

## Lorraine's Blog

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The beginning of February found us still in Maryborough, and back at the RV Home Base, not because we loved the sales pitch, but our caching acquaintances, Liz & Bruce were back from Stanthorpe, and invited us to stay for a couple of days. We talked caching, travelling and had a beautiful bbq.

It was time to hit the road again, we had bookings in Bargara with some turtles – and my sister, so we moved on, staying in Childers overnight, and at the back of the Bucca Pub for two before driving down into Bargara to the Caravan Park.



If ever I was going to rave about a caravan park, this would be the one. Acres and acres of lovely grassy and shady sites, fortunately for us, in the whole week, we had no neighbours on either side of our already generous site. No pool, however, right on the beach, so good for a swim, walks along the esplanade and up to Mon Repos. Would have been even better if we had push bikes.

My sister Faye and her husband Maurie arrived, the same day, and we were booked to visit the turtles on the following Monday. Luck was with us, we got into the first group, in fact, we did not even get to attend the “interpretation talk” as our turtle batch was waiting for us to arrive on the beach. Our little group stumbled down over the sand dune to the ranger who was trying to hold back the little explosion of turtles from the soft sand. Once we were all seated around the nest, she let them emerge, we counted 18 before they stooped. The volunteer walked around the group with

one of the babies, we got to touch and stroke it. So cute.



We then formed a “guard of honour” to help the little fighters down to the sea. Those of us with good torches formed a second inner guard, standing about a metre apart, legs astride, and torches shining between the legs of the person ahead of us. The turtles, attracted by the torch light, come a running, until they reach the ocean and start their big swim out to sea! So moving, so beautiful. We

were then invited to stay on the beach and attend a nest dig, which is when the ranger digs up the remains of a nest that hatched the night previous. She found another 18 turtles alive in this nest, a couple of dead one, and counted about 80 – 100 shells. I had told ranger that I had been to a laying back in 2001, and had the details of the turtle we watched. When we got back to the ranger station, we were invited to attend the lab, where Professor Colin Limpus, the turtle guru was working. We

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gave him the details of "our turtle" and he told us she is still alive, and laying. Pretty amazing, considering she has lost both front and rear flippers on her left hand side. In all, a pretty special night.

John and Faye had a game of tennis, we went for walks together along the waterfront and the four of us went on a river cruise on the Bundy Belle, a lovely way to spend a steamy morning.



We caught up with Bev and Al, a couple we met back in August 2011 near Winton on our way to Birdsville. Bev was celebrating (she celebrated for 3 weeks apparently) her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, so we were able to attend over lunch at The Spotted Dog, and a few days later, dinner at their beautiful old Queenslander. It was great to catch up.

We also caught up with Karen and Paul, another couple we met in Bargara just after we left one in July 2011. They still live in the same house, we caught up for a drink – great to see both couples after so long.

While we were in Bargara, we had a guy come out from Maryborough to put a new fridge seal on our van fridge. When he arrived, he realised he did not have the right part, so had to send away for it. Well, it took two weeks to come, so we had to fill in some time again.





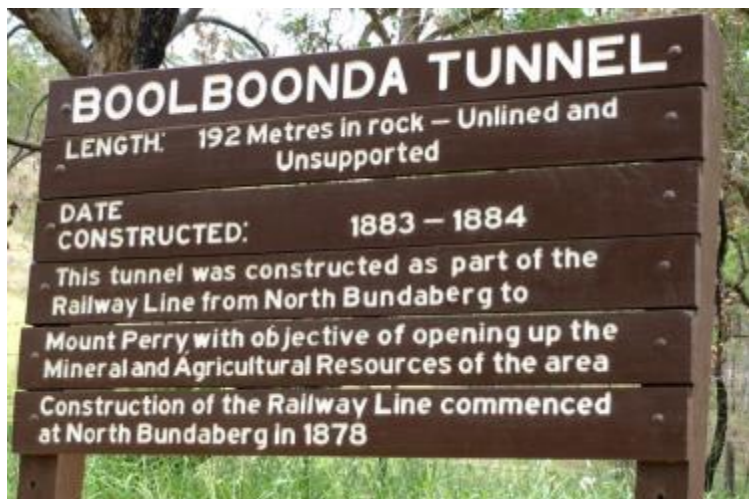
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We went back out to Bucca, but this time we stayed on private property, a couple who allow self-contained caravans to camp down by their dam for \$10.00. We spent a week there, identifying birds – quite excited to see for the first time, a channel billed cuckoo and only venturing into Bundaberg for dump point, water and laundry. However, we did enjoy drives to Yanduran,



