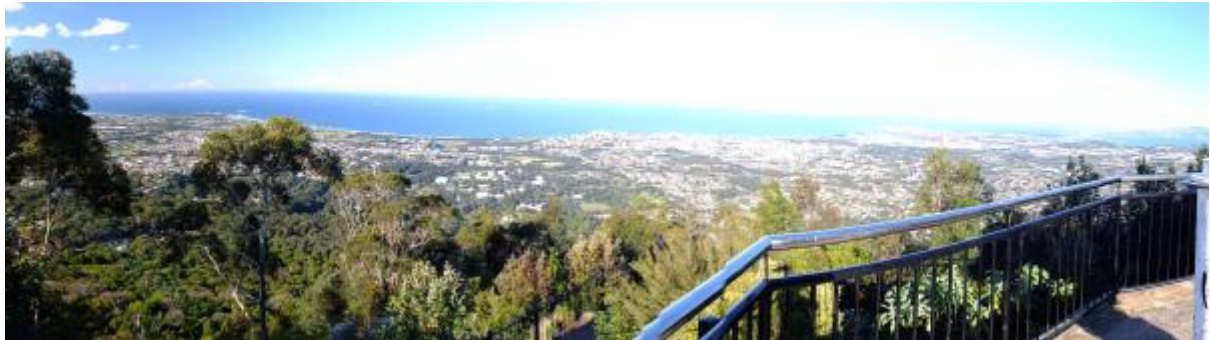


Lorraine's July Blog

We have celebrated another milestone... four years on the road, but more about that later.

We arrived in Wollongong for our house sit at the end of June, in time to buy new laptops and peripherals at the EOY sales. Then we proceeded to kill our download in getting the new toys set up. Luckily we had the use of the wifi in the house as well – which we sucked up like a big magnet! If only we knew that the laptops were set us with “E” this and “A” that and a scary thing called THE CLOUD, all things that automatically stream to A BIG DOWNLOAD VACUUM N IN THE SKY! Fortunately, we have Telstra Platinum service, and have had two very successful ‘one on ones’ with a technician at the Telstra shop, and another over the phone – which took over an hour to resolve – as John had successfully picked up a virus! We have now spent the month setting up, transferring and learning new systems, as well as John, who has not had a laptop/computer since leaving work. As I type, I am currently “chatting” with Jitesh from Norton setting up his anti-virus protection as the installed trial with McAfee obviously failed.

Wollongong. Nice liveable city, long and narrow, as governed by the escarpment to the west and the Pacific Ocean to the east. At its narrowest, it would only be about 5 or 6 kilometres wide.



Above, the view from Mt Keira to the Ocean, left is the view from the harbour to Mt Keira.

The harbour is a popular spot on the weekends, as is the Sea Cliff Bridge – more about that to come.

Lorraine's July Blog

Our charges here are Juno, a 68kg Arabian Bull Mastiff, along with Trim and Tabitha, mother and son of the feline type. Juno is a big whoose.



Trim likes to sleep on our bed and Tabitha is, like most cats, quite aloof.



Lorraine's July Blog

We have journeyed into Sydney three times so far, the first visit was by car, very brave of us don't you think? We had to take our camera to Fuji for a warranty job, so drove through the suburbs, over the harbour bridge and on to Brookvale, after which we wandered around Manly Harbour, had lunch, walked out to the lookouts at North Heads, then returned to The Gong by the Harbour Tunnel. Our next excursion was by train – the princely sum of \$2.50 each, took us from The Gong to Central Station (Sydney), another train to Circular Quay, a ferry ride on the harbour, then return by the two trains... Pretty good value! After our ferry ride, we wandered around the historical Rocks area, particularly impressed by the back lanes, the remains of homes built into the cliffs.



Fascinating.....

I even met Bruce Willis!



Lorraine's July Blog

Our third visit to the big smoke, again involving trains and light rail, was to spend the day with Leon (John's son) and his girlfriend Melly, who both live in Sydney. Coffee at The Lindt Café in Martin Place, lunch at the Fish Markets; they were keen to show us their city.

The Lindt Café, for those overseas, was the site of a one man siege a few months ago. A visitor to the café and a manager were shot and killed during the event.



