Motor Museum by Daniel Ricciardo.

The Aviation Heritage Museum has a large collection of aircraft of all ages. Interesting to see all of these aircraft and how to be able to fit all of them in the available space. There is, among other things, a Tiger Moth from the time of the First World War. Great to see these planes that was flying over Europe during wars. They flew so long distances and many hours. Don't understand how the crews coped with the stress and pressure that it meant flying so many hours over hostile land. Not very many made it through the entire war.

A DC 3 flying from Brisbane to Perth overnight with just one stopover! Was it possible to sleep in these planes? Sound-proofing was minimal. The "bed" was more a hard bunk. You cannot have been very productive next day.

All of these aircraft have been refurbished to a large extent by volunteers who work exclusively with interest and passion. It is truly an experience to see these collections of cars and aircrafts. Future objects will come in as well. This means that the museums also live and reflect today. Fantastic.



New and old airplanes in a very nice mixture



Bunks in the overnight plane from Brisbane to Perth

Cecilia went with Judy, Di, Jan and Helen on a river trip on the Swan River. They took a taxi down to the quay. Quarter at ten the boat departed. The skipper also guided along the way. After driving under a number of bridges, the river narrows. Nice villas mixed with recreation areas along the riverside. After an hour they were offered some cheese and biscuits. With the cheese they were served and taste two kinds of white wines. Two hours later they arrived at the Sandalford Winery. There was a guided tour of the wine production. After the tour there was a two course lunch served

with a salmon dish and a baramundi dish. Very tasty! But first, they tasted six different types of wines, three white, one rosé and two red. At half past 2 pm it was time to go back again. That was also a two hour trip. Taxi back from the quay to the hotel.

In the evening dinner at the hotel. Cecilia was not hungry after the very nice lunch. Two magicians entertained and they were wonderfully talented!

#### April 8th in Perth

The excursion today was to a restaurant outside Perth. Goosberries Restaurant. There were really scenic views on the road there. On the way there we drove on a road with 4 very steep slopes. The slopes were so designed that when one was in the upper part, cars disappeared in front of you in an even steeper part of the slope. Unfortunately, it is impossible to illustrate with photos. Neither I nor Cecilia was prepared then. On the way back we tried to video and photograph but the illustration of how steep the slopes were. But it cannot be shown.

We also passed the place where Peter Brock died. Peter was a successful car driver who won many car races with large margins. He crashed at the scene in 2006 with his Mercedes during a rally. There are pictures and videos on Youtube from the site.



Memory of Peter Brock



Cars lined up in front of memory of Peter Brock

Each Rally has a competition between the different states and continents. We were a total of 6 teams in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. Then a team from the USA and Europe. In the European team it was Raoul and an Englishman. The challenge this time is to fly a drone 30 meters and drop a load on a target. The Englishman did the best of all and got a total of 5 points. That gave the victory to the European team.



Cars lined up at Gooseberries Restaurant



Drone with cargo for release on target

Today was the last night for the Rally with Gala dinner in the evening where the awards ceremony took place. All remaining material for the rally was auctioned off. All to cover the cost of the Rally.

Once back we rested a little before it was time for "gala dinner". A little speech and thanks to everyone in the organizer group who did a fantastic job! It was table seating this time and we got nice table neighbours. Adrian and Marita that we know before. And Elaine and her husband from Melbourne. They are so nice! The orchestra that played was very good. Many songs from the sixties, which is needed in this collection where most people have reached a considerable retirement age.



## April 9th In Perth

Breakfast as usual and then brunch/tea party in Sir James Mitchell's park near the hotel. The cars were lined up in an arch so you could take a photograph of them with the Central parts of Perth as a background. To get all the cars on the bank you had to go far from them so that there were small cars far away. And backlight in addition.



Cars lined up at Sir James Mitchell's park

Later I drove Neil to Repco for the purchase of engine oil. He has filled over 5 litres in his (Judy's) race trimmed 3000 the last 4600 km we have driven. The gasoline consumption was 15 litres per 100 km. Gasoline prices vary between stations and locations. Between 1.34 and 1.90 AUD. The highest price was at Nullarbor. Farthest from competitors and expensive transport to get the gas there.

I do not dare to think of our total cost of gasoline! Let's discuss it when we get home. We have more than 9000 km left.

Jan, Helen, Di and Cecilia went to town to do some errands. The hotel offered free transfer to town! Got changed the extra glass on my phone. About half the price here compared with Sweden. We also ate a small lunch downtown.

Some return home today, others stay a day or two. We head north on Thursday morning.

We and 11 others and had dinner in a pub a few blocks from the hotel. It was messy and loud as it is in a pub, but good food!

We said goodbye to Judy, who is flying back to Brisbane early next morning to work.

## April 10th in Perth an extra day

Has not recorded the tripmeter since April 4th. Now it is 7404 and the 4th it was 6290 which means we have driven 1114 km since we left Esperence on the south coast. It was 716km to Perth and then we have driven 398km in and around Perth. Including our excursion today.

We went via Kings Park to Fremantle and back. Kings Park is a lookout point just north of central Perth, a botanical garden with a memorial to all those who have fallen in war for Australia since WW1, from Western Australia. There are over 7000 names!

After having a coffee and a look around we drove on the north side of the Swan River out to Fremantle where the river flows into the Indian Ocean. Fremantle is also known for the port of the Volvo Ocean Race. It is the largest port on the West Coast besides the specialized iron ore and oil ports.

Freemantle is a city that, according to our friends, was quite run down prior to 1987 when Australia lost the America's Cup. It was revitalised in the period architecture. Now it is a bit trendy to live there. We visited the naval museum which was quite nice. The building itself is very nice.



Statue remembering all fallen soldiers from WA



View from Kings Park looking west

Back to the hotel we took it easy until dinnertime. In the evening we went to Charlie Mitchell and his wife in Kalamunda. They had a thank you and goodbye party at their house. Each of us brought their own drinks. Then they ordered pizza. The pizza delivery had to come a number of times to cater for the crowd. We were about ninety people there.

We didn't stay that long because we were up early next day in order to get away on our trip back to Brisbane via Darwin.



Farewell Party held at Charlie and Linda Mitchell's place

## April 11th to Kalbarri 603 km

The bell rang just after five. A shower and packing for breakfast at 6am. We left at 6.55. We wanted to leave Perth before the morning traffic. Now we drive north. We are seven cars (4 Healeys and 3 tin tops). A total of 12 people. A 33 day 9000 km trip 17 hotels 18 days of driving. Average 500 km per day. All accommodation is booked so now it is important to arrive and in time to the hotels. Above all, find the hotel if we don't drive together.

Our 12 persons are Neil Tregear in a Race 3000, David Railton in a 100, Noel and Helen Standfast in a 100 and Diana O'Hara and David Leybourne in a 3000 MkIII. Glenda and Wayne Rabnott in a Mazda 6, Jan and Peter Cowen in a Holden Commodore and Cecilia and Raoul in a Hyundai Accent. In this context a small car but has proven to be efficient. The speed limit has been 110 km/h so far and it is a nice pace for the Hyundai. The pace is set by the 100s.. 100 to 105 km/h, not much faster, in convoy

After about two hours, the exhaust pipe broke on Noel and Helen's car. Those two have struggled hard in order to have their car in order for the drive to Brisbane, in Perth, and now they have just began the trip back and having problem again. Peter and Jan stayed with them as they have spare parts in their car.

The rest of us stopped to see The Pinnacles 190 km north of Perth. Cecilia and Raoul took the opportunity to buy fly nets to put on their heads. The nets came to use a day later.

The Pinnacles are sandstones that have been below ground level in rounds. They are remnants of mountains that have weathered cracks between the stones that remain. Over the years, sand has first been collected around and later above them, and then eroded away. Now they stand as statues in the sand and are easy to roll over as they are like inverted icebergs with most of the mass above the sand. The sand was so firm that it could be driven. There is a 4 km long track around the area to see them up close and in some places parking lots to get off and walk among them. Strange experience to walk among these stones with the same colour as the sand all around. The sand is really yellow here and quite rough.



The Healeys among the Pinnacles



View over the Pinnacles

We drive northwards and take the closest road to the coast road called Ocean Road. The landscape is very sandy. The hills in the background are sand, not mountains. In one place we stopped and looked at the water which was completely turquoise green! We stopped for a coffee in Cervantes. Then we continued to Geraldton where Noel and Helen were in a workshop with their car. We all met up there. Then we left to drive the last bit to Kalbarri.

After checking in, we went down to the beach to look at the sunset. It was really nice there! Back to the hotel we had dinner at the hotel. Quite expensive but good. We did not order any wine with the food. Cecilia have been given tablets by Diana O'Hara to help her foot. Likewise ice to cool the foot. Let's see if it helps.

## April 12th to Denham

After breakfast we shared a grilled lobster. Helen and Noel had got it as bonus when paying for the exhaust repair. Nice bonus!

We started by going down to the beach and looking again in the morning light. Then on to Denham. First stop in a place called Billabong after 2 hours. Billabong is also a name for a small collection of water, or really a snippet of a meandering stream. Billabong was collection of houses with a petrol station as the main attraction. As always, good food and good coffee served.



Stop for coffee at Billabong



On the road to Denham. Flat and red landscape

An hour later we saw the sea again. A deep bay of the Indian Ocean. We stop and went to Hamelin Pool. It is partly an old telegraph station where you can look at old pictures from when the station was built and the old buildings that remains. From the shore you had a fantastic view of the beach. The most troublesome thing was the flies and the heat. We have fortunately invested in fly nets covered our hats. We went down to look at the stromatolites. These are microscopic organisms that grow on sediment and become large and sponge-like solid hard. It takes a few thousand years to grow. Actually it's a form of bacteria.



