

Kalumburu to Wolfe Creek



Miners Pool

(Aboriginal Land) we headed off for Barnett River Station and camped at Manning Gorge. It was very hot about 38C but the walk into the gorge was great. The start and the end of the walk requires swimming across the Manning River. Foam fruit boxes are provided on the banks of the creek to float your back packs cameras etc. The gorge was stunning with fantastic swimming.

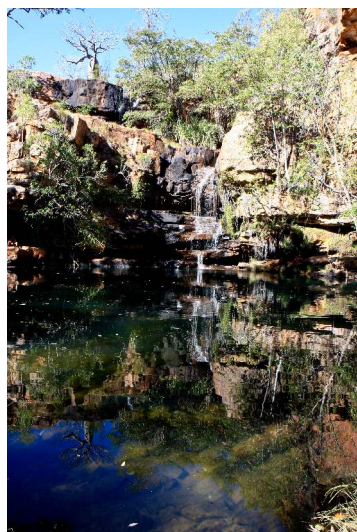
We left Kalumburu on the 5th of Sept and headed for Drysdale River Station where we camped at the Miners Pool. A drive of around 200k – an easy day but in parts a bloody rough road.

The next day we headed back to the Gibb River Road but got caught behind a road train until we reached the GRR.

At GRR we headed west to Barnett Gorge where we were advised that there was good camping on the banks of the creek. However when we arrived we found some newly erected “NO Camping” signs and so, not wanting to have any issues,

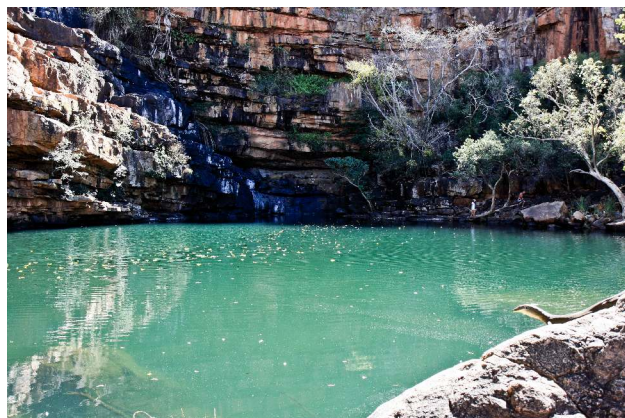


Manning Gorge



Galvins Gorge

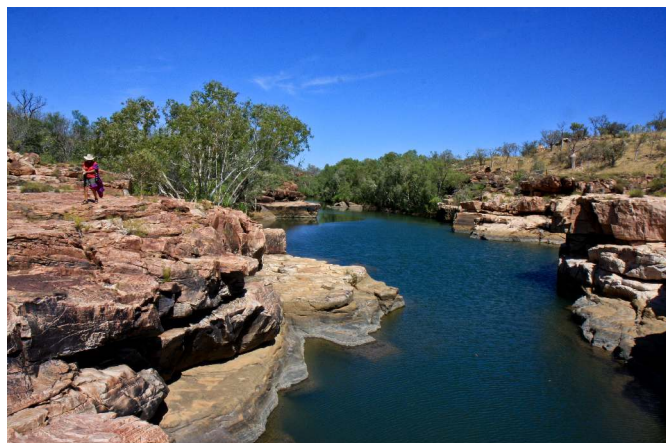
Next morning we headed out early and dropped into Galvans Gorge and ran into and APT Tour Bus group but we where in and out before we got in their way. We then went into Adcock Gorge which was 4WD access only. The last 1km was too rugged for us to take the trailer in without a lot of heart ache and slow going so we hoofed it in. No water over the falls this late in the season but beautiful swimming hole.



Adcock Gorge

We then headed back to the GRR and onto the turn off to Charnley River Station.

Charnley River Station is 43K off the main road. We set up camp and fixed a picnic lunch and headed for DillieGorge. Had it to ourselves – had a swim and lunch – very nice spot (as they all are). We then drove onto Grevillea Gorge but was not enough water for swimming. Returned to camp and that night we had a fire, cooked damper and carrot slice in the camp oven. Charnley River is a great place to camp except that the station generator was very loud. Had it not been for the generator we would have possibly stayed another night.