Moore Park, Gin Gin and Mt Perry, caching as we tripped around. My brother Chris told me a few years ago about an old rail tunnel near Mt Perry, so we were excited to find the tunnel and drive through it, thankful that we did not have the van in tow.



Hoping after a week and a half that our fridge seal would be in, decided to move closer to Maryborough to have it fitted.

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At first, we found another “back yard” camp at Urangan, in Hervey Bay. At only \$5.00 it seemed like a bargain. Well, that night, we were attacked by the tiniest little midges I have ever been eaten by. Two weeks later, we both still have the scars. John was scratching so bad, I gave him some anti-histamines. We left and went to Pt Vernon to sit out the day. The anti-histamines knocked John out, and he slept most of the day in the shade of the annex. We were both so tired and cranky at the end of the day, we booked into a little caravan park at Scarness, where we could enjoy a pool, the beach and esplanade walks, while lapping up the luxury of our air-conditioner. With the heat wave over the past month, it has been a blessing in disguise to go into a caravan park and treat ourselves to aircon.

Finally we got the call to say the fridge seal had arrived, so we checked out of the caravan park, went down to a local carpark, and waited for the guy to arrive. Once installed, we were off again. We wanted to be in Rockhampton by the weekend to spend time with Grandie #4, Bella.

After a night in Appletree Creek (pretty name for a town – but not an apple tree in site) we found ourselves at Calliope again, a regular stopping off point for grey nomads as the travel up and down The Bruce. This was our third visit, this time we camped on the mostly flat southern side of the river, right on the river's edge, with our own little private beach.



Not many campers there, the season still has to pick up for grey nomads. The river looked inviting, but the news that a 1 ½ metre salt water croc had been sighted a few months ago was enough to deter us from entering the water. It was wonderful to sit out under the stars at night, counting shooting stars and trying to catch fire-flies.



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We arrived in Rockhampton, excited to see Bella after just over two year. She is now almost 5 years old, and quite grown up. We planned the days – Zoo, picnic lunch, water park, and caching (treasure hunt) She had cached before with her daddy, so was quite adept at swapping trinkets, even managing to find a tiny candle in the shape of a pink “B”. Together we found 7 out of 10

caches. Bella was quite disappointed about the three we did not find, and could not understand why they weren't there.

At the Zoo, we went to the chimp enclosure for a selfie,



and the aviary before heading to the park for a picnic lunch, followed by a swim at the local pool.

The following day was much the same, caching, more food and a swim. Monday morning, it was off to kindy for Bella, so we moved on before breakfast, stopping in Yeppoon beside the ocean for Bacon and Eggs! And a couple of caches.

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Our plan was to head into the national park at Byfield, but our chosen camping ground is currently closed, instead, we found Getaway at Byfield, private property camping, cottages – and a swimming pool. At \$75.00 per week, we could not go past that.



There is a “power trail” of caches nearby along the road that goes up to the now closed Capricorn Resort. 24 caches in total, we did the lot in about an hour and a half. The cache owners, Dave and Ann contacted us half way through and invited us up for a cup of tea at their house on the hill above Yeppoon. We now have 24 more smiley faces on our map, and two new friends. On Thursday, Dave is taking us BloKarting - more about that next month.

As I sit typing this blog under a tree outside the caravan, the cockatoos are screeching, the channel billed cuckoo is demanding a feed from its surrogate parents (crows), and I have a lamb stew bubbling along in the camp oven. Doesn't get much better than that..



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And this month's Eating our way around Australia – we had breakfast beside Ross Creek at Yeppoon after a long (??) drive from Rockhampton... Doesn't get much better than this.

