



Mudgee Today

The Road to Darwin

Part 2

The homeward journey began with another day of real buzz. The intention was drive to Mataranka, where we'd spent the final night on the outward trip. This time we had chosen a different campsite, 7km east of the highway. There was nothing wrong at all with the one we'd used before, but this alternative had a thermal spring and free natural swimming pool. It was a great camp and caravan site – an iconic Australian atmosphere amongst lovely gum trees, busy enough to create interest, but not over crowded. Having set up our camp we went to find the pool. It was a short walk through rain forest type woodland and there it was – me Tarzan, you Jane – well almost!



But, but, but, the day itself had been no ordinary one. During the conference we'd spent quite a time talking to a single lady from Tasmania. As it turned out this was the start of another little plan. Marian was travelling alone, had flown from Hobart to Darwin, but was going back with a twist in her travel plan. She had booked to take the Ghan train from Darwin to Alice Springs where she intended to join a 5 day outback trek before flying home from The Alice.

We were desperate to see the Ghan, but the rail terminal is 20 or so kilometres out of Darwin. The train is so long (2 engines, at least 22 carriages plus trailers for those who want to take a car) that a terminal had to be built on flat land near the main port facilities. It's so long, that if your seat is near the end, you are driven down the platform in a coach. Marian's train was leaving at 10.30am on the same day we

were leaving town. During the previous afternoon Jacqui and I drove out to find the terminal which was deserted. By 9.30am the following morning, the scene was totally different. The train stood there in all its glory – two huge maroon coloured diesel engines and 22 silvery metal coloured carriages. Passengers were arriving by car or bus, luggage was being moved in trailers towed by a small tractor and gradually the travellers were discovering where their seats were and saying farewell to friends and relatives. There are various classes from full sleeping accommodation to just having a seat in which you sleep at night. It all depends on your budget and how far you're going. Marian was in the cheapest seats. We found her in the station café and whilst I went around taking some video footage, she and Jacqui went to find her seat. The staff allowed us aboard even though we weren't travelling. I think there were 320 passengers that day.



The train's first stop was Katherine, where it was due at 1pm, staying until 5.30pm. We reckoned we could be in Katherine to meet it. Then we could have lunch with Marian.

We left the terminal at 10am giving us a half-hour start, but then we stopped for coffee so that used up 20 minutes of the advantage. However, the train's maximum speed is between 90 and 95 km/hr, which is no more than 60 mph. Knowing that, we decided we could stay ahead of it without too much difficulty.

Once out on the highway, the rail track runs along

side for much of the way to Adelaide with occasional deviations. Inevitably we kept wondering where we were in relationship to the train. Quite by chance, in terms of it being the right moment, I glanced in my wing mirror, and there, on the track, a kilometre or so behind were two large bright headlights. We pulled off the road, stood outside the car and watched as the silver snake move by and into a stretch of woodland. Now we knew exactly what the scenario was. We were right on track!!

Adelaide River is a small but quite pretty community further down the highway. The rail track runs through the heart of the village. Could this be the next meeting point? We arrived, drove to the end of the village and found a parking spot by the metal bridge spanning the river. We crossed the road and walked up a side track to where it crossed the line. The light was bright and the sun quite hot so we hoped we wouldn't be waiting too long. Then we heard it – the distant sound of a train's klaxon (N. American style). Each blast came a little closer and after what seemed an age, the two huge headlights appeared round a distant curve. The train wasn't travelling that fast. The klaxon blared out as the driver saw us near the line. Waves were exchanged and it went on its way. Really, we were no more than 2 big train-spotting kids.

12.30pm in Katherine – we stopped for fuel and for directions to the rail-terminal, which, like Darwin was out of town, but this time only 5km. A number of coaches were parked in the car-park advertising various site-seeing tours of the area which passengers might like to join during their 4 hour stop over. At 2 minutes past 1 we heard the first sounds of the Ghan's klaxon and some minutes later the monster crept very, very slowly into the station.



As with Darwin, the platform is at ground level so the train towers above you. Sets of wheeled steps were

standing by painted markers and as soon as the train was at a standstill these were rolled up for the passengers to disembark safely. We soon found Marian and whilst she boarded a shuttle bus into the town centre, we hopped back in our car (crammed with camping gear) and met her 10 minutes later. After lunch we said our real good-byes – she was just going to wander around the shops and we were back on the road to Mataranka. The Ghan would travel through the night towards Alice Springs, arriving there 1½ days later.

