

OUTBACK ADVENTURE

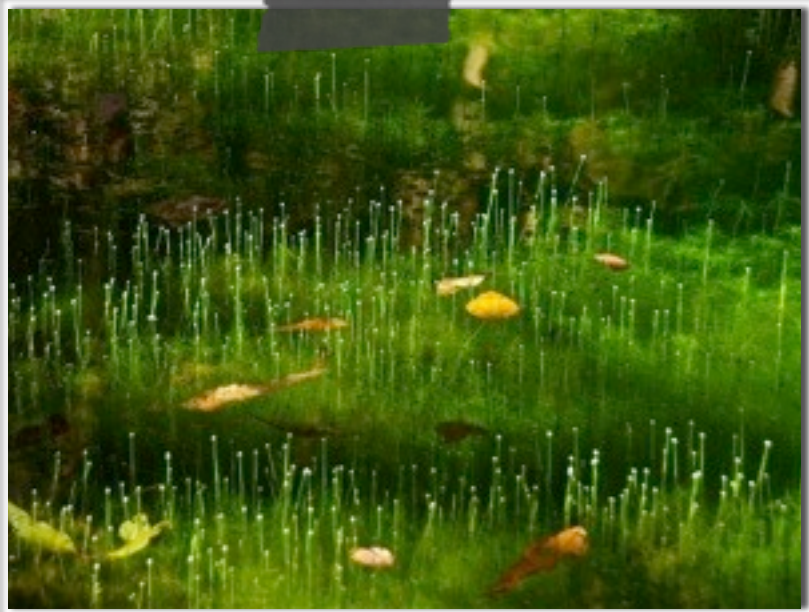
NOWAK TRAVELOGUE | APRIL, MAY | 2012

Katherine to Kimberleys

We spent two days in Katherine. One day was spent repairing and clearing the van. The next morning we walked 12 km to the Butterfly Gorge. It was a lot more testing than the one we did 2 weeks ago, but it did not have the reward of a lovely pool at the end.

Today we set off for Kununurra, just inside the Western Australian border. Kununurra is the gateway to the Kimberleys and the furthest west we intend to travel. The scenery changed a number of times. After the stunted trees, pandanus and low fan palms near Katherine, we drove through majestic dark red ragged uplifts, where hard rock layers resisted erosion.

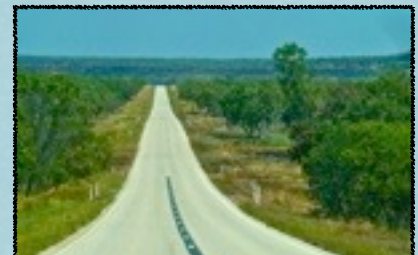
Closer to the WA border the outcrops become much more eroded and rounded. We are currently staying at Lake Argyle, the largest man made lake in Australia/Southern Hemisphere. It boasts being 21 times the size of Sydney Harbour.



FIRE Burning off is a common practice in these parts. If the high grasses and under-story were not regularly burned off in the end of the wet season, the bush-fires situation would be very dangerous.



PIONEERS We came across this monument to the Duracks - the first settlers of this land. Their story is made all the more interesting for us because, by co-incidence, we have been listening to their story -- "Kings in Grass Castles" -- via CD.



DISTANCES We reckoned it was about 550kms from Katherine to Kununurra and expected the trip to take around 6 hours. It only took 4.5hrs - why? - because there is a 1.5hr time difference between NT and WA..

