

## Kimberley Crusaders – Part 1

June 7/2018 – **2,119km** (1,324miles) from home

Hi welcome back everyone...

Many of you have confirmed your anticipation in our travel tales ahead.

Should there be anyone **NOT** wishing to receive these, please let us know; we will amend our mailing list, no questions asked!

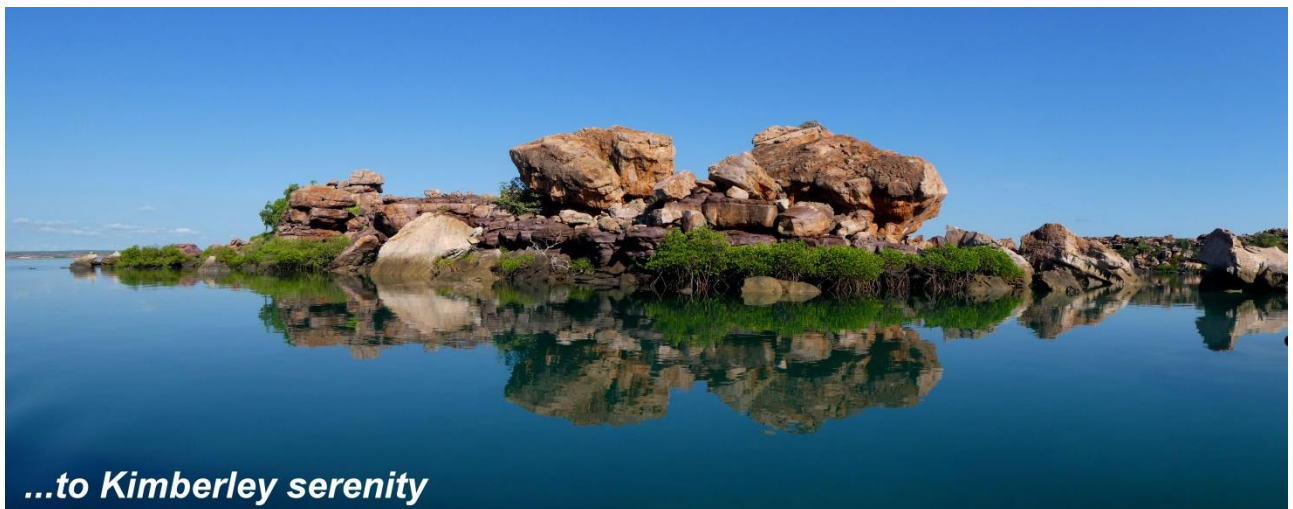
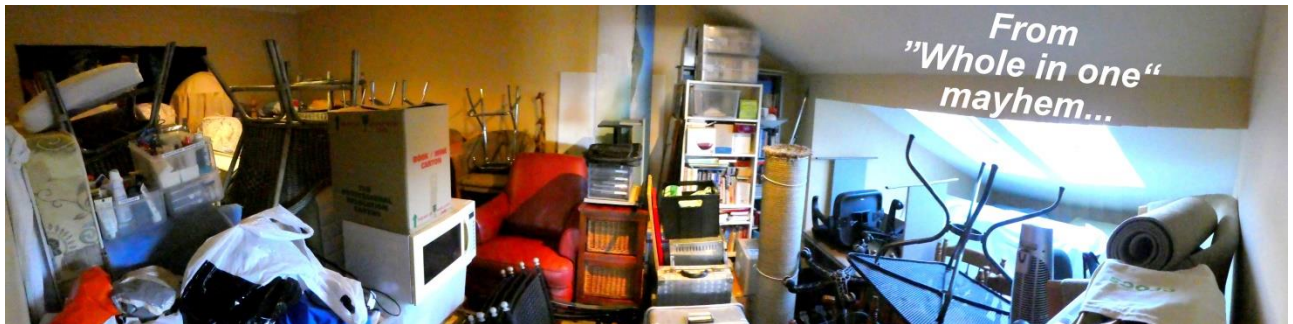
Figuring, we passed our six-month 'Cape Crusader test run' run last year, we decided to embark on a twelve-month stint this year. Maybe longer – depends on how we'll adjust to the **nomadic ways of gypsies** in the longer term; look/see what life on the road will throw at us ☺

So... all a bit open-ended but we've done it: Our home is stripped bare and rented.