After Mataranka it was south, across the Barkly Tablelands famous for its grassy plains and huge endless blue skies, passed Three Ways and on to Tennant Creek. People say that the road gets boring. Maybe if you drive it regularly it does, but not for us. Subtle changes in vegetation and soil colours eventually accumulated over many kilometres to make big differences. Grids in the highway marked the boundaries between huge cattle stations. At times huge flew over head; at others, there was no bird life at all.

On the way north, we had stopped at a truck stop called The Highway Inn close to the village of Daly Waters. Someone had suggested we should actually go into the village, 6km west of the highway, to see the “quaint” and “eccentric” pub. It went on the homeward journey “must do list.” Conveniently, Daly Waters and morning coffee coincided. The village was a bit of a ghost town but the pub has to be seen to be believed. It's old and rustic with a massive deep pink bougainvillea stretching across the front verandah roof. What a splash of intense colour that was! Opposite the pub was a tumble-down shed with the remains of a military helicopter perched precariously on its roof. Sitting on the verandah was a gentleman, maybe in his late sixties, with a guitar across his knee and a table of wood carvings including a heap of small guitar shaped pieces of plywood on which he'd engrave whatever a customer wanted. I looked at him and thought “I know your face”. Then I looked up. A black hen sat on a shelf. It was Frank Turton, “the chicken man”. Yet another coincidence! Frank was a Tamworth busker. When we'd seen him in January, the black hen was sitting on his head as he sang. Just down from the shed, which was Frank's store house, was a small decorated caravan of dubious age – yes Frank's “home-on-the-road”. It turned out he was leaving Daly Waters at the end of the week, after 5 months of busking and drinking free beer, to return to his home in Renmark. Hopefully we'll see him in Tamworth in 2009. Inside, the pub was decorated with hundreds of items of ladies underwear in all colours, shapes and imaginable sizes. It just added to the total eccentricity of the place.



Frank told Jacqui of a Western Bower Bird's bower under a tree beyond the now deserted police station. After coffee we wandered across, and sure enough, there it was, full of glittering stones and other trinkets. Sadly, the bird ran away as we approached. The nest was in the tree well above the bower. Having bought one of Frank's \$30 carved wooden plaques for our verandah, we were back on the road and heading south.

A stop at the Highway Inn again for fuel started another strange sequence of events. We pulled into the fuel pumps behind a fairly new shiny grey Holden Ute with Queensland plates. A young man was filling the vehicle but seemed very nervous, continually looking around with jerky head movements. Instead of going to pay for his fuel he simply wandered off, lit a cigarette and stood smoking apparently totally oblivious of us waiting. The other pumps were busy, so moving seemed pointless. Eventually he came back, rummaged around in a jacket pocket, went to pay and then returned. But all the time there were these signs of agitation. At last he drew away from the bowser and shot off around the back of the road house. We filled up, bought some sandwiches and a drink for lunch and motored on.

Elliot is a small village on the highway with a predominantly aboriginal population. The atmosphere



was very still and silent, except for the song of a mistletoe bird. The sun was hot. We found a small park with toilets and a picnic table in the shade of a large tree and ate our lunch. There was little grass in the area and the earth was a rich reddish brown. A number of really interesting birds entertained us including a group of Apostle Birds (they go around in 12s) also known as Lousy Jacks. It was a very pleasant lunch break except we won't speak too much about the toilets!

It was time to swap drivers, so Jacqui took over at the wheel and away we went. We'd only been on the road about 5 minutes or so, when she suddenly exclaimed, "Where did he come from?" As she said it, a large bright blue police highway patrol car screamed passed us and disappeared into the distance. Where was he going in such a hurry? A couple of hours later we had the answer. We pulled into the roadhouse at Renner Springs for a comfort break and there they all were – the patrol car, the silver grey Ute from the earlier fuel stop, 2 fully armed police officers and the young man in handcuffs, who was still very agitated. He must have driven through Elliot whilst we were having lunch. According to one of the officers, he'd been reported for driving at speed and weaving from one side of the road to the other. They were waiting for another patrol to come north from Tennant Creek to take him for assessment.

The approaches to the mining town of Tennant Creek, some 30km south of Three Ways, seemed bleak. The township has a population of around 3,500, making it the fifth largest in the Northern Territory. A third of the population is aboriginal. It's famous for being the site of the last Australian Gold Rush. By now we were 1000km south of Darwin.

