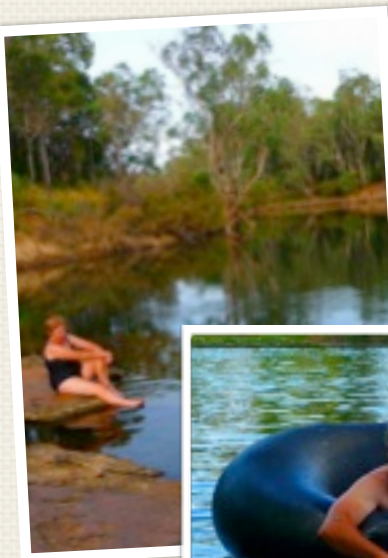


BIODIVERSITY

We were surprised to find out that the south western part of Western Australia is one of the most bio-diverse areas in the world. The number of plants and animal species outnumber those occurring in the whole of UK (and 80% of these are found nowhere else in the world). Over the last 50 years the government has declared many national parks and stopped logging of valuable trees. With the spread of development it will be interesting to see what the future holds.

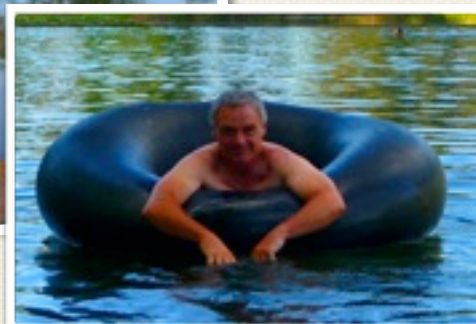
DWELLINGUP

We left Fremantle, headed south and got as far as Dwellingup. This little inland village is well known for its jarrah eucalyptus forest and the School of Woodwork which we visited. Jarrah is very hard wood because it grows very slowly. The rainfall is very low and the soil in this area is very poor. The bushfire danger is always present – more-so because no rain has fallen here since last November. We spent a late afternoon cooling off in a local water hole on the river. Lovely – we had the place to ourselves.



MANJIMUP

We decided to drive on to Albany but our trusty GPS took us around and about on so many dusty back roads that we decided not to trust it any more and instead headed back the way we came. We ended up in a lovely little town called Manjimup. We chilled out and relaxed in the large natural swimming pond at the local caravan park. Luckily we did not end up at Albany as we read in the newspaper that the Ulysees Motor Bike Club was holding its annual meeting there – with over 3000 bikies attended from around Australia.



Tingle, Jarrah and Karri Trees

It is amazing how little you know about your own country. Traveling in WA has been quite an education. We now know more about it's unique trees - especially Jarrah but now also about the Tingle and the Karri which grow taller and are thicker - about the incredible range of small hopping animals (some smaller than a mouse), the variety of beautiful colored native birds (and the sounds they make) and the immense array of plant species. We have about a dozen kangaroo paw plants at home the flowers of which are magnificent. There are millions upon millions here as well as countless bottle brushes and other wild flowers we have never experienced. We will come back in spring time in the next few years just to see the wild flowers in bloom

WE WILL COME BACK IN SPRINGTIME IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS JUST TO SEE THE WILD FLOWERS IN BLOOM. EVERYONE TELLS US THAT THE SPLASH OF COLOUR OVER THE WHOLE LANDSCAPE IS TOTALLY UNBELIEVABLE.

