

# Just a little South East of Nome

(Nome QLD that is)

Gday...

Another month has rushed by and I have covered quite a lot of ground in that time. Not so much in kilometres, but in the things I have done. I began this as usual by selecting the photos that showed my antics and then was surprised how many I had. Despite discarding quite a lot, there is still a few photos. Hopefully it makes it a little more interesting.

I left Normanton and had to quickly cover the 400km to a small town called Mount Surprise which is just north of the Undarra Lava Tubes - one of the "must do" tourist things so I had been regularly told. The reason for the need to hurry, was the 'tourist season' was concluding and I had three days to get there from Normanton to be on the final tour of the Lava Tubes for the season.



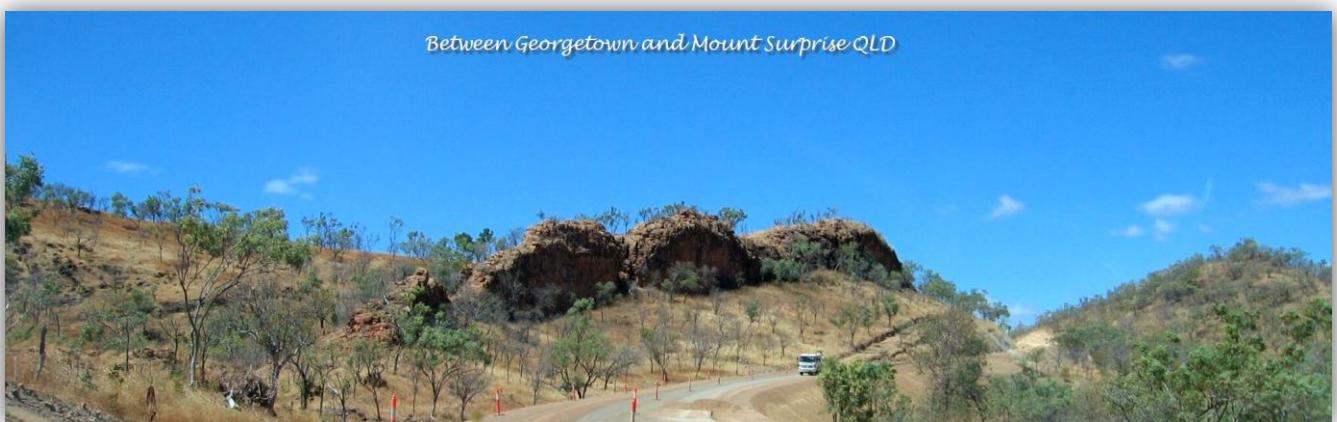
Above: Single-lane bridge across the Gilbert River between Croydon and Georgetown.



The narrow road between Croydon and Georgetown



*Dirt road between Georgetown and Mount Surprise*



*Some of the countryside between Georgetown and Mount Surprise*

*Luckily, I can now say I have seen the Lava Tubes. They are a unique and interesting feature and one that has to be seen and experienced to fully value.*

*I took many photos, but the nature of the tubes makes it difficult to adequately capture them on 'film' when participating in a guided tour.*



*Visitors aren't allowed to wander around or through the tubes without a guide. Apart from the safety aspect, it would be impossible to fully appreciate the tubes without informed comment. An 'interpretive brochure' would never give the same perspective.*

*I found the tour both informative and enjoyable.*

After seeing the tubes, I moved on from the hot, dry outback of QLD and moved up onto the tropical rainforest area of the Atherton Tableland and established myself in a small town called Millaa Millaa. After the inland, with its dry sandy creeks waiting for the wet season, it was so refreshing to be amongst heavily forested areas, with huge trees and creeks flowing with clear water.



Nearby to Millaa Millaa is the very old town of Ravenshoe. Despite being such an old village, they have an extensive wind farm on their boundary providing power for the region. The Atherton Tablelands are renowned for the number of waterfalls in the region so I programmed my days to visit each of them and capture some photos. It was quite amazing that despite being the end of the dry season there was still considerable water flowing over the falls. I would love to see these falls in the middle of the wet season. It has been difficult to decide which falls to highlight here, but these were quite probably the best of those I visited.



Zillie Falls,



Mungalli Falls



Millstream Falls  
(the widest waterfall in QLD)



Tchupala Falls

I have always stayed away from the east coast (and beaches), especially between May and September which is the peak tourist period, but given that it was now October and the caravan traffic was almost non-existent I thought I might just put a tentative toe in the water, so to speak, and head to the coast and do some “beach touring”.

One of the favourite tourist beach areas is Mission Beach, so I packed up the van and headed the Landy down the very steep descents of the Tablelands, through Innisfail and onto a van park called the Dunk Island View Tourist Park at Wongaling Beach which is in-between North and South Mission Beach. The name of the park was quite accurate, as I could view Dunk Island from my van. It certainly was not ‘peak season’ anymore - I was one of only four vans in a park with 115 sites ... and one of those belonged to a couple who were doing temporary work at the park to cover their site fees.