Dillie Gorge - Charnley River Station

Next day we headed back to GRR and then onto Imintji Road House to fill up with diesel. This was a Aboriginal Community Road House and as such only had diesel – no unleaded. More importantly they had Streets Magnums. The road house was being run by a couple of white guys

who were like us – travelling around but taking up jobs from time to time on their travels. They had been at the road house for about 8 months and having a ball.

Drove into Bell Gorge in the Leopold Ranges Conservation Park about 9:30am and scored ourselves an individual, secluded camp site on the banks of Bell Creek. We had lunch then headed off to visit the Gorge. This was really stunning. With a bit of effort you could get to the pools below the falls where there was fantastic swimming and few other tourists bothered to make the effort.

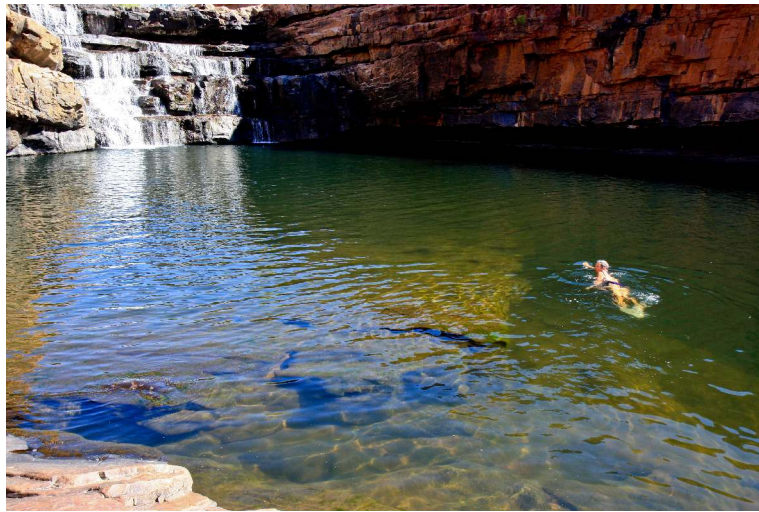


Bell Gorge - Above the falls



Bell Gorge - Below the falls

We continue to be left in absolute awe at the seemingly endless vistas and scenery, waterholes and gorges, as we make our way across the Kimberley.



Chris cools of in Bell Gorge

We then decided to have a rest day as our camp site was so good. Mind you the temperatures are now running at around 40C and the march flies have come out of hiding in the droves. So we took our chairs down and sat them in the creek (in the water) where it was very shady and cool and limited number of march flies. That night we cooked a roast on the Cobb.

The next day (10th Sept) we set off for Derby.

Stopped at a very remote snack place (“Rob's Snack Place” Near Windjana Gorge T/O) where this great guy (Rob) with no voice box (talks through his throat) has set up a caravan and sells pies, pasties, ice creams etc from a caravan. Had a pie then travelled the last 124K to Derby. Set up camp then drove back the 124 K to the road side snack place to pick up my wallet that I left behind at one of the tables. Don't you hate that.

Had Chinese for tea – almost every town of any size always has a Chinese Restaurant/Takeaway. Next day shopped and had a great lunch at “The Point” restaurant on the wharf.

The following day we waited for the car to get an oil change then headed back down the Gibb River Road heading for the Windjana Gorge T/O. Of course we had to go back into Rob's Snack place to buy lunch and thank him once again for rescuing my wallet. Have now done this 120k 4 times after having retrieved my wallet. Camped that night at Windjana Gorge. Interesting but not as picturesque as other places we had been. Mind you we were probably put off by the heat with no relief. Also now that we were a bit further south there was not enough water for swimming anywhere so late in the season. However what water was at Windjana Gorge was infested with literally hundreds of fresh water crocs. It was truly an amazing sight. We have never seen such a concentration of



