

Just Cruisin with Mick and Sally

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River Murray South Australia & Darling River New South Wales - May 3rd 2010 until May 16th 2010.

This trip sees us traveling from Tanunda in the Barossa Valley of South Australia to the River Murray before heading to the Darling River and the Menindee Lakes system near Broken Hill in New South Wales.

Monday 3rd May 2010: It was 8.39am when we pulled away from the Tanunda Caravan Park for the 120 kilometre drive to Hogwash Bend which was to be our destination for the next two nights. It was good to be able to show Malcolm and Sue this spot because we had spoken about it so often in the past. With a quick stop at the Nuriootpa Foodland to pick up some fresh bread and milk, we were soon heading of towards the riverland. Malcolm refueled with diesel at Blanchtown on the way through and then it was grass hopper country as we drove towards Morgan. By the time we arrived at Hogwash Bend it was 10.58am and it was a quick clean of the vehicles and caravans before all of the guts set like concrete. The afternoon weather was perfect for lazing near the river watching the occasional houseboat go by and then to see the water reflections just prior to the sun setting. Some of us not even using jumpers before we retired from the evening campfire.



Tuesday 4th May 2010: After a star filled night and a blue sky mid morning, we watched as the black clouds rolled in and the showers of rain began to fall. As soon as the first shower started, the last one fell with the sky clearing to be another pleasant afternoon. Malcolm's second battery stopped holding charge so it was a quick drive into Waikerie where we picked up a new battery for Malcolm's Patrol and some fly screen wire to protect the radiator at the front of our Patrol from all of the grass hoppers should we come across more on our travels. With a few showers on and off during the remainder of the day, the weather wasn't bad enough to force us inside for any more than a few minutes at a time. One thing that we did find out this trip was that it wasn't a good idea to drink sambuca before port as the sambuca made the port taste a bit watery. We enjoyed our two days at Hogwash Bend and tomorrow we move off to Cobdogla where we intend on stopping for one night only.

Wednesday 5th May 2010: We were not out of bed long before we realized that there wasn't very much power coming through from the second battery in our Patrol to the caravan. On checking what was wrong, we soon found out that our battery has failed over night, perhaps it went out in sympathy to Malcolm's battery the day before. The campfire was stoked up at day break and after a cooked breakfast over the fire, Sally and I showered before we packed our things away and we were on our way towards Waikerie by 9.10am. We stopped to purchase a replacement battery for our Patrol on the way through Waikerie and after a quick stop at the Kingston bridge lookout, we arrived at the Cobdogla Station Caravan Park at 10.25am after our sixty five kilometre road trip for the day.



Park Report - [Click here](#) to read the full report on this Caravan Park

Our Park rating - 7 out of 10.  [Click here](#) to see rating numbers.

Once set up and lunch was out of the way we all took a drive to have a look at Lock 3 and Barmera before returning back to the Caravan Park for happy hour. The wind was now cold by 4.30pm forcing us inside for the evening before retiring for the night.



Thursday 6th May 2010: 8.53am and we were on our way to Renmark which was to be our location for the next two nights. With time on our side we were soon at Berri where we stopped so that Malcolm could do some banking and to allow us to enjoy a cup of coffee at Cragg's Creek Cafe which is situated on the banks of the River Murray with great views of the river. With a total of 65 kilometres to travel for the day, it was 10.54am when we arrived at Renmark and booked into the Riverbend Caravan Park. After setting up and eating lunch we went for a drive to have a look at Lock 5 where major maintenance work was being carried out. From here it was a quick tourist drive around Renmark before returning back to the Caravan Park for a relaxing afternoon.



Park Report - [Click here](#) to read the full report on this Caravan Park

Our Park rating - 9 out of 10.  [Click here](#) to see rating numbers.

Friday 7th May 2010: With blue skies and a gentle breeze, Sally and I set off to see what photos we could take while Malcolm did some running repairs to his UHF radio and Sue attended to some washing. Once back at the Park, the roles almost reversed with Malcolm and Sue off to do some shopping while we looked after Sasha at the Caravan Park. It also gave Sally an opportunity to do some necessary washing while I started to sort out some photos for the web site. By this time Ruby had now worked out how to slip out of her harness when she wanted to go for a run which will cause us problems if we are not too careful with it.



Not very much was done during the afternoon, Sally went and did some grocery shopping ready for the coming few days while I stayed back at the Caravan Park with the dogs. Malcolm was in need of some spare fuses for the rear cigarette lighter plug which runs his Engle fridge as it had now blown two fuses on the trip so far so it was a quick trip into town for some fuses and at the same time we fueled up with diesel. The rest of our afternoon was spent at the Caravan Park enjoying the perfect weather that we were experiencing.