Anyone toying with similar thoughts - ***One must not underestimate the monumental effort it takes of breaking free from societal life's seemingly countless entrapments!***

Whose crazy idea exactly was this in the first place?!

Hello golfers, proudly managed a "(w)hole in one": Squeezing our entire possessions into one room. Credit to Katherine's most skilful planning and removalists' even more astonishing stacking skills.



This is our vision ☺



***Empty lounge room camping:***

***Family farewell with sisters***

***Jennifer, Charmaine and Brian***

## 'Kimberley Crusaders' launch pad - 21.5.2018



### FLASHBACK to April 3:

In the meantime up north, the wet season has ended, the oppressive humidity disappeared and the welcome heat of the **'dry'** has arrived beyond the ***Tropic Of Capricorn***: The siren call of tropical Northern Australia beckons yet again.

The dry season normally lasts for eight months: No rain, the bluest of blue skies and balmy nights.

Our eyes set firmly on the **Kimberley** this time, a dream for most – the stuff of legend, many claim.

The western boundary of the Kimberley is a rather frayed coast line, rugged and pretty much inaccessible by road and therefore best explored by boat.

**Fortunate enough, we were able to set first eyes on this magnificent part of Australia at the beginning of April prior to our conquest by road.**

We cruised the Kimberley coast on the 24m/78ft catamaran MV Odyssey. Following is our ***"Snapshot Preview"*** before we will be arriving in the Kimberley with our six-wheel road rig around July/August.





Just before our cruise Katherine had her gall bladder whipped out. Someone had the gall to suggest we might use it for bait though the idea was promptly vetoed by her doc who insisted keeping the bladder for analysis. Pathology turned out negative - thank God!

Bladdertheless, we managed to bag some beaut bruisers using lures instead with me, Chris, **unusually** catching the bigger fish this time. To Katherine's defence, she did feel somewhat handicapped blaming the sore void once occupied by her missing minor organ.





Icon of Australian fishing is the **Barramundi** although considered by locals to be only average as table fish. My Barra was 80cm – the maximum legal size. Larger ones change sex from male to female and such become breeders that must be released by law. Luckily, mine made a meal for many and, in my humble opinion, was absolutely delicious!

There are lots of other tasty species never seen at east coast fish markets like mangrove jack or golden snapper but the pick would be the humble estuary cod. Not to mention dinner-plate size mud crabs:



The Kimberley coast is not for the timid or agoraphobic (*a disorder characterized by symptoms of anxiety in situations where one perceives the environment to be unsafe with no easy way to escape*) but if you want a holiday where you possibly won't see another person and where adventure is every moment of the day, look into the Kimberley, it is said.

**Crocodiles are plentiful here, so swimming (in creeks/beaches/estuaries) is suicidal.**



***Eyeballing a salty Mr.Croc***



***Little lounging lizzard  
up close & personal***

Despite the presence of those primordial predators there are many opportunities to escape the heat for an invigorating cool-down in freshwater streams, swimming holes and under waterfalls; provided same are well above the high-water mark and in locations inaccessible for loitering lizards. This often involves clambering over rocks and hiking through untracked bush – way of exploration and adventure!



