

Lorraine's March Blog

March found us in the wilderness areas of Tasmania again, over on the West Coast. We had gone for a drive – as we do – and called in to another fishing village called Granville Harbour. We only intended to stay for morning tea, ended up staying three days!



Like Trial Harbour, this tiny village filled with a collection of old and new “shacks” and 4x4s towing abalone and rock lobster boats was so friendly.

We watched boats enter and depart the water in a small protected cove, saw my first abalone (gross) and hoped to be given a rock lobster, but the lobster fishing family did not catch enough

(apparently). Both industries are big down here, the abalone is sent to Japan live, they pay big money for them.

Rock lobsters are around \$120.00 per kilo.



Hence neither is on our daily menu!



We left

the van at camp and went for a drive in the dunes, and onto the beach, but were a bit intimidated by the prospect of quick sand, so turned around and came back.

Not very adventurous, are we?

Did not fancy having to see our beautiful Nissan disappear into sand as the waves crashed over her!

Lorraine's March Blog

From Granville Harbour, we moved on to Pieman Dam, where we were able to leave the van safely while we went for a drive into the Southern Tarkine to Corinna. We could not take the van as the only way to Corinna is via a punt called The Fatman Barge, on the Pieman River. With the van in tow, we were both too long and too heavy!



Corinna is a funny little village, really only surviving these days on tourists, all the buildings there has something to do with the resort, be it staff accommodation, tourist accommodation, or the tavern.

Originally a mining town, born by prospectors moving overland from Waratah to Zeehan these days, a quiet resort town where tourists can board the Arcadia II and take quiet trips along the Pieman River.



Lorraine's March Blog

Back at camp, we found we had new neighbours; they had with them a baby wombat. She was beautiful. John had a cuddle, she walked across my feet. Apparently her owner had killed the mother in her car (not on purpose) and found the joey, which at the time was only about a month old. She



has since hand reared her, she is now around 14 months old, walks on a lead, or just follows her human mum around. When she gets too big to handle, she will be going to Wings Wild Life Park on the Gunns Plains, she will never be able to be released back into the wild.

As I was working on a story covering three “dying” mining towns in the west, we wanted to travel to Rosebery for information, on the way we stopped off at Tullah, where we found Wee Georgie Wood, a restored train that now takes

tourists for a ride through town. Even though it is aimed at children the ride was interesting. The small mining settlement was only accessible by a 2ft gauge railway. When the highway was built in the 1960s they

closed the railway, but though dedication of volunteers, the trains runs once more. We ended up camping in Tullah that night, in the carpark and donating to the cause.

Moving on, we ended up in Burnie, where we had the usual round of things to do when you get to a big town.



You know, Chemists, Centrelink, Telstra, Bunnings, ATMs and an Auto Electrician.

We always end up spending too much money when in bigger towns, so are pleased to move on. And move on we did, back to the west again, but this time, hugging the North West coast of the island.

Lorraine's March Blog

At Rocky Cape, we camped behind the Tavern, which must be applauded for their entrepreneurial attempt at satisfying grey nomads. You can camp there for free, if you are totally self-contained. You can pay for power and water (\$10.00 per night) if you need it, and pay extra for showers and toilets if you don't have your own.

This is exactly what grey nomads are asking for. While we were there we met up with a couple from Brisbane, Rick and Carol-Lee, who are travelling with their van. Like a few others we met, they had not booked their return journey, and are stuck in Tasmania until they could get a return trip, in their case, I think it was sometime in July. Not prepared for the cold, Carol-Lee has had fun haunting the Op Shops to buy up on warm clothes. They were a fun couple, we shared a few happy hours.



Stanley was next village to visit, we stayed for a week, exploring the town, hiking The Nut, visiting Highfield House, and driving to Trowutta Arch.

The Nut can be hiked up to, or visited via a chair lift. We did the latter. Despite the hike only being about 450 metres, it is a steep zig-zag track up (and down) then you have the 2k hike around the rock, the remains of an ancient volcanic plug.