Approach to Windjana Gorge

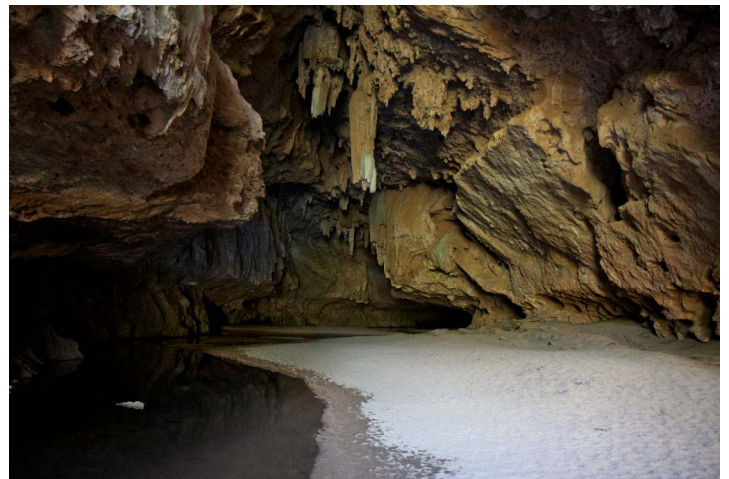


Inside Windjana Gorge

crocs in one area. Stayed 2 nights – cooked another Damper and Carrot Slice in the camp oven but got the heat wrong for the damper which was not our most successful nights cooking. Carrot Slice was good though. Next



Camped at Windjana Gorge



Tunnel Creek

day while still camped at Windjana Gorge we drove to Tunnel Creek. This was quite amazing, a creek running fair and square under a mountain range. Used in the old days by the Aborigines to escape the troopers as the entrance is not obvious. We walked through the creek to the other side of the range. The range is a Devonian Reef made of solid limestone with fossils scattered through the rock and is the same geology as Windjana Gorge.

Next day headed for Fitzroy crossing – the road from Windjana Gorge to the Great Northern Highway was very corrugated. Stayed at Fitzroy River Lodge – what a great caravan park. We chose to have a non powered site which meant we had a beautiful lawn site under shady trees – really quite good for a formal Caravan Park which



Geikie Gorge

we normally try to steer clear of. Went for a boat trip up Geikie Gorge which is more of the Devonian Reef that we observed at Windjana Gorge. Quite a good tour.

We weren't looking forward to Fitzroy Crossing as our memory of it from 1984 was not really a town but a mountain of beer cans on the side of the road and drunk persons?? everywhere. We were pleasantly surprised.

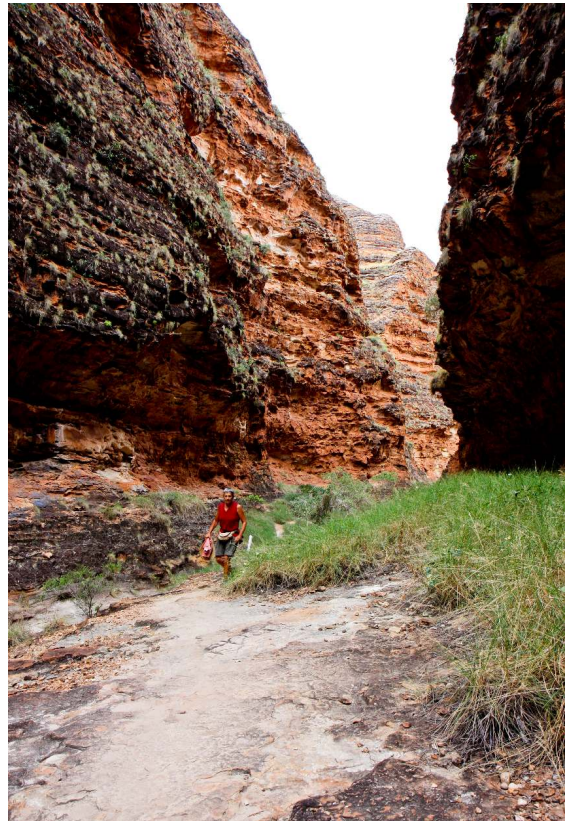
Drove to Halls Creek the next day and visited the Information Centre to get info on the Bungle Bungle Range. Also cruised past the the local caravan park and was not impressed so set off for Old Halls Creek which apparently has an alternative Caravan Park to the main one at Halls Creek. If you ever want to experience Australia's most unusual caravan park this is a must. But only put 1 night aside for the experience. It was run by a Balinese Woman and was a hotch potch of old junk, dropouts who had no where else to stay, and guys escaping maintenance. We had a fire and cooked damper and coconut slice in the camp oven. All the time getting advise from my new mate Andrew who was a local resident escaping maintenance. Turns out he is qualified baker and was pissed, so he was very helpful in our effort to cook damper etc. Eventually he admitted though that he would have no idea how to cook in a camp oven and was quite flabbergasted at the result that we achieved. "Sheeeeeet maaatey, thatsh bloody fantashtich". Our hostess complained about the severe heat and consequently went for a swim (actually not really – she can't swim) in the small pool/dam that they keep filled with artesian water. The pool was next to our camp site. Our hostess proceeded to walk into the dam fully clothed and then talked non stop in broken English interspersed with screams if she looked like getting over her depth.