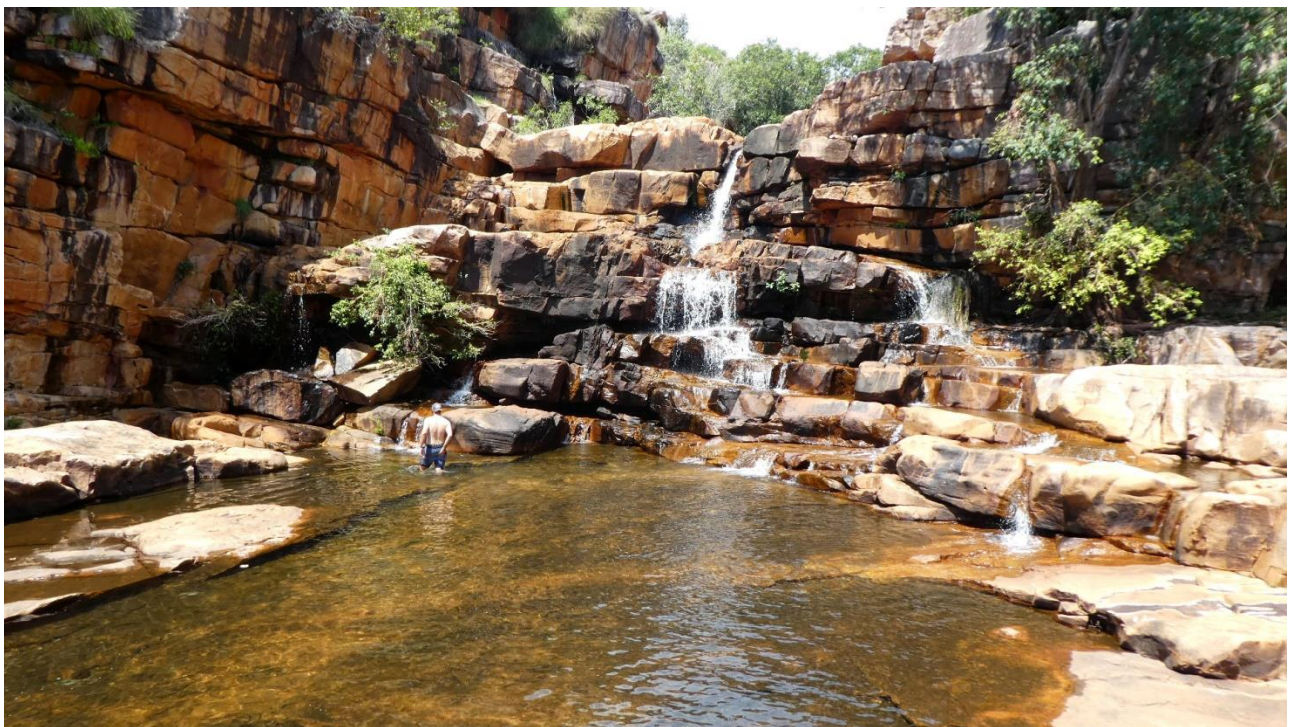
*A croc's best camera smile*

**Bush hike and rock climb in quest of a freshwater stream for swimming:**



*Safe freshwater swimming hole*

**Below:** Out in the distance lies the croc infested no-go zone – though up here it is safe to wallow in a freshwater stream and play under the soothing waterfall just behind me (next picture below) – **Bliss!**