The telegrafstation at Hamelin



The Stromatolies at the Hamelin Beach



Boats moored by the beach in Denham

At the telegraph station, they told us it was 52 degrees hot on Christmas day there! The campsites for caravans and trailers are popular places for travellers. Some backpackers came in with a kangaroo baby joey whose mother had been hit by a car. It was placed in a pillowcase in a box. The nice lady in the shop has to bottle feed the kangaroo until it can handle itself.

Then on to Denham, which is today's goal. We had plenty of time to take a walk along the beach before dinner and visit the tourist information as well as watching the beautiful coloured sea where the boats were moored a short distance from the beach.

Sundowner at the hotel pool and dinner at a nearby pub.

#### April 13th to Carnarvon 353 km.

From Denham we drove to Francois Peron National Park and a Homsted or sheep station. Buildings were preserved without renovation. Due to its proximity to the salty sea, the rust has taken its toll. Interesting to see how primitive it was with steel roofing on all buildings. No insulation. Cold and drawn in the winter hot and unpleasant in the summer and all these flies all the time.

Each sheep station includes a Sheep Shearing shed and housing for the shearers, who were a traveling group and had their own chef with them. Kitchen and dwelling was kept by the farmer. The chef had to work really hard. Have breakfast ready for the shearers when they wake up and then all meals during the day.

Water supply in Australia is different from Europe. There are two large underground aquifers. One in Western Australia and the other one in Eastern Australia. In the west, the water is 400 to 600 meters deep. Under a layer of clay that holds it in place at this depth. But with such pressure that a drilled well is artesian. In addition, on this farm the water was warm about 40 grC. The salinity is high almost that it can be called brackish water. It is possible to swim in but not for use in the household.



Water is salty and 40C. you can have a swim/bath



The salty winds take is toll of steel

We met at a school class at the age of 12 with a guide. The guide talked about what you could find in the area and what it looked like before the English arrived. The guide told us that when the nature reserve was formed, there were 15,000 wild sheep and 12,000 wild goats and a number of cats and foxes. All these alien animals (Feral) must be exterminated from the National Park area. The sheep have largely succeeded to exterminate. The goats are about to be eradicated. It takes time and costs



Cecilia a shearer in spe?



Kitchen stove!

money. Several methods are used. One is to have traps at water holes. Another is to have a Judas goat. That is, a goat equipped with a GPS transmitter. This goat does as a lone goat would do, seeking out other goats. After a while, you use a helicopter and find out locate the herd to which Judas goat has joined. The Park Ranger shoots all goats except the Judas, who feel lonely and looks for a new herd. Where again the new herd are located and killed.

Cats are more difficult to remove. Cats want to catch their own food alive. With ferromones it has been successful in tricking the cats into eating poisoned feed. Poison feed is also used by foxes and wild dogs. The poison used, is based on a native flower that native animals are not sensitive to. But cats, dogs and foxes die.

The goal of this National Park is to restore flora and fauna to what existed before the first whites came to the area. Cats, rats, foxes and hares are "alien animals" foreign animals. That is, animals that immigrants have moved into the country.

Given the large surrounding areas, it is understandable to use poison instead of traps or firearms.

We were not supposed to drive on gravel roads but we could not resist go for a short detour out to the coast and take a look at Shark Bay. it was only 4km from the road. After that we understood why we were not supposed to drive on that kind of roas. It was like a washboard. We drove very slow and careful although the car shook due to the corrugations on the road. Just waiting for parts to come loose and fall off. But nothing did.

We had a nice look at the lookout at the Eagle Island. An island where de Malgana people collected Wanamalu eggs. later the immigrants collected guano for fertilising their crops.

The seagrass is growing in the waters by the shore. Continuing shallowing the water due to the grass traps sediment and the water by the shore gets shallower. The seagrass fields are meadows for the Dugongs that are an endangered species.



Eagle Island in Shark Bay



View north. Photo taken at a few degrees south of the topic of Capricorn. I.e 22,5 degrees South

After the National Park we drove 240 km to drink coffee and meet the others who fed dolphins etc. in Monkey Mia. It was then only 110 km to Carnarvon which was the goal of the day.



Flat and sandy. Just bushes no trees



Today we had the showers on distance

The hotel in Carnarvon was the first hotel that was fenced with high fences and gates that were closed all night. Felt a bit dangerous to go outside at night, but it is most thefts that are committed, not robbery and abuse.



A view of Carnarvon from the old railway bridge



A brief shower hit us

The usual sundowner and then a good buffet dinner.

The hottest day is 33 degrees and it starts to get humid. Saw powerful showers in the distance. Only a very brief shower hit us.

#### **April 14th** to Coral Bay. 242 km

It rained lightly when we left Carnarvon. We experienced all types of weather from sunshine to heavy rain on the way to Coral Bay. In several places we passed flooded floodways. It was probably a decimeter of water along the way. According to Noel Standfast, if you see the centre line it is shallow enough to pass through. Found it out only afterwards, couldn't check if I saw the lines at all crossings. Drove slowly through. The car did well. The water did not go up to the body. The Healeys did it too, they got wet from the top as well.



Noel in the water



Arrived in Coral Bay not clear sky yet

Arrived at Coral Bay at eleven. In an hour the sky was clear and the sun shone. There are very many people here at the campsites because of Easter holidays. Eventually we got our room and were able to go down and have a swim. Absolutely lovely in the water! We took turns swimming Cecilia and Raoul several times. We went back to the hotel and changed.

Then we had lunch, grilled chicken and salad. Walked around a bit and checked if we would buy t-shirts to swim in. but everything was too expensive due to the Easter holidays.

In the evening Noel and Helen arranged food for all of us. There were shrimps on the barbie to have on a sandwich with grilled sausage with onions. We used the camping sites barbecue area with tables and benches. A very nice initiative from Helen and Noel.



This is the closest shark we came to



Helen and Noel made dinner at the BBQ

### April 15th still in Coral Bay

Raoul had an easy day just some laundry to take care of. He could not understand why the machine did not receive the coins. Eventually, he understood that there was no electricity. After some time the electricity came on and he managed to get the machine going. He picked up the clean but wet laundry that hung it partly indoors. Should have put all the laundry outdoors. The indoors did not get dry before dark.

Cecilia was out snorkelling with some others in the group. At 10 am down at the beach where the boat comes and picked us up. It was a boat with glass bottom so you can look down under the water. We went cross fantastic coral reefs in various forms. Some look like cabbage heads with all leaves, others look like rag braids. After half an hour it is time to immerse yourself in the water with snorkels and frog feet. What an experience! It's like swimming in an aquarium. Fish of all sizes and in fantastic colours. After half an hour we change places and snorkel a bit more. The corals here have 50 shades of brown. According to Noel, the corals on the Great Barrier Reef are considerably more colourful and varied.

When Cecilia came back we had lunch and a coffee at the cafe. Went for a swim. Rested a few hours



The Chef himself David



The BBQ area. We never found the lamp switch but the lights were on anyway.

before it was time for sundowner and dinner. Today Di and Jan have arranged burgers and salad for dinner for all of us. Yummy!.

Tomorrow we go on to Karratha.

### April 16th to Karratha 570 km

Drove from Coral Bay 0730. Cecilia drives in Neil's car in the morning. Raoul change place after a couple of hours. Nice to ride Healey on long distance. It was hot today our Hyundai measured up to 35 degrees. It doesn't get any cooler in a Healey. However, Neil's car kept the engine temperature stable.

On the other hand, it was highway speed all the time. No slopes. Got some photos of oncoming trucks and some more. Termite stacks and burnt bushlands along the way.

For a while there are areas with low vegetation. Then suddenly there will be large areas with high stones, Cecilia thought. Neil said it was termite nests that look like rocks. If you cut off the top of them, you can see all the hallways inside.

Raoul driving alone last in the Hyundai last in the convoy when a Lizard suddenly appeared on the highway slowly making its way over the bitumen. He stopped and took a picture. Since he disappeared from Neil's mirror Neil stopped and went back for Raoul. Lesson learned; do not stop!



The lizard



Healeys turning left onto NW Costal Highway from Burkett Rd

Then it suddenly becomes quite mountainous. These are volcanoes that are quite flat at the top. So the landscape really shifts.



It is high numbers. Port Hedland is for next day



Forest fire some years ago. Flat landscape



Maitland Industrial Estate. Built under Neil's supervision. We just passed it outside Karratha

After 2.5 hours we stop to refuel and stretch our legs at the Nanutarra Roadhouse. Then we change again so that Raoul goes with Neil and Helen goes with Cecilia. In addition, Wayne and Glenda change car with David and Di. We stopped at a parking lot to wave all the Healeys to pass, Mazda with Di and our rental car. Di pulls out Mazda again onto the highway and takes off to catch up to the line of Healeys. Behind a crest comes a police car that makes a U-turn in front of the Mazda and stops it. Speeding ticket for Di. What bad luck.

We continue our path. There are a lot of cows along the way. The area is agricultural countryside. The scary thing is that the cows have the same reddish-brown colour as the ground and the stones. We see a number of dead cows along the highway that have been hit by cars or trucks. As we begin to approach Karratha we turn towards Dampier, which is a town entirely based on the mining and gas industries here. We stop and eat for a while in a cafe overlooking the ocean. We have passed a train loaded with iron ore on the road. The train is 2.1 kilometers long and is pulled by six locomotives!



The Healeys at North West Shelf Visitors Centre

Looked at a natural gas plant which is one of the largest in the world. Purifies, cools and condenses natural gas for transport as LNG to other countries on vessels. Natural gas is also piped to Bunbury City south of Perth. 1690 km. Impressive facility. Karratha city exists only because of the oil & gas and associated facilities constructed in the area. The city is a modern and very clean.

We go to the hotel and check into Karratha. Raoul goes shopping and I throw myself in the pool for cooling down. When Raoul comes back, we unload everything. It's Sundowner at 6 pm. Should we go out and eat? Some want, others don't. There is a small Thai jam here nearby.

The hotel room's air conditioning was the worst we have been to. It was so noisy that we had trouble sleeping. We turned it off and tried to sleep anyway. But it was too hot.