In the morning light, following an interesting evening's Happy Hour at the caravan park's patio bar, where a guy in his early forties sat on a stool playing his guitar and singing well known country songs – turned out we'd met him at Tamworth last year too – and a reasonable sleep punctuated by the sounds of many barking dogs, outback style, Tennant Creek looked quite tidy. We thought a real effort was being made to add some interesting new buildings along the main street.

Tennant Creek to Alice Springs is 531km (330 miles). The major point of interest on this stretch of road is the Devil's Marbles. The area is located near Wauchope, 114km south of T. C. It contains formations of naturally rounded and oval boulders called **Karlu Karlu** by the local Aborigines. The boulders are located in a traditional Aboriginal sacred site and are important to the local Aboriginal people. The

Kaytetye people believe that the boulders are the eggs of the rainbow serpent. Over time, the ceremonies and stories related to the Devil's Marbles have largely been lost, but the site is still very important to the tribe and may be considered to be among the oldest religious sites in the world. The Reserve is accessible (by short pathways) all year round and has a network of pathways with information boards and a basic camping area. The Devil's Marbles are made of granite, which surfaced like a little geological island in the desert, surrounded by incredible amounts of sandstone. The granite is thought to have formed about 1.7 billion years ago as a result of the hardening of magma within the earth's crust. Thick layers of sandstone on top of it put a lot of pressure on this granite. After the folding of the earth's crust, which led to the lifting of the granite, and the erosion of the sandstone, the granite came to surface. The pressure was gone which caused the granite to be able to expand; cracks formed, and it fell apart in big, square blocks. Subsequently they have become rounded through various forms of erosion.



The whole scene is quite extraordinary and the colours, set against a clear deep blue sky, were amazing.

Alice Springs was to be a 3 night stop-over. You can't really go to Alice without staying a short while because it's like no other place. It's a busy desert town, surrounded by the hilly rugged ridges of the MacDonnell Ranges. We had Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday before heading to Port Augusta on Monday. Jacqui had been in touch with the President and Treasurer of Alice Springs U3A and we had instructions to ring the latter when we were settled into the campsite. Soon after Jacqui rang, Kathy came to meet us and we arranged for a morning coffee meet on Sunday.

We spent most of Saturday at "The Desert Park" on the outskirts of Alice, which is a well organised and

fascinating desert nature reserve. The plants, shrubs and birds were absolutely fantastic. Differing trees and shrubs attracted birds of all sizes and colours. The intensity of colours in some of the smaller birds was just amazing. During the afternoon we went to a falconry display in a pre-constructed amphitheatre and watched a number raptors being flown and fed by two young ladies. It really was an absorbing visit. Someone had said, "You'll need a couple of hours". We were there for 6 and could have stayed longer but the afternoon was drifting on, preparations were being made for a wedding and we had some shopping to do for supper.

That night's sleep was rudely interrupted by a violent storm – not much rain, about 5mm, but the noise was deafening and the lightning spectacular. If I'd had more courage I'd have been outside with the camera.

On Sunday, Jacqui gained a friend! A Major Mitchell's Cockatoo came and sat on the little table outside the tent. It was quite tame and equally destructive pecking at the label on the coffee jar, virtually ripping it off, followed by pecking the metal band off a teaspoon. It followed her around for a while, and then wandered away to the next door campers. We wondered if it belonged to anyone living in a permanent home on the site and might have escaped during the storm, but we were assured no one owned a bird of that nature. In the end Jacqui contacted the Animal Rescue Service, who put her in touch with their "winged" department and within 20 minutes a lady arrived with a cage, captured the stray and took it off to the local rescue centre.



After morning coffee, the two U3A ladies offered to take us on a driven tour of the town. Anzac Park has a high point and war memorial from which you can view the whole town and surrounding hills. As always, being with locals gets one to places that might

have been missed on such a short stay. After lunch we had 2 objectives. I wanted to go to Simpson's Gap; Jacqui wanted to "ride a camel".

The West MacDonnell National Park incorporates a number of scenic gaps, including Simpsons Gap,



one of the most prominent water-holes in the West MacDonnell Ranges. The area is an important spiritual site to the Arrernte Aboriginal people, where several dreaming trails and stories cross. At dawn or dusk it is renowned as a place to see black-footed rock wallabies along the short walking track into the gap. Large repre-

sentative samples of many of the vegetation communities of the MacDonnell Ranges are found in the Simpsons Gap area, including large areas of mulga. It is a major stronghold for over 40 rare and relict plants.

It was about a 15km drive to the car park near the Gap, followed by a short walk at the side of, or in, a dry river bed. Closer to the gap, we found water. The rock colours, accentuated by bright sunlight and strong shadows, painted an exquisite picture. At one point we spied the ears and head of a rock wallaby fairly high up in the rocks. Notices asked tourists not to disturb the habitat.