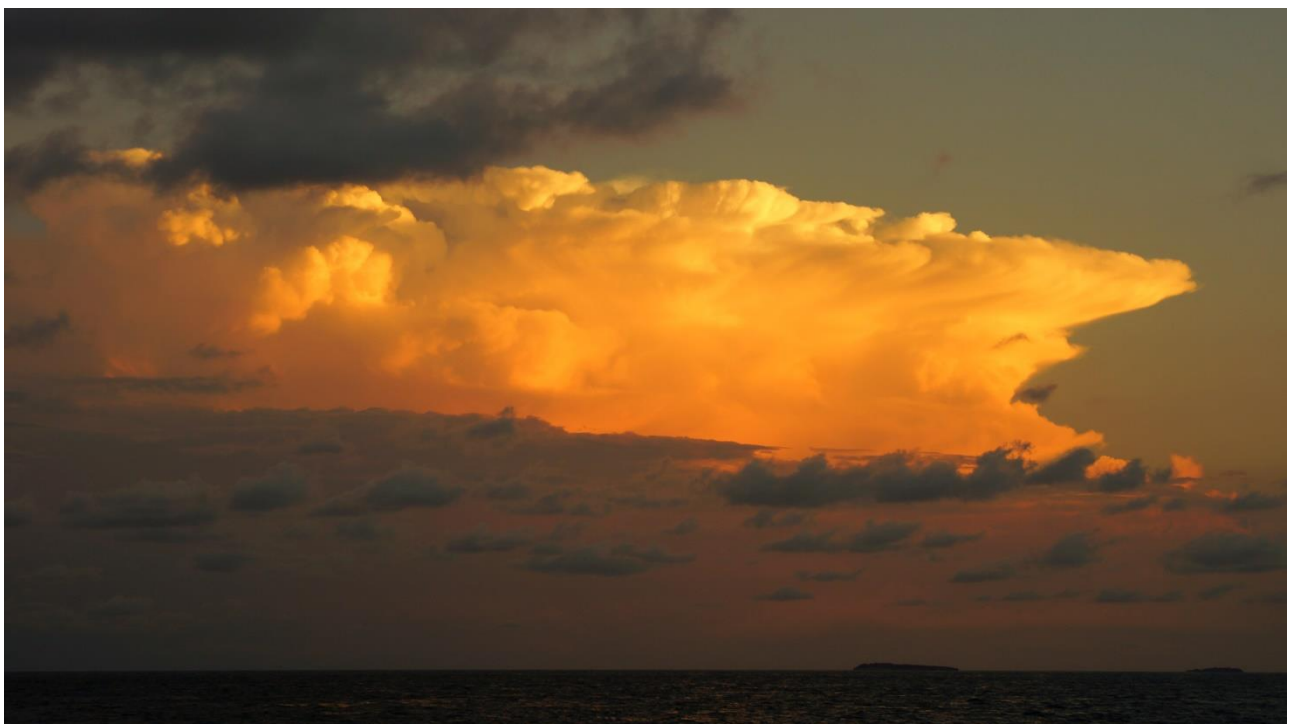




We are right at the end of the wet season (best time!) which means the waterfalls are pumping but there is a chance of the odd storm brewing – always quite a spectacle to behold up in the tropics.



*Kimberley afternoon storm brewing*





As usual the following morning all is calm again. Our vessel Odyssey is anchored at the foot of Twin Falls. We spend an hour to climb to the top, enjoy the sweeping views and... a dunk of course!