#### **April 17th to Port Hedland 319 km**

Left Karratha at 0800. Stopped at Point Samson, Noel and Cecilia wanted a swim in the Ocean. Saw sign on the way to Post Simson about a Museum, Cossack, and wondered what it was. Google had the answer that it was a partially renovated abandoned city. Built by baitfish and turtle hunters in the 1880s and 1890s. But the cyclones that passed in a belt right here changed the conditions for the outcome. After a couple of cyclones the port became shallower due to slurry and the two cyclones also ravaged the city. Operations were moved partly to Point Samson and partly to Broome.

Drove on for a snack at the Whim Creek Pub which unfortunately closed for good. The pub was an old classic pub and stop along The North West Coastal Highway.

We continue driving to the motel for the night. The hotel was more than that. Camping areas, caravans, and accommodation for people working in the mining industry here. They come here and work maybe three weeks and then go home for a week. It's a bit like working on oil platforms. It's a pretty worn area.

The temperature was up to 37 degrees according to our car. Helen felt ill when we arrived at the hotel. Felt better in the evening. Both Cecilia and I preferred to sit in our car today. 37 degrees is hot even if it blows in an open car. In the evening we went to the restaurant at the hotel and had dinner. It serves as a dining room for anyone who lives in the hotel. The restaurant was more like a canteen. But a lot of food to choose from, and plenty. Many dishes were made to order.



The main building in Cossack today



Nice rebuilt house in Cossack



Whim Creek Pub



Trucks outside Port Hedland. We met a couple.

We had paid for a food package; Dinner, breakfast and a takeaway lunch, do it yourself. Leaving at 6:00 am tomorrow to avoid some heat. We were advised not to leave before dawn due to risk for animals on the road.

**April 18th to Broome 609 km**

Woke up 05:00 am and then breakfast 05:30 am. Did not finish in time for departure 06:00 am as planned but at 06:17 am we left. Caught up with Neil, Dave and Noel and Helen at the first petrol stop after 200 km. Raoul changed car went with Neil as a passenger the next stop. Which was the Sandfire Roadhouse. On the way we passed the exit to 80 Mile Beach. Neil commented that it was the wrong place. It turned out later that it was the right place and we missed it! When we discovered the error, it was 41 km to drive back. 82 km back and forth.

The rented house in Broome worked well. Plenty of space for ten of us. We cook ourselves but don't have to clean after the stay. Ended the day with a trip to Cable Beach to watch the sunset. It was not special today.



The boats must be big in order to manage the waves on the Ocean.



Sandfire Roadhouse in WA



Sunset in Broome first night

### April 19th Good Friday in Broome 26 km

Breakfast in decent time, ie at eight o'clock. We decide to take a walk in the car around the city. We went down town and stayed at the lookout at the chinatown. Then we head out to the lighthouse. There is a footpath out to the cliffs which are fantastic. The sea has really shaped these cliffs. Then we go to Cable beach and walk a little above the beach. It's high tide. We have a coffee at Zanders by the beach. Then we decide to go down to the Port, ie the big harbor. We saw a nice restaurant right there at the pier that we walked out on as far as we could. There were some fishing enthusiasts standing and fishing.

We also visited a place nearby where people drop in and pull up their boats when they go out fishing. Then we went back to town and visited the Japanese cemetery. It is very aesthetic in Japanese way. Difficult to read on the stones as in most cases it is written only in Japanese, but beautiful. and well kept compared to the Anglo-Saxons beside. The heat hit us and we went back for some lunch in the house. After lunch we went down to Cable Beach and had a swim together with Neil and David.



This sign was at the boat ramp

The beach at high tide

The tide had changed radically so it was a bit to go on the beach before reaching the water. The water was really hot, so it felt like a single big bath! We saw the famous camels on the beach!

Since it is Good Friday today we ate fish and chips for dinner. Good!

### April 20th Easter Eve in Broome

Taken it easy. Be on display of pearl capture and pearl cultivation. Bought a two small smart bags. Cecilia bought three small bottles of fragrance on the market. Hot today a rain came in the afternoon evening and gave some relief. Staircase to the Moon occurs this night.

There was a market in the city today, so we went there. It was much like most markets, clothing, crafts and food and drink. Very hot. Then we were on a guided lecture about luggers, ie about those who picked up pearl oysters from the bottom of the ocean outside. Luggers are the boats they used and on which they could be out for several weeks. The divers were dragged though the seaweed by the boat.

They had to pick the oysters they could reach. the speed of dragging was determined by the boat or rather the captain of the ship. Workdays could be many hours under water every day.

But it was a hard life as a diver. Many drowned or got the diving sick. The working days were about 10 hours. They could not go to rest during that time. Peeing was made in a bottle. In order not to have to

do number two as they say here, they used opium. So some became addicts too. Very interesting lecture.



The Luggers was small boats



Air pump and a diving suit

The pearl in the shell mainly used for buttons. The pearls became a by-product, you might say. Eventually, the pearl buttons were outclassed by the plastic. Then the pearls became important and they started to grow pearls instead. It was a Japanese who figured out how to do that.

After this tour we took a turn on the town in the heat. Came back to the house eventually. Ate a little lunch. Suddenly, a heavy rain come.

Tonight is the full moon and tide coming in, so we will look at "The staircase to the moon". You gather on a special beach and watch as the moon rises. So we all went down. There were a lot of people. But great when the moon came up! Unfortunately a bit cloudy so the steps were not so clear. Then back to the house where we ate left overs.



The staircase to the moon



"Leftovers" only wine left?

#### **April 21st. To Fitzroy Crossing via Derby 535 km**

From Broome to Fitzroy Crossing via Derby as an extra excursion it was not on the road. A trip of 50 km easy trip extra but well worth the trip.

We stopped and look at the prison Boab tree on the road into Derby. A bottle tree used as a resting place when capturing indigenous people who would either go to jail or be used as slaves for pearl fishing in Broome, in the late 1800s. They were linked with neck chains, just like the slaves in the United States. A terrible handling. They themselves understood nothing.

There is an old prison in Derby too. It was terrible and used until 1975. Mainly for the indigenous population. They were punished for stealing food and possession of meat, which police then assumed was stolen from the farmers nearby. The prison was a concrete slab with rings used to chain prisoners if they became violent. The south wall was corrugated sheet metal and the others were sparse iron bars. There was no place for personal hygiene or no Privy. Just an open space.

The inmates may have a blanket to take over in the winter, no beds or something like it. They had to rest on the concrete. The blankets were not washed.



The Boab Prison Tree



The old prison in Derby

Went down to The Jetty and had a lookout over the sea. It was 4.5 hours to high tide. There was no water within sight, and the Seabed was bare as far as we could see. A couple of hours later, we were down and looked again and then the sea ran under the pier at high speed. The depth was several meters.

The pier is still used as a shipping port for livestock.



The jetty in Derby at 10.47 am



The Jetty in Derby at 1:05 pm

Before leaving Derby we stopped at an Art Gallery with Aboriginal art. It was an association of artists and it was led by the couple Narval. We were delighted with some of the paintings we bought. Also got a photo of us and artist MaryAnn.

We bought each one sandwich before moving on to the Fitzroy crossing. We arrived there at four o'clock. The hotel was in the middle of nowhere. In addition, is extremely expensive. The hotel is built on poles so as not to be flooded. Parking was in the shade below the rooms. It was very hot when we arrived, so we went to the pool directly. Lovely!

Usual sundowner by the pool. Dinner at the hotel. The restaurant was closed, but you could order in the pub and then we were allowed to sit in the restaurant and eat.



Mary Ann Cecilia and Raoul  
We did not buy this painting it was too big



Termite buildings in a flat countryside



The hotel in Fitzroy



Parking under the hotel rooms

**April 22th** to Kununurra 662km.

At night we woke up to a car alarm going off. Raoul went out and had a look but couldn't see anything. Then in the morning it turned out that a little pane in the back was smashed on Peter and Jan's car. They didn't even know they had alarm on the car! Nothing was stolen anyway. The thieves were probably scared by the alarm going on.

Drove off half an hour late to Kununurra. Two stops on the road to change drivers for the cars that have two. All refuel and buying water or something else to drink. In the open cars you perspire very much when the sun is shining and it is 37 38 degrees C in the shade. Noel and Helen drank 4 litres until the second stop. It's hot in a Healey. Admire Neil and Dave driving alone. Over 600 km up to 38 degrees. Well large parts of this day were "only" 32 but that is still hot.



Healeys resting in the shadow



On the highway north east corner of WA

We arrived at our Ibis hotel at three o'clock. It was unmanned, so you had to call a phone number and get a code for a box where the key and instructions were located. Unfortunately the pool was turned off for cleaning so we couldn't swim. Drove around in Kununurra in the afternoon. Bought chips for sundowners and looked at the view from a cliff of Kelly's Knob just outside the villas north of town.

We stayed at Ibis Style Kununurra and the others in cottages at Kimberleyland Waterfront Holiday Park. It sounds nicer than it was. In the evening we took the car and drove from the hotel to Kimberleyland. Sundowner with Neil and David by the lake, but first we watched the feeding of 2 freshwater crocodiles down by the dock. What was said was that it was an old crocodile that always came at a certain time, just before sunset.

We went in group to a restaurant that was almost closer our hotel than Kimberleyland. Our hotel had a high fence around the site and the gate was closed after sunset. Sunset is basically the same as nightfall at this latitude.



