

Lorraine's Blog

May started much as March and April did – at another house sit. This time we are in Cairns, with two little dogs – a schitzu and a bitza, a 37 year old horse with no teeth, and two guinea fowl (there were four, but two of the chicks have disappeared – probably to a resident python). The little dogs are



yappers, going off at anything from a falling leaf to the posie, walkers with dogs and joggers, but mostly sleep – and at night, you don't hear a peep from them. Here are butterflies galore, including Blue Ulysses, Cairns Birdwing and this one is called a Cruiser.

The birdlife is very noisy, the black butcherbird is evident, the curlews call at night, and we have wallabies in the back paddock. One night, we heard something grinding away for

hours, only to find the next day a coconut with a huge hole ground out of it – through the husk, and down into the hard shell. John normally does it with a small axe, so I wonder what sort of teeth did that damage.

The house is not huge, but on two acres. We have our own two bedroom granny flat, which is quite comfortable – I have quite enjoyed this house, even though this time, there is no pool. We are not far from the beach – Clifton Beach is a northern beach near Palm Cove, so we are able to take the canines for beach walks anywhere from Palm Cove to Trinity Beach. They love it, while neither is good on the lead, we have got Winton (bitza) used to a harness, while little Missie just runs out of puff quite quickly. She is a fat little thing, obviously, not used to walking too much and has to be carried up any stairs if we encounter them. The owners advised us if walking them on the beach, to have the dogs between you and the water – just in case of crocs – which made us chuckle. The two guinea fowl are nothing but poop droppers, so we constantly have to clean up their mess.



The caravan sits in the shade in the back paddock shared with Chammie the horse, we have given it another good clean, both in and out, and John has updated our map on the back. He is waiting anxiously to be able to draw in the red line to the cape – but that will be later in the year.

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In between visits to mechanics (new clutch) Beaurepairs (rotation and alignment) doctors for immunisations for Indonesia, scripts etc, dentists (John broke a tooth), we have managed a drive up to Port Douglas, and a drive down to Innisfail.



The lines on the map have now been joined all the way down the coast from Port Douglas to Wollongong! We drove to Innisfail only because John needed some more paint for his map on the van, and there are no hobby shops left in Cairns now, the closest being Innisfail, so we made a day of it, checked out Flying Fish Point, and the local botanical gardens.

A day in the CBD had us wandering the beautiful esplanade, shame you can't swim there, way too muddy, and the ever present thread of those huge lizards.



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Oh, and the mangroves! There have been some pretty spots to walk, near the airport, we found a boardwalk going about 600 metres into the mangrove swamp, mosquito infested, so covered with plenty of repellent.



The Cairns Botanic Gardens were touched on briefly, we had a quick walk on Sunday and hope to get back to see more.



The northern beaches dot the narrow coastline, Machans, Holloways (John had to get a photo there), Yorkeys Knob, Trinity, Kewarra, Clifton, Palm Cove and Ellis Beach. We are spoilt for choice if we want to go for a beach walk. The coastline is narrow, from scarp to the ocean, in the case of Clifton Beach, not much more than 2 km wide. Everywhere you look you see rainforest, mountain and ocean. When you drive up past Ellis Beach towards Port Douglas, the mountains actually come down to the ocean. Beautiful!

I have just decided I will carry on into June, May was a bit quiet, and we had an exciting day yesterday that I want to share with you.



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My son, Joe flew up from Brisbane to spend a week with us. We promised him a day trip up to Cape Tribulation and along the Bloomfield Track. We had already established that it was not wise to take the van along this track, due to the steepness, so a day trip would have to do. It rained overnight in the area, so we knew the track was going to be wet. And, it rained most of the way up from Clifton Beach.

The Daintree Forest welcomed us as only a rainforest does, huge drips of rain falling off the tropical leaves of mostly unidentified plants. Lookouts shrouded in mist, unknown fruits on the ground. (this pic is cassowary fruit and rambutan)



It was quite a rewarding experience, and Joe was taken by the variety of plants he had never seen before. We arrive at Cape Tribulation, and shortly afterwards at the Bloomfield Track. The rain held off for a while, we were asked by a tourist in a little white hire sedan if we thought she might be able to get to Cooktown this way. We advised her

against it, without even knowing that around the corner, down a hill only 500 metres away was our first creek crossing. Just as well she stopped to ask.



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Ever adventurous Joe walked the crossing ahead of us, we took the 4wd over slowly, it was quite deep, over Joes knees – and he is quite tall. Easy done, continue the trip, stopping occasionally for photo calls.

About 20km into the 30km road, we were flagged down by a lady, her partner had slid off the road down and around the next corner. We moved down slowly, came across the Rav4 in trouble, with a camper still attached, a 4wd facing downhill in the opposite direction with a boat attached, and about ½ dozen people running around waving their arms in the air.

We stopped, decided our patrol would be able to pull them out. Joe attached the Nissan to the camper trailer to firstly pull it out of the ditch, then the little Rav4 tried to move on. Sliding up the hill with the trailer in tow, us attached to the trailer was a bit scary, but we got him out, then Joe realised the RAV was not in 4WD!!@!@**!.

We forgot we had only just bought our new “bog outs” – he could have driven himself

out with them, but at least we had the recovery gear to help. Just shows, you might never need the gear to get yourself out, but may be able to help someone else. There was more to it than all this, this is just the brief version, but we did promise Joe an exciting day on the Bloomfield, and that is what he got. What a shame it was raining the whole time, John told me to stay in the car out of the rain and mud, so the camera did not even get a mention. No photo to prove the day, how sad!



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Today, the boys have gone fishing off the jetty at Palm Cove, but before they left, they set up the dehydrator making beef jerky.

Never a dull moment on the road for us.

Eating our way around Australia this month our 21st wedding anniversary at Star Apple Restaurant in Yorkeys Knob.