Saturday 8th May 2010: Under ideal conditions to be towing with no wind and clear skies, it was 8:00am when we left Renmark to start heading for Mildura which was 140 kilometres away where we would have a look around before

finally traveling to Wentworth and setting up for two nights. It was the first time that Sue had been into Victoria so she had to get out at the State border to walk on Victorian dirt for the first time. Arriving at Mildura by 9:51am, Malcolm refueled his Patrol and then we headed to the river Lock where we were lucky enough to see a paddle steamer pass through the Lock. From here we headed to Wentworth where we arrived at 11:35am and booked into the Willow Bend Caravan Park for two night.



Park Report - [Click here](#) to read the full report on this Caravan Park

Our Park rating - 5 out of 10.  [Click here](#) to see rating numbers.

After a bite for lunch we ventured down to the river junction where the Murray River and the Darling River both come together to form one river as it makes it's way down to South Australia. As we drove around Wentworth, it was plain to see the tributes that have been paid to the Fergie tractor which was instrumental in the work done to save Wentworth from being washed away during the record flood of 1956. From here we took the short six kilometre drive out to the Perry Sand hills before returning back to the Caravan Park for the afternoon.



Sunday 9th May 2010: Today would have been the slowest start to any of our days so far on this trip with no one venturing outside too early. Once we were all up and about, Malcolm and Sue went for a walk while Sally and I went down to the Wentworth Warf area for a look around. Mid morning Malcolm and I went and had a look at the old Wentworth Goal where we both found it very interesting to read what happened within the goal so many years ago.

While Sally was playing on the computer and reading Facebook, she noticed that Gordon and Jill Sanders who were friends of Malcolm and Sue had made a posting on their Facebook that they were at the river junction so a quick drive soon located them and they all returned to the Caravan Park for a coffee and a chat. Amazing how you have to go interstate at times to visit friends. The remainder of the afternoon was spent walking along the Darling River and getting ready to move off in the morning towards Menindee.

Monday 10th May 2010: Our departure time was set for 8:00am but as it turned out we were all ready and left by 7:40am, sometimes I think that if we had arranged to leave at 6:00am we would eventually leave at 5:30am as we seem to be running 30 minute ahead of schedule all of the time. Once again we were traveling under perfect weather conditions with no wind and full sunshine. We were very surprised by the number of feral goats that we came across wondering around feeding on the sides of the road and in near by paddocks. With a short stop to give our legs a stretch at the Coombah Roadhouse, we were soon at Broken Hill where we refueled before continuing on to Menindee.

By chance we thought that we would stop for a look at Copi Hollow where we had lunch before we inspected the Caravan Park and it was then that we were so impressed with the lawned sites that we enquired and booked for two nights. It was one of those things that you normally book into one place and later on find out that there was somewhere better but in this case it was not to be. We were now set up on lush green lawns at Copi Hollow Caravan Park which was right on the lake with water at our back door and, from what we had heard was the best Park in the district.



Park Report - [Click here](#) to read the full report on this Caravan Park

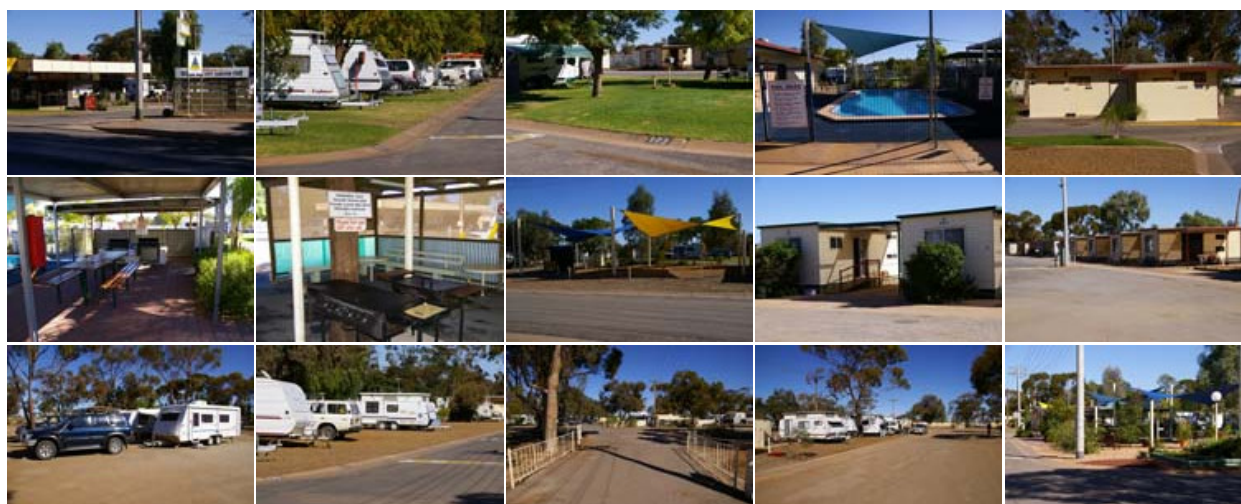
Our Park rating - 8 out of 10.  [Click here](#) to see rating numbers.