The Mirima Rock in sunset light



"Tame" fresh water crocodile at feeding time

#### April 23. Flight to Purnululu National Park.

Pickup at 0830 for flight over the Bungle Bungle Range to Purnululu National Park. We are 12 in the group and the plane, a Cessna Grand Caravan, took 14th including the pilot. A passenger who did not belong to our group came along. All were placed by weight heaviest forward and lighter/less heavy backwards. Raoul has been hesitant if he was to go along, as he does not like being trapped in aircraft. When everyone else got their seat Raoul was without. He had to take the second pilot's seat. Photographed as much as I could but couldn't shoot properly. The flight went into hooks so everyone could see what was there to look at. First, the dam that is the cause of Lake Argyle. Then the lake itself formed. It's really amazing how it was possible to build a short but high dam wall and get such a big lake. The dam wall is built higher than the various overflows that exist in other places so as not to damage the dam when the water level becomes too high. The dam was filled at 2.5 years instead of the estimated time of several years. It was a lot of rain in those years. In 2011, there was so much rain that the wastewater road was about to flood. The dam is approximately 1000 square kilometers at the 30% level, then holds 5.6 cubic kilometers. At maximum level, it covers 2000 square kilometers. It can hold 35 cubic kilometers.



The passengers in plane



The Argyle lake dam wall

This whole area of sandstone mountains was formed over 350 million years ago. The mountains are like striped of different layers. The dark grey bands consist of blue-green algae. The orange portions have iron oxide protection over the sandstone. Therefore, it looks quite rusty. Bungle Bungle is of great importance to Aboriginal culture.



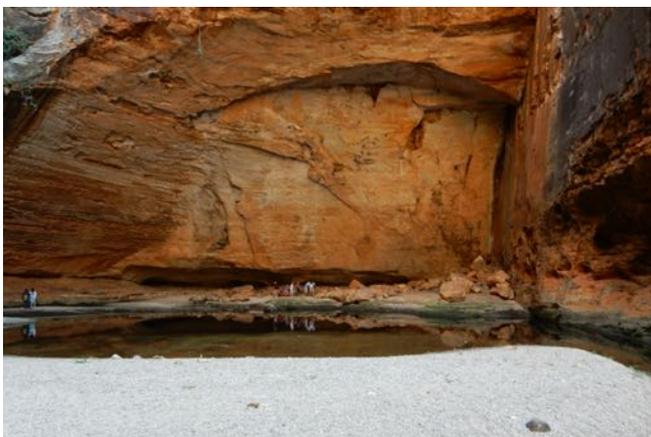
The irrigation canal from Ord river



Part of the Argyle Lake

The destination of the flight was the Purnululu National Park. Once down on the ground we took a 4wd bus to a place where we started a short hike. We had two guides one of which is indigenous. We also got lunch bag with us. Cecilia walked with rods. The sticks were good to have in the sand. It is very heavy to walk in sand.

These mountains are incredibly beautiful and you feel quite small. We walked a couple of kilometers in fairly mixed terrain and not quite easy. Also, the flies were quite troublesome. Eventually we came to a cave very large where we ate our lunch. It was a huge crack that widened at the bottom so that there is a space with "roof". Cool and nice after a hike in the flight-proof and warm weather, at least 37 degrees and sun. An amazing echo there.



Cathedral Gorge Purnululu National Park



The beehive shaped sandstone cones

Eventually we went back to the bus which took us to a Lodge that was built out here. There are overnight accommodations in a fairly luxurious design. However, we would only have some iced tea and fruit. We became little frustrated due to nothing more to see when the fruit was consumed. Back to the airport where the pilot was waiting for us. He is good at telling, so the one-hour long journey home went pretty fast. He told us, among other things, that in Lake Argyle we passed there are about 35,000 crocodiles. Freshwater types!

We flew over the world's most rewarding diamond mine, more than 17 tons of diamonds have been mined there. The mine has its own airport. Virgin Airlines and Aviair are the only ones allowed to land there. Virgin Airlines has regular flight to transport workers and diamonds back and forth to Perth. Aviair sometimes flies visitors in. The mine will be closed within 2 years, as it is no longer as profitable. It is the low quality of the diamonds that makes it no longer profitable. Wondering what is going to happened with all the houses and the airport.



The typical gorges in Bungle Bungle Range



The Gang going around Oz + one

Once at home at the hotel we took a shower. Then we were at the country club here and had dinner. We were only five of us the rest had dinner at their cabins. In bed early after a rewarding day.

**April 24th** To Lake Argyle by bus and return by boat on the river.

Picked up at the hotel for transportation to Lake Argyle Resort, the camp that was built for the workers who built the pond for Lake Argyle and then rebuilt as a campsite.

On the way we made a stop at the Lake Argyle Homestead Museum. A home from the 19th century where a family started a farm. The family moved with livestock and everything from Queensland about 480 miles and expected that it would take 6 months. It took 2.5 years!



Cecilia at the sign for the Argyle Homestead



Cecilia och Raoul at the infinity pool at Lake Argyle

When the dam was built, the house was torn down stone by stone and the stones were carefully numbered and placed in barrels. When ten years later they could afford to put it back up, most of the marks had disappeared. The house is very nice and nicely planned with a hall in the middle of the house that goes from front to back. You can open doors from both sides. On both sides of the hall there are the rooms which also have their own exits to the porch that extends around the



The boat on Lake Argyle



View from boat at Lake Argyle

house. This allows air to flow through the heat. Lines on the floors highlighted furniture and what the room was used for.

On to a boat that took us out on Lake Argyle. It is a freshwater lake/dam. There is a lot to look at in terms of scenery and wildlife. Birds, fish, small wallabies and cobwebs that are said to be incredibly strong. We moored to an island for lunch where it is also possible to have a swim in the 30 degree water. Lovely! Lunch consists of grilled fish that the guides cooked on board the boat. Add various salads, chicken and fruit, it becomes very yummy.

Lake Argyle can serve as a reservoir over several years. Without rain it will take 7 years to empty the pond. At the same time as heavy rain can cause the water level to rise 1 meter. In one day.

Return to the starting point, above the dam and then transport to the river below the dam. Given the temperature, it was nice to take a bus even though it was less than 1 km. The height difference was significant first up the dam then down the other side. We board a new boat that will take us 55 kilometers back to Kununurra on the Ord river.



Bats at day rest



White bellied Sea-Eagle



Beautiful bird but no name



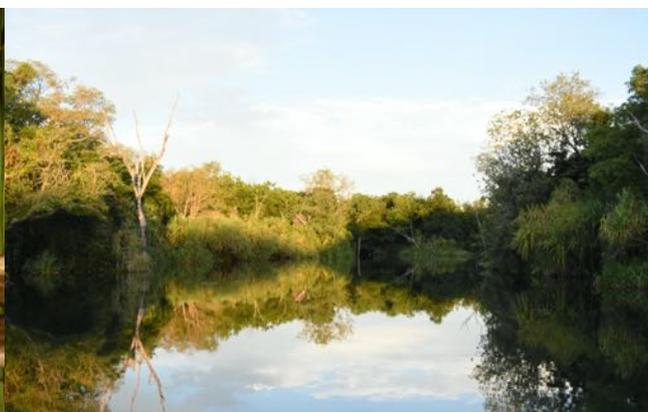
Kingfisher

It is truly a spectacular road with vegetation down into the water and amazingly beautiful. The guide who runs the boat is really knowledgeable and constantly shows different things. We see some small crocodiles. He shows areas where the crocodile females lay their eggs. 99% of eggs are never fully grown, as there are always dangers that lurk, such as birds eating eggs and adult males eating baby crocodiles. We made detours into the tributaries too to see more birds. Some parts of the journey took place at high speed and other parts slowly. It was an amazing experience to get to go on the river!

The lower part of the river was also a pond that holds water for agriculture in Kununurra and also a power plant. The water is used for irrigation of 35,000 ha of land and electric power for both Kununurra, the diamond mine and Wyndham.



A crocodile in rest



A tributary to the Ord River

We were served Afternoon Tea in an area with ceilings and benches. It did not appear from the river, but it was like corridor into the vegetation. We got pumpkin scones and a nice cake for the tea. At half-past six we were back in Kununurra and was transferred by bus to the hotels.

After a shower Cecilia and Raoul went down to Neil and David and then heated our pizza pieces from yesterday in their micro. Just enough for dinner today after a good lunch and Afternoon Tea.

**April 25th. ANZAC day to Katherine 512 km.**

We did not wake up to the ANZAC morning service at Kununurra. 04:22 am. Noel and Neil did.

Drove from Kununurra at 0730 am and refuelled at Timber Cross and bought ice cream. Ice cream is expensive here in the heat. Bad boring road in the NT but the speed limit is 130km/hr on bad roads. Should have a maximum of 80 in Sweden. The radii of curvature are for 130 in most cases



Stop at highway side for Noel. No ignition repair. We left the sat phone and went on this time



These highways are limited to 130 k/h for cars and 100 k/h for trucks. The highway is narrow

but still questionable. We kept 100-110km/hr. After Victoria River Noel and Helen got problems with the ignition again. They had been standing there for about 10 minutes when we arrived. We had the satellite phone so we handed it over to them if they didn't get the car started. They succeed a couple of times. When they had 15 kilometers left to Katherine, it is no longer possible. They called for a tow truck. At eight o'clock they arrived at the hotel. Peter and Jan were with them all the time while the rest of the gang went here to the hotel. Peter had the warning lights on his car and the portable refrigerator for too long time. This caused his battery to discharge. The tow truck driver's wife had to come with start cables!

Cecilia and Raoul arrived at Katherine tired and hungry. Could check in to the hotel despite the early hour. Around 1500. Took a dip in the pole which was "cold". That is colder than the air. Could be for a while then it got cold. It was comfortable in the heat. A cold pool is a pool with sun protection over. Without the sun protection, the pool gets warm.

## **April 26th.** to Darwin 300 km.

Had breakfast just two of us. We decided to go to the museum here in Katherine. Some will go by helicopter and a couple will go riverboat. Raoul drives Noel to the car rental company where he will rent a car. We went to the museum. A pretty enjoyable experience with many stories about people who made impressions and they were real adventurers. Northern Territories is a very harsh place to live in.

The first flying doctor also started here with his flying medical care. His aircraft is at the museum. This doctor was not allowed to join the Royal Flying Doctors, because he flew the plane himself. After a couple of hours at the museum, we felt it was time to have lunch before we started our journey towards Darwin. We found a very nice cafe where we had sourdough bread with avocado and drank delicious coffee.