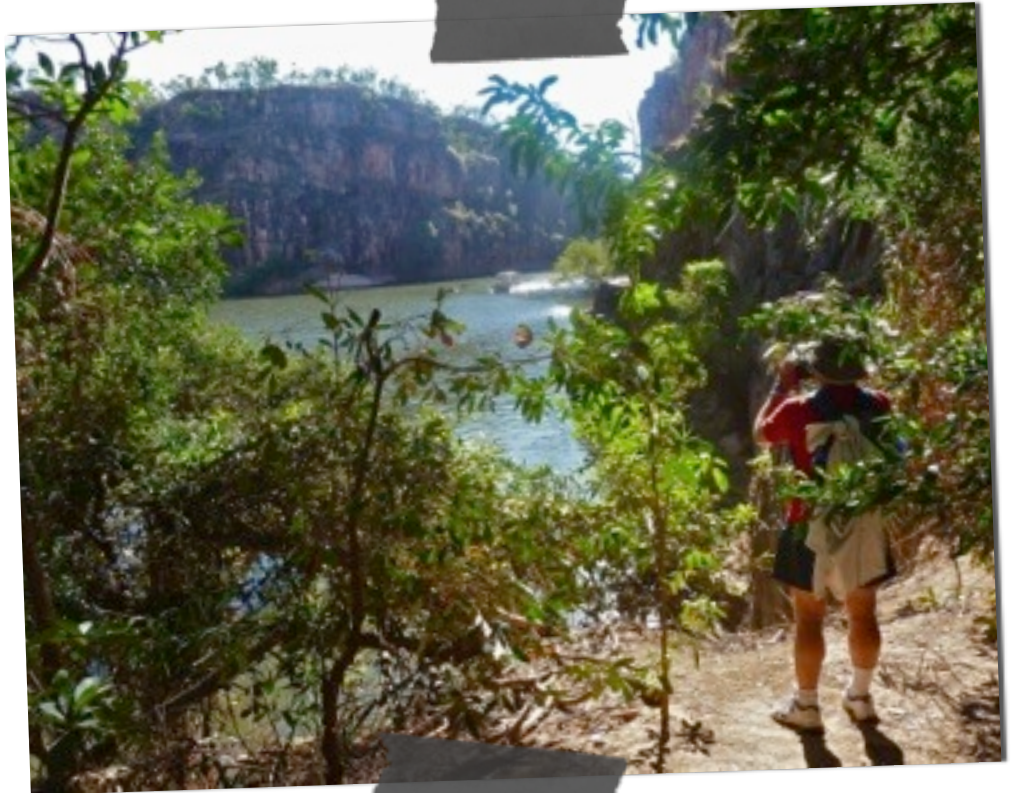
UPSIDE DOWN



AUSTRALIA'S OWN BOTTLE TREE

There is something mystical about the boab tree. The first time we caught a glimpse of the strange bloated trunk and weird spiky branches reaching up into the sky, we were filled with wonder. The closer we drove to Kununurra the more of these trees we saw. The sheer size of their trunks stood out starkly against the other more slender eucalypts. In some places there were thick stands of them. Some even had twin trunks.

One of the biggest local boabs was hollowed out and used as a prison cell.



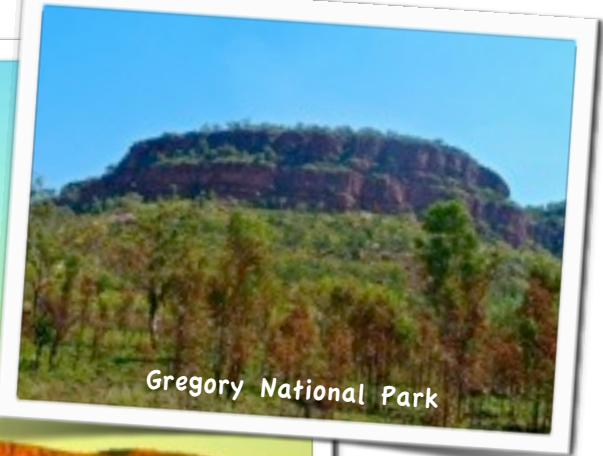
BUTTERFLY VALLEY WALK

After our first Katherine Gorge walk almost 2 weeks ago, we were keen to go on another trek. As before, we left early. We were keen to take the longer Butterfly Gorge walk. We saw lots of butterflies but were disappointed by the fact that the walk ended in a steep bank down to the river. This did not allow for any swimming. However, the shady canopy that the trees provided, and the cooling effects of the bubbling brook and rock pools, made the trip very memorable. It was only when we decided to head back that we realised how hot, rocky, uphill and long, the walk was. We got back to the car quite drained. Our camping neighbours, Peter and Darelle, walked the longer trail the day before and they too found it very uncomfortable on the way back.





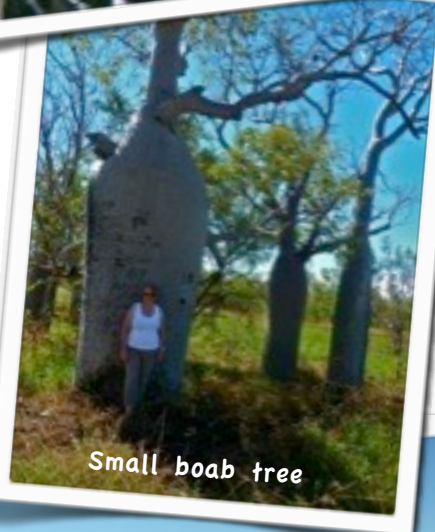
Sunset over Lake Argyle



Gregory National Park



A rock pool at the end of our walk



Small boab tree



Infinity pool at Lake Argyle Caravan Park