*Odyssey moored overnight at  
Twin Falls*

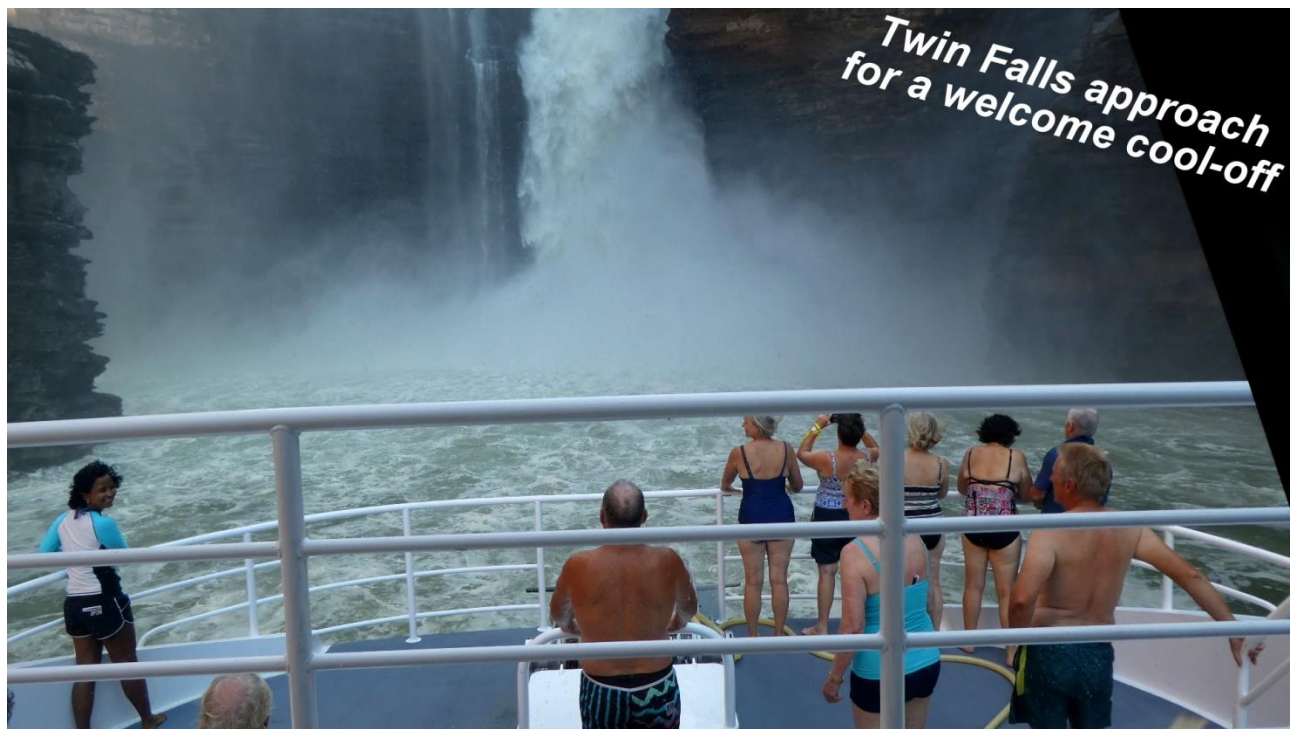


*Dunk in the middle of nowhere*



After the long hike back to the boat down a steep rocky slope, strewn with large boulders, a second dunk awaits the (now profusely perspiring) climbers: Skilful skipper Mark nudges 65ton Odyssey's bow right into one of the falls and everyone enjoys a thorough head-to-toe soak.

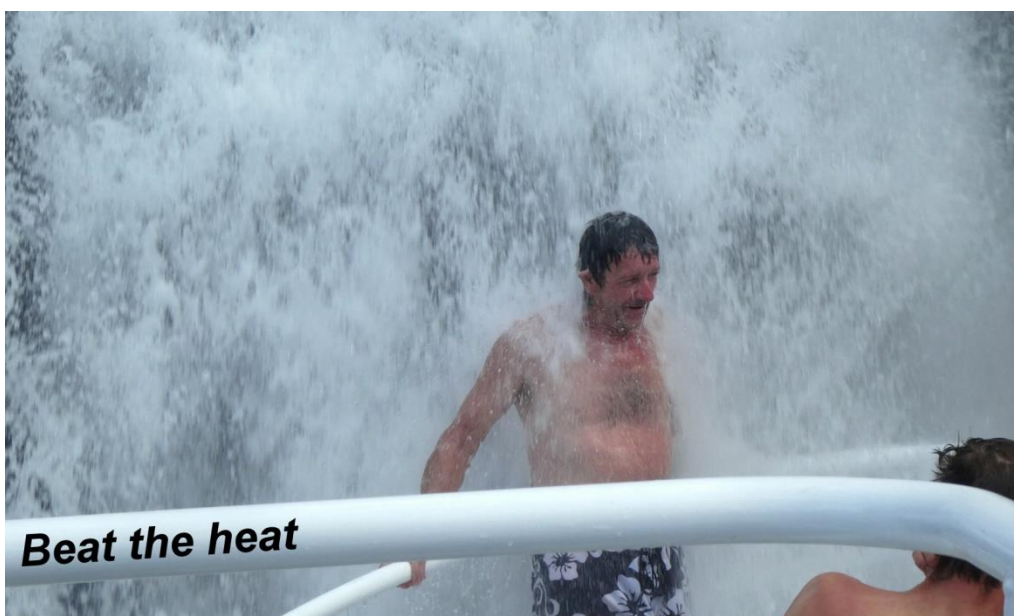
Waterfalls in the Kimberley are still plentiful early April and this exhilarating treat is repeated time and again over the course of our 14-day coastal *Waterfall Safari*. ***Bring it on – true bucket list material!***



