

## Lorraine's Blog

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2017: The year so far!

Before our house hosts returned, we had a day as tourists in our home town, one of the things we used to enjoy was a day on the City Cat. We caught the boat from St Lucia, travelled to Riverside Centre (for coffee), walked the City Gardens, before catching another Cat to Hamilton for a pub lunch, then returning to St Lucia. A great day, costing us no more than \$5.00 in total for the boat ride!



Left house sit on 7<sup>th</sup> January, glad to get away from the concrete, heat and neurotic dogs. While it was great doing a house sit with a pool the pool was often too warm to appreciate, and the pool studio which has been our home for the past month, was hot. Our hosts arrived back from America on Thursday morning, and were gone again for the weekend to their “weekender” at Boonah for the weekend. We stayed until Saturday, ensuring, as we do, that the apartment was cleaner than when we arrived.

We had a call from Donna and Errol, past work mates of John's, they wanted to catch up before we left, so we made an afternoon trip over to Springfield Lakes for a chat.



On Saturday, we were off, heading for the Brisbane Valley, with our first stop in the little village of Toogoolawah. I have been through the Brisbane Valley literally thousands of times, and never detoured the 50 metres off the highway to visit this village. So today we did, lead by the promise of a cache, and found a neat little “free” camp in town behind the railway museum. Unfortunately the museum, along with a lot of other things in town, was closed till the 9<sup>th</sup>

Jan, so all we could do was look at buildings and peer through windows. Never-the-less, we had a quiet night, not woken by the sun at 5.00 am as we had been at our house sit.

Our next port of call was Narangba, caching along the way, whenever we could find a suitable spot to stop with the van. Between the drive, and a walk around the parklands in town, we managed to clock up another eleven caches, all belonging to a cacher by the name of Youngoldfella. We had dinner with him (John and his wife Chris) at the RSL in town, conveniently with a carpark that allows 24 hour parking behind.

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The plan the next day was to walk around town further caching, but after checking out the dozen or so murals, we found it was way too hot, and decided to jump in the air-conditioned car and head towards Murgon.



Murgon has one of the best freedom camps we have stumbled upon. We first discovered it a few years ago when we farm sat in the area, now back again, thought we would give it a try. South Burnett Council have opened the old caravan park (in older Camps Book as \$+) as a free, 48 hour stop over. For a \$10.00 refundable deposit, you can get the key to the amenities – hot showers, flushing toilets, and can hook up to water if needed. They also have a dump point. The amenities, though old and probably in need of a bit of modernising, are spotlessly clean and the water runs beautifully hot – if you want a hot shower on a 37 degree day that is. We only stayed one night, as we had plans to visit Geoff and Michelle on the farm we “sat” two years ago.

Once on the farm, with the obligatory cups of tea over, Geoff and John planned a week of fencing, so



Michelle and I suffered the heat in the air-con'ed Toyota into Kingaroy to very seriously check out the air-con'ed shopping centre. Someone had to do it! We went with Geoff and Michelle for a drive out to Boondooma Homestead, a heritage listed property we had worked on back in 2011. We were surprised that Buddy and Lynne remembered us – even asking about Brodie. We spent a pleasant hour under their “big top” chatting over lunch. On our return, we called into the Hivesville Hotel for a quick cooling ale.

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Cat at 5.30 each afternoon.

Our hosts had to go away for the week, so asked us to stay on to watch the property for them.

Despite the heat wave in South East Queensland (yes another one), we enjoyed our stay on the farm, (they did have an inflatable pool after all) nothing much to do, except sit in the shade, keep an eye on 16 chooks, talk to one lonely chocolate Labrador (who was being boarded because her owners were away,) and feed one Tom

We discovered that Bridgit the Lab loved Tom Cat's food, and Tom Cat loved custard.



was built in 1905, then on to Maryborough, where we initially camped in the middle of town.

Moving on, found us at places like Brooweena where this is a brilliant little historical museum and Chowey Bridge, a bridge that



We partook of the heritage walk with Ailsa, a local, and were told that the local Kanaks were not looked after (unlike the ones under the care of my Great Great Grandfather), to the statue of Mary Poppins, and saw the bank where P L Travers was born.

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We decided to take a look at the new RV Home Base. We were able to camp on their hard stand for 48 hours, under the condition that we do a tour of the property and listen to the sales pitch. So we did! Interesting concept, lovely homes, fantastic facilities, but we are just not ready for this lifestyle yet. We have acquaintances through geocaching who live there and we tried to catch up, but they were in Stanthorpe at the time, but invited us back as their guests the following week.

We filled in some time down in Hervey Bay, wandering around with our home on our back, swimming in the ocean, checking out the esplanade.



Australia Day, we set up the van beside a little beach at Boat Harbour and just spent the day under the awning watching the tide go out and in, people chasing the water, boats being marooned on the sand banks. A lovely way to spend Australia Day. We even had our own little sausage sizzle.

We allowed a day doing a caching drive to Tin Can Bay. Normally when we go out for the day without the van, we take a thermos of tea or coffee and picnic lunch. Today, we decided not to, that we could get coffee at Poona, and lunch at Tin Can Bay. We pull off the road into many of the side tracks, going into sea side villages, caching, but not finding coffee. It was not until around 2.00pm, that we arrived at Tin Can Bay, found fish and chips – and a coffee.



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The couple from the RV Homebase were returning a few days later, so we decided to check out the campsite at Lake Lenthall.

Pleasantly surprised to see a huge expanse of water, nicely mowed (green) grass, and not many campers. We set ourselves up for a couple of days to see out the month before returning to Maryborough.



January over, we are not enjoying the heat back in Queensland, it will get worse before it starts to cool down as we travel north. Looking forward to seeing the turtles in February, and two house sits as we move further up the coast. Our plan was originally to travel via inland roads, but with the way the weather has been, we thought it prudent to stick to the coast.

How have you all survived the summer so far?

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Our picture for "Eating our way around Australia" comes from our days farm sitting at Murgon, where we decided to cook some ribs (courtesy of the butcher in Kilkivan) on the weber!!!!