Today is 4 weeks since we left Brisbane.

Helen and Noel's car was towed to Katherine yesterday and today it was in the workshop and the fault was found. A breakage of cable during the insulation on the lead to the ignition coil.



Pine Creek open cut gold mine



Bushfire probably light up by locals or the fire brigade.

We made a stop in Pine Creek where we went up to a vantage point where you looked over a lake that was once a gold mine. Very beautiful from above. We made a stop at a petrol station and then three Healeys from our group left. So we have a little control over each other. Just before 5 pm we arrived at the hotel in Darwin and checked in. Raoul didn't feel quite fit for eating out so we went to Woolies and bought some food to eat in the room. It was a quiet evening for us, which felt necessary.

Warm and moist. Unused to the "normal" heat in Darwin we experience it as very hot yet it is not the hot and humid season it is in the beginning of the tourist season. That is the dry and "cool" part of the year.

## **April 27th** in Darwin

We went out to the Veteran Car Club which is located in a hangar from 1934 in the middle of Darwin. Lots of different cars and engines, tools and much more that have to do with motor transport of goods and people. The hangar was the original Qantas hangar at Darwin airport. The Veteran club were given the hangar. It is located in what is now a residential area. The club has also acquired a variety of machines and tools that have been used and or can be used for the renovation of cars and the like. Volunteers and club members renovate their own and shared vehicles.

Then we took a walk around Darwin's old port area which is an apartment house area with restaurants. During WWII Darwin was bombed by Japanese aircraft. There is a tunnel in the harbour area that was used as a shelter. Cecilia went into it and had a look with Neil and David R.



The 1934 Qantas Hangar in Darwin



Old harbour. Now apartments and parks



The Parliament building in NT

After lunch, Raoul, Neil and David went south to a military aviation museum. Where there is, among other things, a B52 and an F111 fighter plane. A club with volunteers also runs this collection. Impressive! There are lots of artefacts in museums that are maintained and renovated by volunteers.

In the evening we went on an evening trip with a Lugger (Pearl fishing boat) for two hours. It was a BYO. So we brought our own wine and snacks. A very nice way to have a sundowner indeed. We were eight from the group on the boat. Then have dinner at a Vietnamese restaurant.

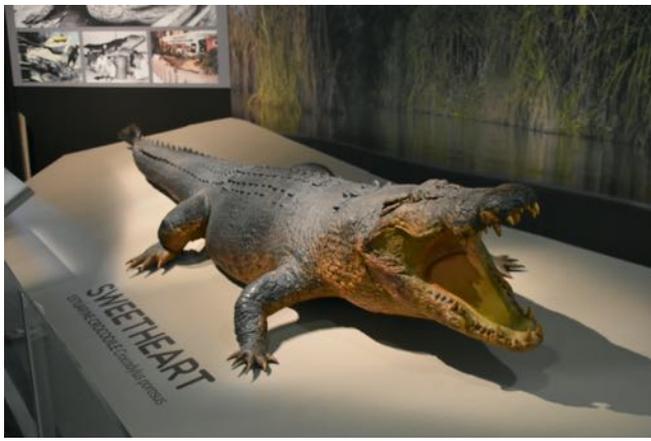
#### April 28th in Darwin

Today visited the Museum of Northern Territories. There is, among other things, an exhibition about the cyclone that hit Darwin at Christmas time in December 1974. It wiped out the entire city which at that time had a population of 48,000 inhabitants. At worst, the wind force was 200 km / h. Almost all children and women, as well as the elderly, were evacuated immediately because almost all homes had been broken. Darwin is a fairly new town since most buildings have been rebuilt from the mid and late 1970s.

There are also exhibitions about the animals in the area. A stuffed crocodile that met a tragic fate when it was to be caught to be moved to another area in order not to be close to people. The age was estimated to be between 50-80 years old.

An art exhibition called Moon and stars. Really nice paintings and some photographs and videos. A very enjoyable museum. Add no admission makes it cheap too. Then we went down to the shipyard area to visit the next museum, the Royal Flying Doctor's service. First we had lunch at the pier. Fish and chips of course!

The RFDS museum had two very interesting hologram movie screenings, partly about Pastor Flynn, who was the first to work actively to get the opportunity to fly a doctor in need in the outback, and also to fly a sick patient to hospital. The other was about a commander on a US



The Sweetheart



Mindil Beach Market

military ship who was in charge of the Catalina plane in the port of Darwin. He told his story how he survived the Japanese air attack in February 1942.

They also had 3D glasses where you could follow the attack and experience being in the middle of everything. It felt a little scary actually. Cecilia got a little seasick by some scenes. Furthermore, you could read about the punishments it is to get sick in the outback. A real shiver!

Common to all the museums in Darwin is that they show what happened during the war. Above all, the first attack by Japanese aircraft on February 19, 1942. Another 60 times, Darwin was attacked by aircraft during the war, but the Japanese military never landed on Australia's mainland.

The cyclone Tracy 1974 is also described in the museums. There were 48,000 people living in Darwin before the cyclone hit Darwin. Almost all children and women, as well as the elderly, were evacuated immediately because most homes had broken. New buildings have much stronger frames. But there are a lot of villas that look like they will not be able to handle the next cyclone.

Ended the day by going to Mindil Beach Market. A market with everything from food to clothes and other things that you can carry. The market begins at 4 pm and is open until 9 pm. Sundowner with Neil and David R at the hotel.

#### April 29th Darwin to Mary River Resort

Today is the first day of the highlight of the trip. A 4 day excursion to Mary River Resort and Kakadu National Park. Depart from the hotel at 0830 towards Mary River Wilderness Resort.

First stop Howards Springs. The first national park in NT. During WWII, it was an area of relaxation for officers. However, an environment was created for a bacterium that causes ear infections so everyone who bathed there got ear infections. It is not possible to swim there anymore but a water playground for children is built beside the original dam. The guide fed the fish so we could see a Barramundi and we got see the fast glans of a Barramundi that came to the surface very briefly and twisted the food a couple of times.



The fog dam dike



Howards Springs dam

Next stop Fog Dam. The dam was built for rice cultivation in the area. It is flooded during the rainy season. We sat in the bus which drove very slowly over a dike that shared the area. Amazing water lilies with beautiful flowers. We also walked a bit on the dike, though not too close to the waterfront. Walking on the dike was really forbidden but allowed by our guide on a stretch that the dike was a little wider. The water level was low which meant that the water line was more than 5 meters from the roadside. There are saltwater crocodiles in the area. You should be more than 5 meters from the waterline and pay attention to where there may be saltwater crocodiles. The crocodiles are fast but you should get away if you are more than 5 meters from the water. Also, crocodiles do not hunt for prey but wait for the prey to come close so that they can easily take it. 5 meters up on land is too far to be a sure win for a crocodile.

We saw the White bellied Eagle and white waders. This is rich water with plenty of nutrition. Lots of life of different kinds in the water and thus many animals higher up in the food chain, like birds in different forms. And saltwater crocodiles! They are far inland despite the fresh water. As the water comes into contact with the sea, the crocodiles enter. Fog Dam is low in relation to the sea outside so that the tide penetrate long into the rivers.

Then we went to a lookout called Windows to Wetland. A fantastic view of the wetlands.



From the lookout of the Window to wetland

Further transfer to Corroborree Billabong and a good BBQ lunch on the boat with sausages of crocodile and buffalo. The crocodile meat is very light and firm. The buffalo meat is dark and was quite spicy but tasty.

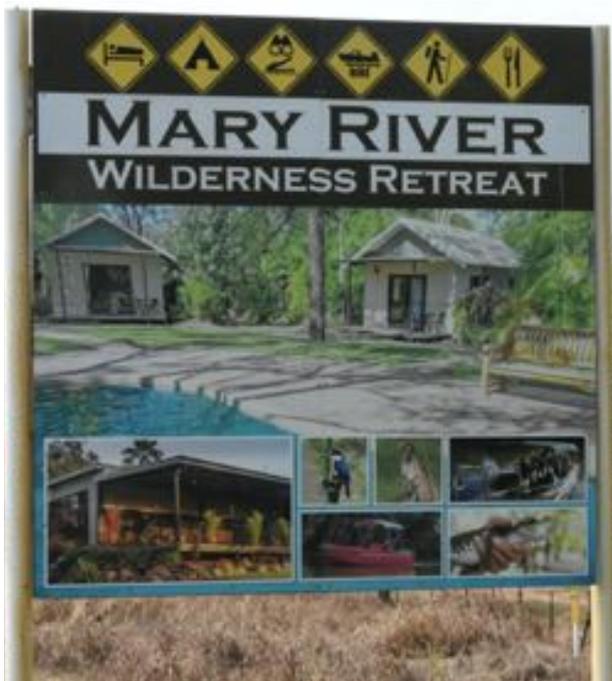
Riverboat ride on the Adelaide River. It is very beautiful and restful in some way. Lots of fish in the river and many birds flocking to them. Also saw two small saltwater crocodiles. It is supposed to be 7 crocs per km. We travelled at least 3 km so we should see 21 crocodiles. Probably the other 19 saw us before we saw them. It was warm in the water above 32 degrees and then the crocodiles are often a bit down, where the water is around 32 degrees which is their favourite temperature. When the water gets colder they come up to sunbathe/warm themselves in the sun.



White bellied Eagles at Adelaide River



Eastern Great Egret flying over water



First you see this big sign and then the small one. On the way in to the Resort!

After two hours we were back at the bus. Now it was off to the Mary River resort where we will be staying. We live in small nice cottages. Happy hour at five with a little beer and wine. We had our dinner together with older couple from Colorado and two couples from Brisbane. Very nice everyone.

#### **April 30th Mary River Resort**

Our car is in Darwin we at Mary River Resort so it will be 0 km with it and we will go by bus.