Camels are quite common in the Top End of Australia. There are herds out in the wild, but we only saw one (camel, not herd). However, there are camel farms, some of which provide organised treks. There's one such farm 5km south of Alice.

So, from Simpsons Gap, we went camel hunting, found the farm, watched a line of animals being prepared for a trek and then spoke very nicely (don't we always?) to a lady who offered to take Jacqui on a 10 minute ride (for a small fee – but of course!). I have the pictures to prove it!

By 8.30am on Monday morning we were all packed up and driving out of Alice through the Heavitree



Gap, where road and rail squeeze side-by-side through the range. Coober Pedy was our next destination with a spare day to explore what we'd been told is "like nothing on earth". Was it to be more like the moon?

From Alice we were driving through the red desert. This was like nothing we'd experienced too. The faithful railway line was never far away and at one spot where we just stopped for a stretch of the legs, we stood on the line and stared to the horizon. Long before it reached there, the track had disappeared into a point. Great perspective for the budding artist or technical drawer. Road trains drove by, campervans and caravans seen earlier caught up and motored on, only for us to see them parked up a little later taking a break. Each day's travel would be punctuated by comments and queries like, "Didn't we pass them a while back?" Or "They were at the campsite last night." A young eastern European 4-some camped close to us in Tennant Creek. They were at the Devils' Marbles. Then they camped near us in Alice and we saw their car again in Coober Pedy. As you travel and take breaks, you talk to those around. It's amazing what you find out about people. So many will tell you their life history, even though you're complete strangers.

20th July 1969: The world heard, "That's one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind", as the American Astronauts walked on the moon for the very first time. Coober Pedy, South Australia – earth or moon?

Coober Pedy, Opal Mining Capital of the World; the red desert, with some scrubby type vegetation, slowly turned to a dustier environment with little or no vegetation. Increasing numbers of conical spoil heaps of varying sizes, debris from opal prospecting gave the landscape a lunar like appearance. I don't mean to be disparaging to this famous desert mining town but it has an atmosphere and character which

is hard to describe without using the word “shanty”. In Europe, one would think it no more than a village, but the Australians regularly use the title of “town” for even quite small communities. We booked ourselves in to a caravan/camping park for 2 nights. The sinking sun gave the desert mounds a pinkish glow.



We spent the following morning around the town. An initial drive around didn't take too long – most side roads petering out into dirt tracks. For many, the town would have been depressing and might have seemed untidy and uncared for, but that would be without first studying the history and culture of the place, including the decline of local opal mining. Groups of aboriginals hovered, many of them drinking bottled alcohol even though it was quite early in the morning. The Intervention Programme in the Northern Territory did not include South Australia, and we were told that Coober Pedy's alcohol related problems are increasing as some aboriginals move south to escape the more stringent regulations back north.

Temperatures in a Coober Pedy summer are very uncomfortable so quite a few families live underground in caves excavated in the rock. A couple of shops, a café and a hotel are all partly under ground, hewn out of the rock to provide a cooling temperature with little annual variation. The hotel really was impressive in the way the architect had combined surface and underground facilities. Hillside slopes are littered with 90mm plastic piping sticking vertically upwards like chimneys – ventilation shafts. Some friends of ours in Mudgee have friends who own such a home and we spent most of the afternoon with them in their very interesting “house”. They live about 6km out of the town along a track which appears to go nowhere. However, Brian suddenly turned off the track up a slope to a flattened out area with an easterly facing verandah, which included a window and door in the back wall. On one side was a fairly large barn-type shed. The easterly view from the verandah is just desert with some low

grey green scrubby vegetation. The horizon is over 45 miles away (Brian talks in imperial measures). The only “break” in the scene is a small group of low, flat-topped hills in the middle distance. At one point, we saw an approaching cloud of dust as a vehicle sped along the dirt road coming from the direction of Oodnadatta. Brian and Judy love their view. Brian said there are times when it's almost too wonderful to look at.



Living in a cave has other advantages besides that of the steady all-year-round temperatures, so no heating/cooling expenses. For example you can excavate passages and additional rooms without requiring planning approval. Depending on the rock formation, you can create interesting levels. There are few windows to clean. Their home was lovely in its unusualness. They had started it digging by hand, but later extensions had been created with mechanical help. The floors were all carpeted and the walls painted white to reflect the electric light. Brian is an opal miner, whose son has left opal in favour of gold, but dad still works in his mine and creates small pieces of jewellery in his underground workshop. These are subsequently marketed in their daughter's shop on the Queensland coast. That's why there just happens to be two light aircraft in the hanger sized shed and a runway marked out in the desert a little way in front of the house. But that's another story!