*Twin Falls approach  
for a welcome cool-off*



*Keeping cool in  
the Kimberley*



*Beat the heat*

Then came **the day we did not get the opportunity to have a swim** but... Captain Mark had his back-up plan: Inflate the **on-board swimming pool**, pump it full of salt water (crocs filtered out ☺) and shout several bottles of champers – sure way keeping body temperatures at comfort levels and guests amused:



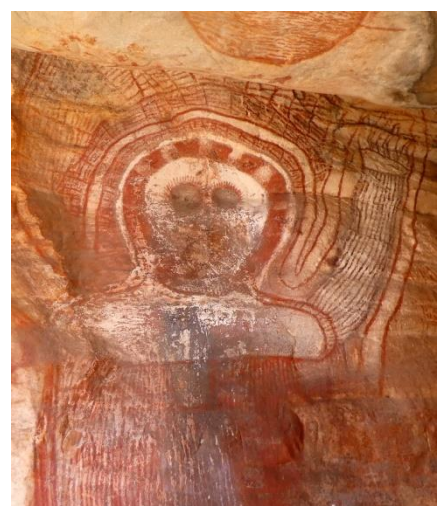
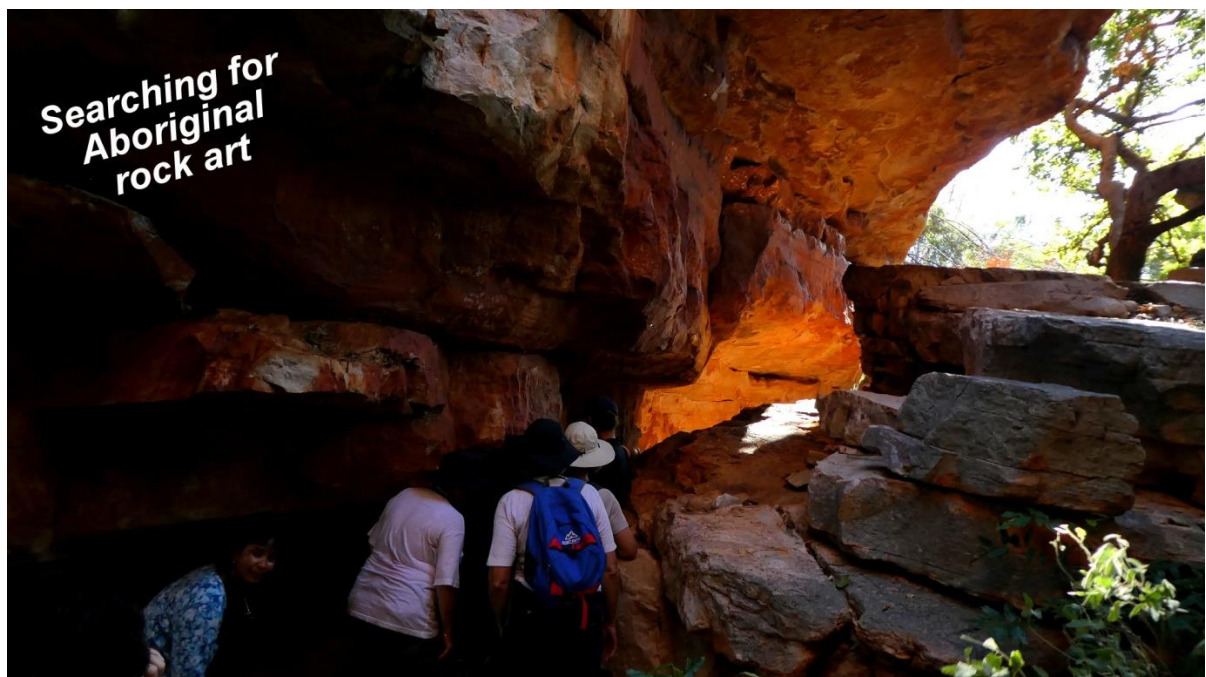
At night friendly lemon sharks would often visit our boat...