Continental breakfast at 0700 and departure 0800. Delayed one hour drive east to Mamukala after stopping at Aurora Kakadu Resort for brief information on where we were going. The bus automatic gearbox stopped changing up to the highest gear so the driver/guide decided not to take us further from The civilization and the opportunity to get the bus repaired and therefore returned home. It was an hour back as well. Back to the hotel at 12 noon and Cecilia took a swim in the pool. Then we made walk at the area around the hotel. Many warnings about Crocodiles and poorly marked paths.

Raoul saw a snake but it was more afraid of us than the other way around. At 4 pm we went on a river trip by boat to look for crocodiles. Two crocodiles could be spotted for those sitting in the right place in the boat we others saw one or none. The crocodiles were not cooperative at all that day. Too hot in the water according to the guide. At the end we hit something below the surface. Whether it was a crocodile or a log is difficult to determine. The guide quickly turned the boat around and drove back to the starting point. It was something he did not expect.

The dinner was fish ie Barramundi or a piece of meat. The pannacotta dessert tasted good. Nice company around the table.

#### **May 1st May River Resort**

Hot breakfast 0700. "Cooked" as it is called when you get a full English breakfast. The guide drove the bus we had yesterday to Darwin 115 km away and returned with a rented bus. A small one with small seats where you hit your knees in the backrest of the seat in front of you. No headrests either. But it works!

A long trip to Kakadu National Park. First stop was Cahill's Crossing, some 173km, which is the only entrance to Arnhem country. Western Arnhem land is prohibited for whites. It is an agreement with the indigenous people there. The transition to Western Arnhem lands on a riverbed road. This means that the road is a concrete slab over which the river water flows. Can only be used at low flow. The area is otherwise isolated.

After that we went north to Ubirr and looked at paintings. They are several hundred years old or more, and look amazingly fresh. The art of painting was a well-established tradition and with fixed rules about. It is storytelling about what they have done in the area and if has been dangerous and or rewarding. Except for the oral tradition this is the only way to tell others not present if it is a good place to be in or not. The indigenous people had no written tradition. Their language is only oral.

The path we walked eventually led up to a plateau where you had a fantastic view of the wetlands. Cecilia was really proud to be able to walk all the way without rods!

Over time, indigenous people have learned to use and read the nature and the shifts of the seasons in a unique way. People have been able to survive on this continent under the most extreme conditions. Dry and hot, humid and hot. Storms and fires. Water has been found daily in various ways during hikes. On rocks, stories have been drawn but only for initiates. Stories of good or missing catch are described in pictures. The pictures are found in places where you have established that you have resided temporarily or permanently. The latest pictures were made as late as 1963. Now there can be no more as no living people have been inaugurated how to do and thus can perform paintings. Many of these images are inaugurated. Inauguration can only be made if you have the right origin.

Raoul walked up to a lookout and had a look out over the flat landscape. It is a great view from the lookout.



Cahill's Crossing. The Port to Arnhem Land.



Paintings at Ubirr more than 2000 years old. Amazing!

Some of the group wanted to take a flight over Kakadu National Park so we left them at the airport in Jabiru. We others went and looked at a uranium mine that is next to Kakadu NP. That's if I understood the right world's largest uranium deposit. It is an opencast mine that is actually being wound up. Despite finding large deposits during the open pit. The area should be restored. Given that Kakadu is a World Heritage listed, that's good. But it is also a matter of profitability. Then we went to Jabiru, which is the nearest town. It developed and grew as the open pit started. Now no more than 500 people lived there. They have a hotel that imaginatively looks like a big crocodile! We went to a park where we had lunch. Much needed!



The rock at Ubirr



View fro the rock

After lunch it was time to pick up the "pilots" at the airport. We went to the Bowali Visitor Centre where the former airborne people had their lunch. Others had a coffee and looked around.



The Dam in Jabiru. A man was killed by a Croc where I am standing



The Uranium mining at Jabiru

We went on to Nourlangie Rock, where for an hour's walk we looked at paintings that also were ancient. We came to the cave first, which was superbly constructed so that it had shelter from all the harsh winds of rain, while the cool breeze was always there. There were tracks in boulders after cooking.

Time for a return trip to Mary River, a trip of about two hours. Everyone is a little tired after a long day. Dinner is ready when we return shortly after seven. No time for shower before dinner. Good dinner on Shoulder of sheep. Very good and tender cooked.

**May 2nd. Last day at Mary River Resort.**

Breakfast 0700 depart 0800 to a place where a freshwater crocodile and a saltwater crocodile are located within the lock and boom so you can view them up close still be safe. In comparison, the saltwater crocodile is much larger. Has a more powerful jaw.

Then a long journey to a presentation of termites. Magnetic and Boulders. They have different strategies for keeping the heat at an appropriate level. Boulders ventilate its tall buildings. In termite society is one queen who is the mother of everyone in a stack. When the queen dies after 30 to 70 years, the whole community dies and even the stack degrades. The stacks grow by 0.5 to 1 meter in 10 years. Magnetic termites build their stacks narrow but wide. Always with the broad side of the east west direction. This is to catch the sun in the morning but not in the middle of the day.



Cathedral termites. This is Cecilia on the picture not a termite.



Magnetic Termite building

Then we went to Florence Falls. For swimming or a short walk. The lunch was eaten at another waterfall high without too much water. Due to the lack of rain last wet season.

After lunch it was off to a Wangi Falls, new bathing place. Not so high, but with many pots to bathe in. Above 28 degrees in the water. Nice with not directly cooling. On the way to Darwin, we stopped at a mango farm that uses its own harvest for the production of ice cream and other both frozen and preserved products. This ended the stay at Mary River Resort or shall we say on the Mary River Resort bus.

It was many hours in a bus that was not made for a full grown westerner. Possibly school children. Doubtful if it was worth the price to see so little in such a long time and travel bus so much.



Florence Falls to the left and Wangi Falls above.



A little ice cream made of Mango.



Kelly the guide who never stopped

### May 3rd to Daly Waters 590 km

Departure from the Darwin City Edge Hotel was set to 0630 we were as usual a little later. Drove off at 6:45 from the hotel. By then, three Healeys had already started. We drove after the GPS and stopped for refuel at the first gas station. After that it was just to put cruise control on speed and head in the direction of Katherine.

We made a stop at a memorial to Forrest who managed to pull telegraph lines to this point from WA in 1873. When we were out on the road again, David and Di came running. They drove ahead of us right into Katherine. We rushed to the cafe we were at last Friday which was so good. It was just as good today! Tasty sandwich and coffee.

Then Cecilia bought a linen in a store next door. Talked for a long time with the girl in the shop who was very nice. On the road again after refuelling. Just such a monotonous road. So far it has not been as hot as last week the temperature stayed quite long below 30 degrees. We made a stop in Mataranka where we went down to the hot spring to bathe. Mataranka Thermal Pool is very fine in a palm forest. Lovely hot, guessing just over 30 degrees. This area belonged to Elsey station in the Never Never region. The book I ran into in Katherine is an autobiography written by a woman who in 1902 travelled from Melbourne to Elsey station where her husband had been offered a job in some higher position. Fun to actually have been there too. After the bath we went on to Daly Walters.



Well the highways are tiresome but when you meet this kind of vehicle you have to be on the edge.

Mataranka hot springs. The shadows are not fish.

The woman in the store in Katherine had told us that it would be a rodeo in the weekend tomorrow night in Daly Walters. It is strange, you drive and drive and it is nothing more than the road. So suddenly you come to a town with lots of caravans, horse transport and people. It feels very much like new builders' spirit. But nice! There is a pub that also handles the gas pump. You have to remember how much fuel in AUD in order to be able to pay at the bar desk in the pub after having fuelled up. Everything is based on trust. The pub itself is filled with abandoned bras and Panties hanging above the bar counter. In the outdoor room hangs the abandoned Flip flop shoes, etc. As well as a lot of number plates, preferably from AU, but I see some from Germany and someone from Hungary. Have they brought these from home to decorate the wall here? One wonders. We take an early sundowner and then go on happy hour in the pub and also have dinner there. Entertainment is provided by a woman singer who is staying there too. She sings well and many of the songs are well known. There was a sudden rain shower as well and it has apparently not rained here for eternity. In the evening another shower came.

Daly Waters Pub is an old pub that was built in the 1930s and has seen many things happen. Typical of a pub in an area with livestock husbandry is that the herds can be driven through the town street and that the cowboys drinks and fight as well as fire their weapons. Even against each other.

The station owners in the area have also threatened to burn down the pub. They served beer and spirits to their employees.

It was good food and good entertainment when we were there. Funny that such a genuine old jam can look like it would collapse anytime and serve very good food.

We are on the border of the prairie. At 590 km we have moved from the tropics, hot and humid, to hot and dry. The fall is coming and it becomes noticeable at night.

#### **May 4th to Tennant Creek. 400 km**

Raoul has a poor alarm on the phone so he woke me up at six when we could have been sleeping in until seven! It was intended that we would leave at eight, but pictures had to be taken so we left



Nice cars in front of Daly Waters Pub



Why have the ladies left these hanging in the pub

at 8.25. It feels cooler in the air and the temperature shows 24 degrees. We roll on and first stop in Elliott after a couple of hours of driving. The majority, we understand, of the population are Aborigines. As you drive through town you are struck by how some plots look like garbage heaps. All the debris is out in the gardens, empty cans, empty bottles, yes everything you can imagine.



Driving 400 km today not much traffic.



Burnt areas occurred some bigger. The landscape was always shifting

At the supermarket we bought coffee. Of all the appropriations in the store, it is understood that they are not easy with these people. For example, it says that for health reasons they do not sell alcohol to pregnant women.

We continue down to Tennant Creek. We are there at one o'clock. Check in at the motel. Then go down to a lunch spot called Memories restaurant. Reminds us of an RSL where you have to sign up to eat. Raoul ate a beef sandwich which was a great burger but with a beef steak in. Raoul enjoyed this different burger.