During the afternoon we went for a drive from Copi Hollow to the main Darling River Weir where we were surprised to find the amount of water being held back from flowing down the Darling River system. The amount of water that was held in the lake system made for a very impressive sight as there was water everywhere. It was back in 2003 when we were last in the area and all of the lakes at that stage were dry. One thing that did really surprise us was the number of caravans and campers that were set up along the banks of the Pamamaroo Lake. From here we visited Menindee before returning back to the Copi Hollow Caravan Park.

Tuesday 11th May 2010: We had thought about visiting the Kinchega National Park but unfortunately we were unable to take our dogs with us into the Park so we had to give it a miss. We went and had a look at the Sunset Strip which was a row of shacks on the edge of the Menindee Lake. Again it was interesting to compare the lake with water to the lake that was dry when we were here in 2003. The remainder of our day was spent back at Copi Hollow where we spoke with fellow caravanners and enjoyed a happy hour before the cold night air came in.



Wednesday 12th May 2010: Today we head back to Broken Hill for one night to allow us to restock with groceries before heading to Burra Creek Gorge for three nights. With now wind and a clear sky, we left Copi Hollow at 8:11am heading for Broken Hill where we arrived and booked into the Broken Hill City Caravan Park at 9:25am. Once set up it was then that I noticed that our door handle to our caravan had started to crack so it was off to the local Caravan repair shop to purchase a new handle which I fitted myself. The advice from the dealer that was offered to make the fitting of the handle a little easier was rather disappointing although it did improve dramatically when a senior person at the repair shop got involved.



Park Report - [Click here](#) to read the full report on this Caravan Park

Our Park rating - 7 out of 10.  [Click here](#) to see rating numbers.

After the caravan door handle job was completed and lunch finished, we went to stock up on the necessary alcohol to keep warm on the cold nights ahead at Burra Creek Gorge. From there we visited Lisa to see her new baby daughter before we returned back to the Caravan Park. We knew we were in for a cold night tonight when the outside temperature was chilly by 4:00pm. Once we had cooked our meats on the Park's BBQ's, we all remained inside to beat the cold air.

Thursday 13th May 2010: With our trip now getting closer to the end, we moved off towards Burra Creek Gorge at 9:15am to see us crossing the South Australian border at 9:45am. As we intended on eating anything that had to be handed in at the fruit fly inspection point at Oodlawirra, we pulled into a large Parking Bay, ate our lunch and then

proceeded on towards Oodlawirra and finally arriving at Burra Creek Gorge at 2:50pm. A number of campers had already arrived and set up around the camp ground with the largest group being a Motor Home Club which finally swelled to over ten Motor Homes by the end of the weekend. We were lucky enough to find some dry Pepper Trees which had been cut down by what appeared to be the local council in a bid to rid them from the area. It was soon evening and the cold air was starting to set in making us very pleased that we were able to find some extra timber to burn as well as the wood that we had brought with us.

Friday 14th & Saturday 15th May 2010: After a cold three degree overnight temperature, there wasn't many who wanted to venture outside to light the fire as it was much warmer in our beds. Once the sun started to shine the temperature soon rose to a very comfortable level. For us, both Friday and Saturday was for sitting around the campfire talking and not doing much else as it was set aside for the relaxing part of our trip. Bruce and Maree managed to meet us there late Friday afternoon with their caravan so we now had a group of six.



Sunday 16th May 2010: The overnight temperature wasn't as cold as the previous two nights which made it a little easier to leave our caravans first thing in the morning. The Motor Homes started to leave one by one as the morning passed and we eventually left our camp sites at 12:17pm to start heading home. Malcolm and Sue headed north towards Booleroo Centre while Sally, Bruce, Maree and I all headed south towards Adelaide. Our group had now split into two making us realize that our two week holiday had about ended. We finally arrived home at 2:09pm with Malcolm and Sue arriving at their home soon after that. With a change of employment it is the first time for many years now that we place our caravan under cover at home not knowing when it will be next used, hopefully it will not too long in the distant future.

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