South to Port Augusta, with a short diversion to Woomera to see the remains of the rocket development testing area and the out door aircraft and rocket museum. The little town is very clean and smart, but was somewhat deserted except for a few tourists like ourselves. Original military married quarters have been converted into private homes, but, as with all these places, you cannot erase that military atmosphere.

Not only does the landscape and climate change as one travels these huge distances, but also the type



and volume of traffic. Driving through Queensland and on into the Territory, many of the road trains were cattle trucks. Two trailers will carry 90 head of cattle, so you can see how many 3 or 4 trailers will move in one go. Queensland produces huge cattle numbers and Darwin is the outlet for live stock being shipped to Indonesia. However, once south of Three Ways and Tennant Creek, we noticed the numbers of cattle trucks falling away. Other types of load took their place!

Moving house is a common phrase. Moving THE house is more common in Australia than in UK. In fact it's very common. On the road south from Alice Springs to Port Augusta, we had repeated meetings with OVERSIZE loads. In NSW a truck carrying large rainwater tanks is classified as oversized. In NT and South Australia large mining equipment such as huge dumper trucks and half a pre-constructed house is true OVERSIZE. Now you know as well as me, if you meet a half house on the move, you know what to expect fairly quickly. Exactly! The other half!



These loads take up most of the width of the highway, with the truck itself being driven down the centre. So what warning do you get, and what do you do? First comes a vehicle way ahead of the convoy with flashing orange lights and the warning "OVERSIZE". This is followed by a period of nothing

else coming towards you. Now the fun! Blue and red flashing lights with pulsating headlights. Ah! The Police Highway Patrol Car! Yes! But it's coming straight at you on your side of the road! There's only one place to go. The roadside verge! Then stop where you are. Now comes the wide load, and boy, is it wide? No don't move! Here comes the other half! What a way though to clear the traffic to the side. Just drive straight at it! Naturally, we had to take some pictures, but not of the police. They might have been less than impressed.

One is almost in Port Augusta before you leave the desert, but during the last 15 or so kilometres, there are great views of the Flinders Ranges to the south east, which make a contrasting skyline to what has gone before. Port Augusta is divided by the river which opens out into the Spencer Gulf. The main shopping area fronts the water on the eastern side and provides a pretty quayside location for car parking. The railway line, which at this point is a combination of both east-west and north-south rail links is also on the eastern side. The overnight clanking of shunted trucks made a "welcome" change from barking dogs! Port Augusta claims to be "The Cross Roads of Australia".

Once south of Port Augusta and Port Pirie, the landscape changes totally. From here we turned east through the rolling hills and lush pastoral scenes of central South Australia. Deep green paddocks were interspersed with areas of vivid canola yellow (oil seed rape to those in UK). Homesteads looked well cared for and quite prosperous. Quaint little towns like Burra and Spalding, yes Spalding, had added character because local sandstone had been used in many of the buildings, especially council offices and churches. We smiled at the name of the café in Burra, where we had lunch. "Cook O'Burra". What a clever use of words!



Our mid afternoon stop was in Morgan, an historic town at the side of the Mighty River Murray. Sadly, it's not as mighty as has been known because of the drought. Never-the-less the river side scene, with car ferry, wide flat bottomed house boats, numerous pelicans and a huge flock of corellas, was lovely. At the height of the paddle steamer era, Morgan was the busiest river port in South Australia.



Not far out of Morgan we passed a right turn signed to Bordertown (family will understand the nostalgia) although it was well over 250kms away, so too far to divert.

Our camping trek was now in its final stages. It was Thursday afternoon and all being well we'd be home late on Saturday. The "Riverlands" surrounding the Murray is great vine growing country – South Australian wines rank with the best. Our Thursday night stop at the side of Lake Bonney was not far from the Banrock Station Winery.