The thermometer started with 27 dropped to 25 before ending at 31 while driving. Lower temperatures in the morning due to clouds. Lots of flies in Tennant Creek because it hasn't rained this year. The dung beetles have not been able to bury the cud dung in the hard ground. The cattle suffer from drought and die. Both parts are good breeding grounds for the flies.

After lunch we sit for a while and talk to the restaurateur who is Indonesian. He has been in Australia for five years and is doing well in Tennant Creek. He works hard and hopes to become a permanent resident here. He has two children at the University of Sydney. He also has extra jobs and cleans up business. Really a diligent man.

There is a very interesting exhibition on the living conditions of the families here during this period and until the sixties. Very much based on photographs and letters written by the women. The men did not write any letters. The nationalities were many.

There was a difficulty of transporting people and supplies to Tennant Creek from larger cities such as Alice Springs. At one point, it rained so much that the roads and the railroad were washed away

and disappeared at 40 km. It caused the inhabitants to live on meat and bread. Livestock existed and the baker had a stock of flour/cereal. Fruits and vegetables did not come in for a long time. The highways were inaccessible south of Tennant Creek. New suppliers from the north had to be sought.

Exhibited items were mostly rusty scraped machines from the mines. There were a large number of mines. The gold rush caused many seekers, some of whom failed. The rush ended at the outbreak of World War II. After the war, it was the company that continued but now mining of gold ore has ended.

Afterwards we drove back to the hotel and it is stated that Saturday afternoons it is stone dead here. Few people hanging outside IGA. Sundowner at the hotel. We also ate a light dinner here at the hotel, a dessert for Raoul. Chocolate Brownie with ice cream and cream. Good ending to the day.

Driving today was easy. Most traffic found during the last 20km south of Threeways.

### **May 5th to Mount Isa. 700 km**

Woke up 05:30 am and departure 06:30 am, at dawn. We almost succeeded. Cecilia took the keys the room in order to leave it at the front desk but there was no place to leave it so she had to go back and leave it in the door instead. That made us last to leave.

First stop in Tableland after 200 km for coffee and sandwich then in Camooweal after another 270 km for lunch. Now we were back in Queensland. There are still a few days drive to Brisbane and 8 days left. Just over a week left of our 7 week tour. We are almost "home".



A perfekt day to ride a Healey! The highway will never end.



Three Healys resting in the shade

When we got to Mount Isa we went with Neil and David R to Lake Moondarah and watched. It is a dam from the Leichhardt river to guarantee the water supply for the city and the mines. It is very beautiful and serves as a recreation area. There is also a rich bird life.

Finished the excursion by going up to a lookout point in the middle of the city and looking out. From there you could see that the smoke from the chimneys had damaged the landscape. The smoke has been sulphurous and made the soil acidic. The result was that the vegetation killed and is now on the way back. Neil was the area manager in Mount Isa for a couple of years during his career.

Sundowner and dinner at the hotel.

### **May 6th no driving today sightseeing in Mount Isa**

Spent the morning at the tourist information which also has a demonstration mine, which is shown to tourists and others for a fee of AUD75. It was an interesting display of how mining worked a number of years ago. Hard, dangerous and vibrating work. There are fewer in the mine nowadays with larger and automated machines. Much from Swedish brands. It is also interesting that fans



A common size of a vehicle in the outback



Lake Leichhardt and a boat on tour.

and mining machines were also operated with compressed air. A great way to get energy down into the mine. Electric machines then came. Better ventilation and cleaner exhaust gas have now made use of diesel engines. Nice guide. It was interesting but sometimes a little difficult to keep up with the jargon.

Among other things, they tell about the different population groups who came there and worked in the mine. It became like little colonies. Among other things, there was a group of about 1,000 Finns who worked at the mine in Mount Isa.



Sandstone not yet fully dissolved in vinegar



Teeth and parts of skeletons after dissolved

After a break and some lunch we got a guided tour of fossils. A station in Northern Queensland called Riversleigh has found numerous fossils in various stages of sandstone. Everything from teeth to large parts of animals that lived on Earth 30 to 40 million years ago. We got to look in microscope at "small grains" that turned out to be teeth! Absolutely fascinating! The finds are unique. Many animal species that have not been found elsewhere, have been recovered. The sandstone contains mixers with small tooth parts and leg parts. Everything is stored in sandstone which in turn is a stored rock. Every winter the archaeologists are in the area knocking, blasting stone. The stone is placed in weak vinegar solution to dissolve the sandstone and obtain bones and tooth residues. Whole animals have also been found, ie the legs have been in the same place.

Sundowner as usual and dinner at the RSL club in Mount Isa.

**May 7th to Winton. 667 km**

Departure 0630. Healeys left 15 min earlier. In the dark, when all cats are grey. 13 kms outside Mount Isa the highway was closed due to an accident with an overturned semitrailer Reported for another 2 Hours. We had probably met all 4 Healeys on their way back but in the dark we could not see what kind of car we meet. Nor were we prepared to meet the Healeys. We turned around and tried to find another way but it was a dirt road.

Neil called, when we turned around on the dirt road, they were back at the hotel. We wanted coffee and were looking all over the CBD of Mount Isa for a cafe but only to find very close to the hotel it when we gave up. Shopped at Woolworths and then to the hotel for gathering and departure 0845. The road turned out to be free for more than an hour. The next stop was refuelling after 100 km.

After 128 km then beer at Crocodile Dundee's favourite pub. Walkabout Creek hotel in McKinlay. That is the tavern used as a backdrop in the Crocodile Dundee films. The interior shooting was made in a shed behind the pub. In front of the hotel is his car is on display. It looked even less drivable now than in the movies. This pub is really in the middle of nowhere. Not a house in sight.



The Walkabout Creek pub



Raoul, Neil, Noel and David in the Walkabout

Lunch, after another 76km, at the Blue Heeler hotel which is named after the dog breed Heeler that is a Cattle dog. This is really in the middle of nowhere too. People have written their names on the walls and made a contribution to Flying Doctors. Caps are also donated, so we donated a Austin



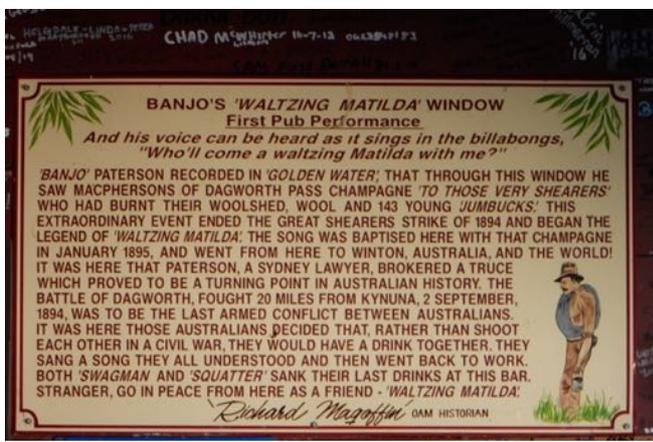
Healeys at Blue Reeler hotel



Caps at the Blue Reelers pub. The AHCOQ cap is the black in the middle far down

Healey Owners cap with contributions to Royal Flying Doctors.

Then to Winton which is a small town. With some hotels and the centre for opals in Qld. After checking in we went to tourist info which was surprisingly large and nice. The big attraction in town is Banjo Paterson who wrote Waltzing Matilda. After the sundowner we all ate dinner at the Gregory Hotel, a very old and, rich in ancestry, hotel. Small town but a great restaurant with many guests.



The story about Waltzing Matilda



Three Healeys on winding road

As always, I find it surprisingly many and large restaurants in rather small towns. There are not many people living in Winton. It must be the many people passing through that makes the restaurants going. We have booked all the hotels, for our trip, in advance so there have always been booked rooms for us. But some hotels have had no vacancy when we got there. This was true of this hotel as well.

**May 8th in Winton**

Cecilia and Raoul started the day by visiting the Music fence, a place with instruments made of all sorts of things. Then the truck museum next door. Some nice trucks from different ages. In addition, they had a lot of wrecks in the yard. Interesting to see the development of trucks over time. Also scary how undeveloped they were just 30 years ago.



Musical fence in Winton



Well renovated trucks from yesterday

We went down to the tourist info again to see what we would do more.

We decided to go to a place where you can look at dinosaur fossils. It was about 25 km outside of town. The first legs were found on the ground. This is when the soil or upper soil layer rotates by drying up the soil and the rain pulls down the top soil layer in the cracks. This means that what is in or below the soil layer is moved upwards. The sandstone below is also eroded so that what is in the sandstone is released and moved up to the surface. This is how the first fossil bones from a dinosaur were found by a station owner. Since then it has only been found more and more. We got to look into a workshop where volunteers sit and release fossils from surrounding materials. As well as an exhibition of the bones found. Some bones were in many pieces and jumbled. Good guides and good movies that complemented the experience.

The entire centre was funded by the entrance fees and volunteer work. On application, the museum receives grants from the state. A new road from the national highway cost AUD240000 and was received in grants.

Back to town we had lunch at the museum and afterwards we went into the museum. Much is about Banjo Paterson, the son of the city who wrote Waltzing Matilda. The melody is so associated with Oz that it was played for a gold medalist in the Helsinki 1952 Olympic Games. Also used as a military march and in other contexts. The ballad is about a swagman who camps at a pond and sees a lamb that he stuffs down in his backpack. Three policemen want to know what he has in his backpack. The



Real bone from real dinosaurs. Amazing



The Workshop to take away the stone from the bones

swagman does not want to go to jail. He jumps down into the pond and disappears. The hat floating on the water is all that remains.

The museum was interesting and told about many different sides of the countryside. For example, some movies have been recorded here. After the museum we went to the hotel and rested for a while.

Sundowner and dinner at the same hotel s yesterday.



Andrew Barton Banjo Paterson



The North Gregory Hotel. It is Majestic!