The next morning we headed off for the Bungle Bungle Ranges (Purnululu National Park). We had double checked at the Information office in Halls Creek as to the access with camper trailer in tow. She said yes they were allowed but it was very slow going and she could no emphasise enough the poor condition of the road and the difficulty of access.. We had talked to a guy in Kununurra who did a few K's along the track (after leaving his caravan at Kununurra) in his Nissan Patrol and was so concerned that he was going to do the Patrol some harm that he turned around and headed back to Kununurra. What a woos! Anyway, throwing caution to the wind we headed into the park. What an absolutely wonderful drive, with amazing scenery even before reaching the park. And while the road was pretty challenging, particularly with 4WD tour buses belting along at break neck speed in the opposite direction. The real issue with the road was a lot of tight bends and crests with a very narrow road, virtually single car width.

The Purnululu NP really is something, and like Ayers Rock (Uluru) has world heritage status. We did 3 Walks over 2 wonderful days. Echidna Chasm, Mini Palm and Cathedral and Dome Walks. On the second day we did

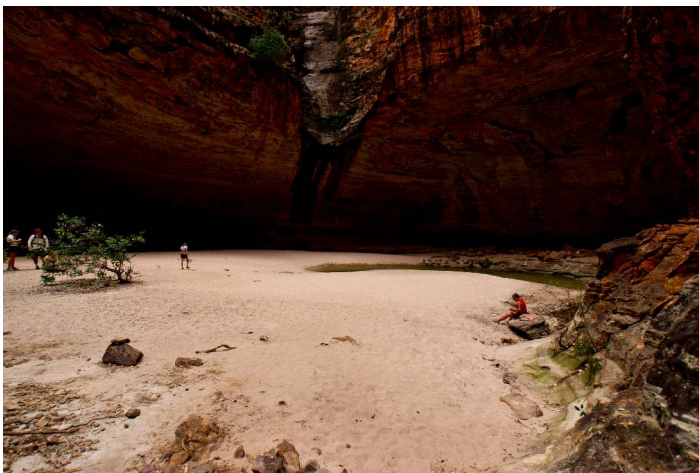


Christine is dwarfed in Echidna Chasm



Cathedral Walk

about 10k before lunch and fortunately there was cloud cover and even a few spots of rain which made it bearable as the temps had been running around 40 C for the past few days.



Inside the Dome – Bungle Bungle Ranges



Bungle Bungle Ranges

On the morning of the 3rd day we took off for the Tanami Track. As you would guess, we stayed well clear of Old Halls Creek Caravan park and our charming Balinese Hostess.

The Tanami T/O is 16 km SE of Halls Creek. And our aim was to camp at Wolfe Creek Meteorite Crater that night. On the way in mid afternoon we ran into a convoy of about 11 Britz Hire 4WD full of Germans. They are known amongst travellers as “Fritz in Britz”. Also they must be special Toyota 4WD's as they go faster than any other 4WD that we have come across in our travels. And I kid you not they are bloody everywhere in the outback. You pray that they never forget which side of the road they are supposed to be on. Thankfully these guys were travelling in the opposite direction and we therefore virtually had Wolfe Creek camp ground to ourselves except for one late night arrival. We found out why he was late the following morning when after breaking camp about an hour after he had set off we set off back to the Tanami, only to find this other guy about $\frac{3}{4}$ the way out and it is only 23k. At first we thought he must have had car trouble but it turned out to be a couple of Poms in a Mazda or something that they thought was a 4WD. They were doing about 10kph. Mind you I must admit, the corrugations



Portion of Wolfe Creek Crater



Dragon tries to pass himself off as a rock

were among the worst we had experienced and were relentless for the entire 23K.

We obviously hadn't prepared well like some other travellers we ran into who had bought the movie “Wolfe Creek” and watched it while camped at the crater. Apparently the movie is very scary and a good recipe for getting no sleep while camped at the crater.

End part 4

Next Part – The Tanami to Alice Springs