Lake Bonney is a huge area of water – again somewhat diminished and with wider beaches than in years gone by. We booked in to the lake-side park and set up camp right by the beach looking due north across the water. Various birds, including more pelicans, came and went. A cluster of skeletal Red

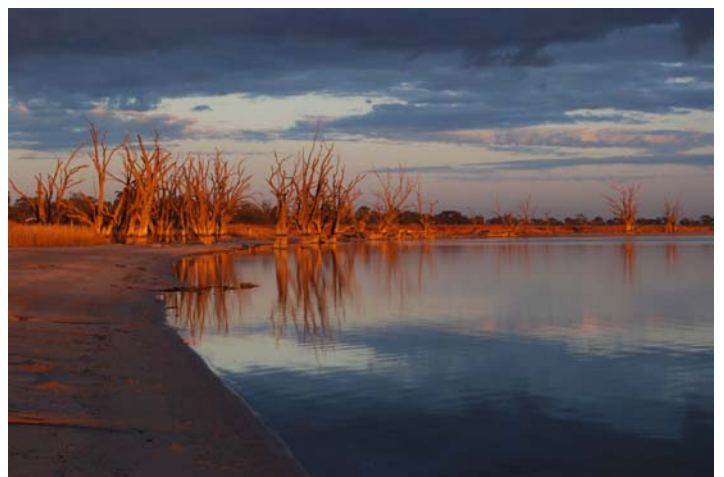


River Gums, once majestic in life yet still so in their architectural remnants crowded the shoreline to the west. As the late afternoon turned to evening their increasing silhouetted forms became compulsive viewing. A stroll along the beach before a BBQ'd supper was the perfect end to another wonderful day.

So we had seen the lake by sunset to our left. How would dawn be coming in on the right? Jacqui is very good at early mornings and so it was still relatively dark when she emerged from the tent well ahead of Friday's dawn. Thursday's sunset did not fall into the "spectacular" classification. The silhouetted trees had made the scene more dramatic. BUT the sunrise was spectacular. The visual power of the sun's rays in a sky which was looking more threatening by the minutes was..... what adjectives haven't I already



used to death? It was supreme. The ancient Red River Gums became pink statues, the intensity changing as the dawn turned to full daylight and an extraordinary scene became quite ordinary. Wow!



But there was trouble brewing in the northern sky as a rain belt developed. Do we shower and strike camp or get packed up first. We got it wrong! By the time we had showered it was raining and the tent was wet. Our verbal response was a little on the colourful

side although less so than sunrise had been. Packing a wet tent is not an endearing process. However, this was the first mishap since meeting the Roo in the middle of the road, so hey-ho, pack the car differently and have the tent loosely folded laying over the top of the other gear. After breakfast in McDonald's at Renmark, chatting to a guy who was an itinerant citrus fruit picker through Queensland, Victoria and South Australia but couldn't pick oranges because of the rain, things weren't so bad. Really, they weren't bad at all, especially as we'd decided we'd finished with the camping on this trip and would spend our final night before home in a cabin at Hay on the River Murrumbidgee.

Renmark is just inside the South Australian border. 139km further on through the northern tip of Victoria, Mildura sits by the Murray which creates a natural state border with New South Wales. Mildura to Hay, where we arrived late on Friday afternoon, is almost 300km. \$50 (\$22) for a basic cabin seemed ok to us. The tent was much drier so we folded it into a smaller package, but it was gritty from the beachside of Thursday night and Friday's rain which had long since subsided. It would need some sorting once we were home. The caravan park was on the edge of the town and right by the river, so we had another gentle water-side stroll and then drove the short distance to find somewhere for an evening meal. The typical Australian hotel/pub was busy but had a very pleasant atmosphere. The food was very good. Once one gets to this stage in any long journey, home beckons with increasing vigour. Our final day on the road was 611km (382 miles), so we were up and away early in the hope of being home before dark. The weather was distinctly cool and rather breezy, so we pushed on through the day, still having our regular breaks and change of driver, but with no desire to hang around.

It's always good to get home isn't it?

In some ways we felt sad because this particular adventure was over. In other ways we were uplifted because of the seeing, the doing, the learning and the people we'd met; some of whom we hope to meet again somehow, somewhere.

We were truly grateful for the friendship and hospitality of those in Darwin who gave us the reason for going and made the whole trip viable.

We were more than thankful too, that all the plans had run so smoothly and successfully.

So, just a few statistics from the log book:

Outward journey:	3,804km (2,377 miles)
Return journey:	4,474km (2,796 miles)
Total travel:	8,278km (5,173 miles)

Our worst moments:

Jacqui – waking up cold and numb on the second morning in Charleville at -2°C.

David – the Kangaroo hitting the car.

Best moments:

Too many to mention.

An outstanding time:

Jacqui – visiting the Desert Park in Alice Springs

David – Dawn at Lake Bonney

One word from both of us for the whole trip :

AWESOME