After dinner we went to the second oldest outdoor cinema, after Broome. Opened in 1918 but burnt down in the forties. Rebuilt a few years later. Now it is run by a non-profit association. They showed nostalgic films like Bonnie the rabbit, Laurel and Hardy. All black and white. We sat in canvas type sunbeds. The evening was chilly, so we got pretty frozen but it was nice!

### May 9th to Longreach. 185 km

Short drive today. Departure 0645 and arrived to Longreach before the tourist information opened at 0900. Over a coffee cup we discussed what we would do the next 2 days.

We booked an evening cruise on the river on Friday night at the tourist information. Up to Qantas Museum booked a guided tour there, over to Stockman's Hall of Fame. Was there 10:56 and managed to get into their show at 11:00. It is a Stockman who shows his horses, a quarterhorse and a stockhorse. They are obviously easy to train because they can do a lot. In addition, the stockman rode a bull (castrated?). Nice show. '

After the show we were told that David and Di have not arrived yet because their battery has caught fire and fire flames came out of their trunk. Poor coverage on the phone. But they got help from a local farmer who had an antenna that amplified the signal on the mobile phone enough to send text message.

We checked into the hotel and met the accident birds Leybournes and Standfasts. Power cables at the battery a few inches from the gas tank burned with an open flame. David got in touch with RACQ who picked up the car



Driving sheep with dogs



Sitting on a "horseback" singing

Noel wanted to go out to them to help them. He got the satellite phone with him. But before he got to the point of fire he realized that his gas would not be enough to get him all the way back again. Wayne had to borrow a can and drive gas to Noel a couple of 10 km out of Longreach.

We had a light lunch then went into the museum at Stockman Hall of fame and start our tour. After an hour, we head over to Qantas to take the guided tour. We looked at some artefacts before the tour because it was delayed half an hour. A guided tour tells you more information than what you can read on the signs. After the tour went back to the hotel to have a rest

At a quarter past five we head off to Stockman's again to look at the evening show and have dinner. We started with a drink from the bar before moving on to the platform. It was the same artists as in the morning but the dinner show was extended with a lady and two children. The main character is the one who talks, sings and leads the show. He is very good at it and a good country singer. After the show we had food; grilled meat, sausages and beef steaks with roasted potatoes and salad. Really good. The Stockman also sings during dinner. It's over at eight. A fun and interesting show about Stockmen as those who care for cattle and sheep are named in Oz.



Drinks at Stockman's Hall of Fame



Young artist. You have to start early.

### May 10th in Longreach.

A little sleep in today when activities start at 900. We went to the Qantas Museum first and Raoul went on a guided tour of the aircraft 707 and 747 and got to see DC 3 up close. Cecilia is looking a while before going over to Stockman Hall of Fame. Cecilia had a cup of coffee and a chat with the girl in the cafe who was from Argentina. Then continues to look at the different exhibition parts.

Raoul made the guided tour of Qantas Boeing 707, the first 707 and the first jet that Qantas put into operation. It was used by Qantas and rebuilt into private jet for a large sum of money. It was for sale after the rebuild 10 times more than Qantas bought it new for. Never sold for the asking price. Probably a bad investment for those who paid for the renovation of the plane. Equipped with gilded belt buckles and cranes. 2 satellite phones 4 TVs (thick) one Beta and one VHS video players as well as CD players. Walnut interior. Bedroom with ensuite. Only twenty passengers could fit in. The plane was used as a chartered private jet by Michael Jackson, among others.

When Qantas was noticed that the plane was for sale in London UK, it was in poor condition. The Museum spent a lot of money and a lot of work in order to get it certified for flying, so it could fly from London to Longreach. It was allowed to fly after 15,000 man-hours of repair to fly without passengers from London to Longreach in daytime only.

The 747 has made 18,000 landings and flown 5.4 million passengers. Landed on Longreach airfield even though the runway was too short and too narrow and not made for such heavy aircraft. The plane flew and landed without passengers and with minimal fuel. It was a great gift from Qantas as the planet had a scrap value/sales value of AUD 5 million. The landing took place on November 17, 2002.



Qantas founders Museum Boeing 747



Qantas first jet propelled Boeing 707

Raoul joined up with Cecilia at the Stockmans Hall of Fame and had lunch there. Raoul is so fond of Akubra hats so he buys one. Then we went down to town and stroll around. Found a nice handbag that Cecilia didn't buy. The only thing Cecilia bought today is two shawls

At three o'clock we went back to the hotel to prepare for a boat trip on the Thomson River with a subsequent dinner. We were picked up by a bus shortly after half past five. We brought warm clothes as the boat trip and dinner was outdoors. First it is the boat trip with some snacks and BYO drinks. The boat was a wheel "steamer". The steam engine was on board and moving, but the boat was propelled by a Ford marine engine and two paddle wheels.

After the boat trip, all of us, some 50 people, gathered around the campfire, but on chairs. A stockman told us what it could look like in the evening at the campfire. He did very well and humorously. Then had dinner with mashed potatoes and a stew. Then dessert, apple cake. After dinner, a barefoot poet recited poetry and told funny stories. He also did it very well. Then we went down to the river to some kind of movie theatre where they showed a movie about a famous person at the end of the 19th century, Captain Starlight, who stole cattle and then drove them down to south Australia where he sold them. The case was brought to court but he was acquitted.



The captain of Thomson Belle



The artists at evening show

After the movie, tea and dumpers. It was really cold so we stood and froze and gathered round the fire. Then bus took us back to the hotel. The driver seemed telling stories without breathing whilst driving.

### May 11th to Roma 700 km

Departure 0630 as usual. Cold only +5 degrees at lowest. Nice to sit in a tintop (covered) car. Heading a little more southwest. The sun did not rise in the roadway today. It was to the left of the road and stayed there all the time. Landscape flat and treeless. Cattle in the fields not very many sheep. Varying greenery on side of the road. After about two hours we stop in Blackhall and had a cup of coffee at the Bakery. We stood in the sun to get some warmth. Outside Blackhall there is a museum that shows how to prepare and package the wool. The machines are powered by a steam engine. Unfortunately we missed the guided walk so we drove on.

The area around Augathella was more hilly and wooded with large trees. Flat and treeless after. Around 50 km before Roma, the earth began to be used again. Cultivation of grain. The road was winding but also more varied with forest. Many dead wallabies in different sizes and in different stages of resolution.



Trees and open landscape mixed. No dull 700 km

The last day we will see the back of these three cars

We install ourselves at the hotel and take it easy. Just before six we went to Penny and Sean and their three children's house. It's Noel and Helen's children and grandchildren. They offer drinks and snacks and dinner. Lambs from their own farm they have outside Roma. However, they live in Roma for weeks because of jobs and schooling.

### May 12th in Roma sleeping morning and no driving.

Woke up early as usual and heard Neil start his car and leave at 0630. Cold today too. Neil and David R drove home today Sunday. Neil wanted to go home to Judy on Sunday when she works on Mondays. The plan was to return to Brisbane or the Gold Coast tomorrow morning. We had booked this hotel one more day and wanted to stay there and take it easy before returning to Brisbane West End and Caroline.

At half past ten we went to tourist info to get some suggestions for activities. They suggest a walk to the largest bottle tree in Roma. We took the walk in the nice but cool weather. Went back the same way. Then we had a look at the little cabin at the tourist information. A simple little cottage that housed a family with nine children in the 1880s.



The story about Roma in the City hall

Very nice renovate house in Roma

We drove into the city and parked. Walked to the City Hall to see the fine wall painting/sculpture that tells the story of Roma. There was a button to press and you got the whole story told. Then we went and looked at the city's old fine buildings, which are marked on a map we got at the tourist information. Some houses are very nice.

Morning coffee in town and then lunch with Noel and Helen, David and Dianne, Peter and Jan as well as Penny and her two daughters.

This lunch marked the end of the social life that has lasted since March 30. 44 days. The last 32 we were 12 who met every evening for sundowner and dinner. Most days we have had company on the day in combinations of people. Nice lunch and we were little sad that this trip was over and we are not going to see our friends again for a long time.

Noel got a punctured tyre in Tennant Creek and wanted to repair the spare wheel before driving to Brisbane. This means that we will not have company tomorrow. We wanted to get away before 09:30 am when the mail arrives with the tube for the spare wheel. Jan and Peter went to Dalby today. Dianne and David went to Miles's today.

### **May 13th** to Brisbane and West End 478 km

Driving from Roma at 0800 it was just us and unknown cars no friends.

The road from Roma to Chinchilla was bad. Uneven was just the first name. Parts were better and parts were in the process of getting better. There were many road works. Even after Chinchilla, the road was partly poor but larger parts were made better. The traffic increased the closer we got to Toowoomba.

Up until Chinchilla it was mixed woodland and cornfields. After Toowoomba, the road goes down on the east side of the Great Dividing Range.

Morning coffee at a cafe in Chinchilla. Good coffee but old muffin.

Have lunch in central Toowoomba. From there it was the dual carriageway and later motorway. Got to Brisbane and West End before rush hour traffic.

## Summary

Summary of the trip is that we have seen a lot and had a great time with our friends in Australia. It has been too short a time to make this trip. Many Australians make a similar journey. They spend 6 months to 2 years traveling around the continent. What we did was really just drive forward to Perth and another road back to Brisbane. We regret nothing. We have many fine memories of this trip. We can say that we have had driving around an island.

Meter position when returning car 16948 km on 20 May. Started in 2000 (Tripmeter) almost 15000 km in total. in 56 days

Mölle April 2020

Cecilia and Raoul

We want to thank all of the participants of this adventure.

Neil Tregea, David Railton, Glenda and Wayne Rabnott, Diana O'Hara and David Leybourne, Helen and Noel Standfast, Jan and Peter Cowen, For all help and company during this time.

Special thanks to Neil Tregea for help with correction of facts grammar and spelling.

Our English has many flaws and we hope that you read this text from the trip is read with this in mind. All errors are ours

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