Lorraine's July Blog

Leon and Melly have driven down for most weekends as well, we have introduced them to geocaching, we have found caches hanging off the wharf at the harbour, in rocks on a bush walk at Mt Keira, in stumps in historical villages like Mt Kembla, and in the main street of Kangaroo Valley.

They enjoy it, Melly loves it, I hope they have found a new hobby.



Melly introduced us to Hindu cuisine – we visited the Nan Tien Temple on the south side of Gong. Beautiful building, beautiful gardens. We ate food we have never heard of before – all vegetarian. Interesting menu, not quite to my liking, but enjoyable all the same.



Lorraine's July Blog

We took them to the Historical Aircraft Restoration Museum, in an outer suburb of Gong. Recently a QANTAS 747B 400 was flown in – and now resides there permanently, we were able to sit in an F1-11, see Catalina Flying boats, and walk through Connie, the recently restored Lockheed Constellation. What a day!



Markets at Bulli and markets at Coledale have kept us well fed, in fact if you go around lunch time, there are so many tastings, you really don't need to buy any lunch. Having said that, our first visit to Bulli Foragers Market, we tried corn fritters. Back again second visit, for lunch, we had corn fritters. Try before you buy is the old saying.

North of The Gong on the Grand Pacific Drive is the spectacular Sea Cliff Bridge, a bridge completed in 2005 after numerous rock falls, which regularly closed the road. The new bridge was built between 2003 and 2005, not into the rock, but out over the ocean, a spectacular 680m bridge winding around the cliffs. Popular with walkers, cyclists, kids on skateboards, and out for a Sunday drive bikers.



Villages dot the Grand Pacific Drive, Bulli, Austmere, Coledale, Stanwell Park (where Lawrence Hargrave the aviator and explorer lived) and now is a popular site for hang gliders.

South of Gong is the beautiful Lake Illawarra, Kiama Blowhole, the historic town of Berry, south west is Kangaroo Valley, towering above our house is Mt Keria, with its serious landslide scar dating back in 2012 (the second one since 2007) and to the east is the ocean, the harbour and the lighthouse. We have been up to Mt Keria a few times, there are a number of caches up there one of which had

Lorraine's July Blog

eluded us – we can see where it is from our dining room table, but when we get there, we can't find it.

The ninth of July came around again, four years on the road, and we have now completed 94,500 kilometres of travel with Dunmowin pulling along behind us quite happily. We are currently on our 9th house sit, (six of which have been in the past twelve months) which is saving us a lot of fuel and site fees, so it will be interesting to compare the figures from last year to this year...

4WD & Caravan Stuff

Fuel, total litres 13,596 (to 2014) 18,343 (2015) = 4,387 litres this period (4,532 litres per year over previous three year)

Fuel, total paid \$21,456 (to 2014) \$28,546 (2015) = \$7,090 this period (\$7,152 per year over previous three years)

Kilometres travelled 69,000 km (to 2014) 94,524 km (2015) = 26,000 this period (23,000 per year over previous three years)

Site Fees paid \$10,102 (to 2014) \$11,889 (2015) = \$1,787 this period (\$3,367 per year average over past three years).

Extreme Points:

Most northerly point – Darwin, Northern Territory (2014)

Most southerly point – Cape Ottway Lighthouse, Victoria (2012)

Most easterly point – Byron Bay, NSW (2015)

Most westerly point – Steep Point, Western Australia (2014)

Lowest point – Lake Eyre, South Australia, 15 metres below sea level (2012)

Highest point – Mt Jarndrunmunhna Western Australia 1128m above sea level (2014)

Saltiest point – Useless Loop Mine – Western Australia (2014)

Wettest place - Narrabri, NSW (2012)

Driest place – Flinders Ranges, South Australia (2012)

Coldest place – Near Walcha, Northern NSW (2015)

Hottest place – West River, Western Aust (48 degrees) (2013)

States visited: (in this order) Qld, SA, Qld, NSW, SA, Vic, SA, WA, NT, Qld, NSW

Longest time in any state: 15 months in WA

Next bit: Tasmania, the centre and then the cape.