There are pretty spectacular views of Stanley and the isthmus from up there. Below is the historic village of Stanley where Joseph Lyons (one time prime minister of Australia) was born. We visited the wharf and were told about a movie that was filmed there not long ago: *The Light between Oceans*. I bought the book, and have not been able to put it down.



Stanley from The Nut

Lorraine's March Blog

The Nut with Stanley in the foreground



Highfield House was built 1832-1835, for the chief agent of the Van Dieman's Land Company, a sheep grazing company. VDL still operates in the area to the west at Woolnorth.

The area around the North West is dotted with sinkholes, so now that roads were open after the recent fires, we decided (helped by the fact that there was a cache there) to go and find the Trowutta Arch. The whole area contains a number of unique cave systems and sinkholes.

Close by is the Tayetea Bridge, where the fires burnt right down to the Arthur River. With a story for the magazine in mind for the Tarkine, I have been gathering a lot of information and photos as we drive in and out of the area, just waiting for all the roads to open up.



Lorraine's March Blog

Driving further into the West, you cannot get to Woolnorth or the Wind Farm unless you pay \$66.00 **EACH** for a tour, so instead we drove into the Tarkine again, this time approaching from the north.

We found Marrawah, which is right on the ocean, a popular spot for surfing, and a great spot to camp. The previous week, it was home to the O'Neil Cold Water Surfing Classic, but this week, was a lot quieter, despite being Easter.



I made Hot Cross Buns on Easter Friday and shared them amongst the other campers, and on Easter Sunday, the Easter Bunny was kind, he left a bundle of *eggies* outside our van. Nice touch.



John tried his hand at fishing!

As usual, not very successful.

Lorraine's March Blog

We met another couple at Marrawah, Glenda and Terry, from South Brisbane, together, we did the

Arthur River Cruise, on the MV George Robinson, a quaint wooden boat which took us up the Arthur River to a landing deep in the rainforest, where we did a short walk while the crew prepared a lovely bbq lunch, then back to the town of Arthur River.

The tour guide Rob talked non-stop for 5 hours, he is a 5th generation North West



Tasmanian, and really knew his stuff. A lovely day, spent with lovely people.

We were, however disappointed here. I had correspondence from the magazine I write for, where we discussed that I was going to do a story on the western parts of Tasmania. In fact, the coordinator suggested that I write about the west. All the time we had been dipping into the Tarkine, I was storing up my information and photos for when we were able to complete the journey. (Roads were closed up until now due to the fires) Imagine my disappointment when on the MV George Robinson, to find that the Editor at Large from the magazine had just done the trip around a week before. I have now had confirmation that he was in the area. I am feeling pretty sore about it, but there is not much I can do about it.



I will have to wait till I see his story, will write up mine anyway, and submit it later (probably about 12 months later).



Near Arthur River is a lookout called Edge of the World. The view is across the Southern Ocean, all the way to Argentina!!! No wonder they call it Edge of the World.

Lorraine's March Blog

We continued our drive through the Tarkine, noting the burnt areas from the recent bushfires. There were not too many places to camp, Temma, Couta Rocks and Nelson Bay had survived the fires but there were not places to camp. The road sides were blackened, but an already sign of



regrowth on the gums and bracken was bouncing back. Continuing our drive towards Corinna then upwards towards Waratah, we found a camp site at Julius River, where we were able to visit some of

the beautiful sinkholes in the area, before heading back towards Burnie via Waratah.



There was only one road still closed from the fires – into the Milk Shake Hills, strange names they have down here. Wuthering Heights, Milk Shake Hills, and Christmas Hills: the list goes on.

Back in Burnie at the end of March, we were able once again to stock up on groceries, do laundry, and catch up with various grey nomads we had met previously.

We are fortunate as grey nomads to have so many freedom camps to stay in as we travel this beautiful island. Beachfront, wilderness and small villages to larger towns. Every camp is different, everyone has various range of (or lack of) facilities, and each comes with its own feature in the way of history of natural beauty.