During the day we make inland incursions searching for aboriginal art sites and other historic points of interest.

We come across the camp site of Major Ivan Lyon at '**Krait Bay**'. From here the raid 'Operation Jaywick' was launched on Japanese warships in Singapore Harbour during WW2. British officer Lyon devised a cunning attack plan: Commandos would travel there in a vessel disguised as an Asian fishing boat – the **MV Krait**. They would use collapsible canoes to attach limpet mines to Japanese ships. The raid proved successful beyond wildest dreams as seven Jap ships were sent to their watery graves. Enthusiastic about the result, another mission was launched sometime later but didn't nearly go as well. Only three ships were sunk and the commando participants, including Lyon, captured and decapitated.

The Japanese surely didn't take lightly to their naval hardware being annihilated.  
Today the iconic MV Krait can be admired at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney.





Late one night in 1942 this DC3 missed a fuel stop at Darwin, ran out of gas and crash landed on a remote Kimberley Island. All four crew survived and were rescued. Two weeks later the Japs bombed Broome!



Early morning cuppa – waiting for the sun to rise ☺



The **Horizontal Falls** have been described by naturalist David Attenborough as "one of the greatest wonders of the natural world". They are formed by a gap in the McLarty Ranges which reaches up to 25m (75ft) in width. The natural phenomenon is created as seawater builds up faster on one side of the gap than on the other, **creating a waterfall up to 5m high**: The difference of water levels from one side of the gap to the other on a maximum tide (*see picture below "Facing the torrent uphill"!*) Within each change of the tide the direction of the fall reverses, creating violent tidal whirlpools strong enough to swallow a small boat.