*The view of Dunk Island from my van site.*

Dunk Island Resort has yet to reopen after the damage suffered during Cyclone Yasi back in February 2011. I had thought about doing one of the Dunk Island Cruises which takes in Dunk and a few of the other islands. However, the general public are not allowed on Dunk Island at the moment and I did not want to just sit on a boat and look from a distance. I was able to do that, sort of, from my caravan.

I also had the beaches all to myself as there were no tourists around. There were a few backpackers further up at Mission Beach but they kept away from where I was. I went for a drive to the north and south and visited all the beaches that cover the ‘Mission Beach’ tourist area. The weather was fantastic, there was no traffic and there was no-one on the beaches.

I really enjoyed spending time at these beaches feeling as if I was the only person who had ever visited them. They were clean and deserted - just as I have always thought beaches should be.



Bingil Beach



Garners Beach

Having now absorbed about as much beach as I could handle in one go, I headed to Ingham to visit the Girringun National Park and witness the Wallaman Falls. It was good to be back in the bush again.



The highest, permanent, single-drop waterfall in Australia, Wallaman Falls is part of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, home to some of the oldest rainforests on earth and many endangered plants and animals. Wallaman Falls is part of the traditional lands of the Warrgamaygan Aboriginal people. 'Nginba Warrgamaygan Ngarji'.

The falls are fed by Stoney Creek and I went around to the top of the falls and then bushwalked upstream. Once again, I was quite amazed that, despite this being the end of the dry season, there was a considerable amount of water. I have made a note to myself to maybe come back to this area in the middle of the wet season - when these waterfalls must be even more magnificent.



Stoney Creek - before it commits suicide by jumping over the cliff to create Wallaman Falls.

It was good to visit the beaches that have such attraction to tourists but having now visited Gerringun National Park it made me realise I really do prefer the bush with creeks and trees. So I moved a bit further south to a very small town called Rollingstone. It was good to camp out in the bush beside a nice creek where I could wander and explore and soak up the peace and quiet - in the shade of the trees and staying out of the humid heat.



The swimming hole on Rollingstone Creek.

Whilst I was more than happy to dip a toe and even wade in upto my waist and have a good cool off, I really could not bring myself to swing from the rope into the creek. I really should have - but as an 'older citizen' I do worry about my wellbeing - and my tolerance for pain, should I damage something, has somewhat decreased over the years.

Just south of Townsville is the small community of Nome. The big feature at Nome is the Billabong Sanctuary - billed as the Australian Wildlife Experience. To be fair it is a really good 'zoo' but very similar to the Irwin's Australia Zoo at the Sunshine Coast.

Across the road from the Sanctuary is a van park which made a good base for me to spend a day at the Sanctuary and to also head off to explore the Bowling Green Bay National Park nearby.

The National Park provided a camp ground but it was for tents only with no room for camper trailers or caravans. However, it does provide a series of bushwalks and of course, there is the main feature - Alligator Creek.

I headed off to the National Park very early in the morning with water, snacks and lunch tucked away in my backpack and spent the day enjoying myself. Unfortunately, the day did not end perfectly as on my way out of one of the walks, on a steep descent, my foot slipped on some loose rocks, my right ankle assumed a very painful angle as my right leg collapsed to save the weight which twisted and hurt my knee and in a most ungracious way I sprawled face first on the ground.

I mentioned previously that "my tolerance for pain, should I damage something, has somewhat decreased over the years" and that came very much to the fore as I sat, cursing, on the track. It took a long time before I could support my weight on my ankle and when I did finally begin walking out, I had to continually stop and rest it. For a time I was a little worried I may have to organise a helicopter ride out to civilisation - but there was no mobile signal - so I put that thought out of my mind. But gee, a helicopter flight would have been exciting.

Eventually, the pain subsided enough to allow me to hobble initially and then ultimately limp the last three kilometres to the campground where the Landy was waiting patiently for me. With the light failing and the gate soon to be locked I gladly climbed in and headed home.

I had taken heaps of photos of the creek but I will bore you with only one.



Alligator Creek - Bowling Green Bay National Park

Thankfully, the visit to Billabong Sanctuary was nowhere near as physically demanding.

I enjoyed the informative sessions provided by the 'rangers', learning many things I had no idea of previously. It was also good seeing some of these 'tropical' fauna up close and personal.



And in conclusion, in my travels, I have encountered many of the contraptions shown in the photo at right.

I had always been told, and believed, these are placed in the road to keep wandering stock from moving from one paddock to the next.

However, the weather-beaten old guide who hosted our tour of the Undarra Lava Tubes was so informative on so many things. He explained why these exist and I now know the truth!



These contraptions are placed in country roads because the weather gets so hot and heats the ground too much. These contraptions perform the same function as the gaps in railway lines and the gaps in concrete paths.

These contraptions, as shown above, are expansion joints which allow the road to expand when it gets hot and stops the road from buckling.

Of course! ... it is all so clear to me now!

On that note, I will leave you and hope that you found something of interest within.