***Aboard this 1200 horsepower rocket ship we explore the awe inspiring Horizontal Falls.***





Facing the torrent "uphill"...  
1200HP hold the boat steady on the spot



**Mermaid Tree**

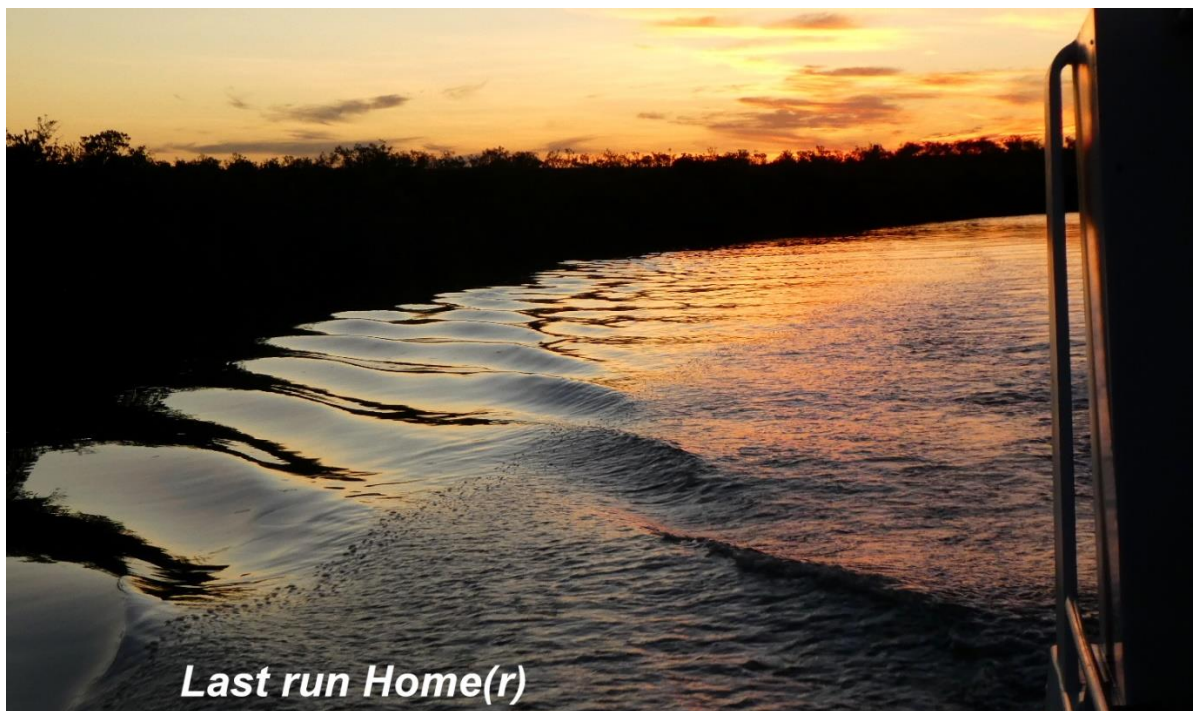
## Careening Bay and the Mermaid Tree

The cutter **HMO Mermaid** under British command of Philip Barker King was careened (beached) here on Sept 30 in 1820. The vessel was leaking badly and in urgent need of repair. The gently shelving sandy beach and huge tides (up to 9m) would be ideal for maintenance works.

P.B. King was acting on order by the British Crown (King George IV) to ***“take care to leave some evidence of your landings which cannot be mistaken”***: His deeply indented carving into this **boab tree** remains without alteration making King’s visit memento last longer than any other he might have left behind.







*Last run Home(r)*

***Kimberley farewell (for now)***



Rounding off our **'Snapshot Preview'** Kimberley experience, we take a two-hour scenic flight from Kununurra (the small town on the northern edge of the K.) over **Lake Argyle** and 250km south to famous **Bungle Bungle National Park**.

Lake Argyle is a man-made freshwater inland sea that spreads over 1000 square kilometres.

So vast is this dam-contained lake, the opposite shoreline is actually out of sight in many places.

A "sea" indeed!

Also staggering to think, the Ord River Dam length is a mere 335m (1,099ft) and constructed by **earth-fill only** making it the most efficient dam in Australia in terms of ratio *'Dam wall size to amount of water stored'*!



**Lake Argyle:**



*Lake Argyle - Ord River Dam: 335m*



**Bungle Bungle  
National Park**



## Back to current state:

Since leaving Sydney we paid a visit to long-time friends Megan and Brian. They have settled at scenic **South West Rocks** half way up the east coast of New South Wales.

A perfect spot for retirement it seems with warm waters well into the winter months and **Smokey Cape** around the corner offering great surf for keen board riders.



Treasured friends:  
Brian and Megan  
at South West Rocks



*Smoky Cape view from lighthouse - 6ft surf running below*



*Smokey Cape light house is Australia's highest above sea level*



We then moved further north to the **Sunshine Coast** in Queensland where the sun really shines: **Air 25C** during the day with **water** still a rather bearable **22C** – even on the second day of winter (June 2<sup>nd</sup>).

At the small local village of Pomona we swing by friends Judy and Peter who we met during our travels last year. They also own an AOR van, therefore caught our attention; went over to “greet the family” and clicked right away. Lovely Judy farewell-gifted us with two pairs of her hand-grafted woolly slippers – these have been keeping our toes toasty ever since!

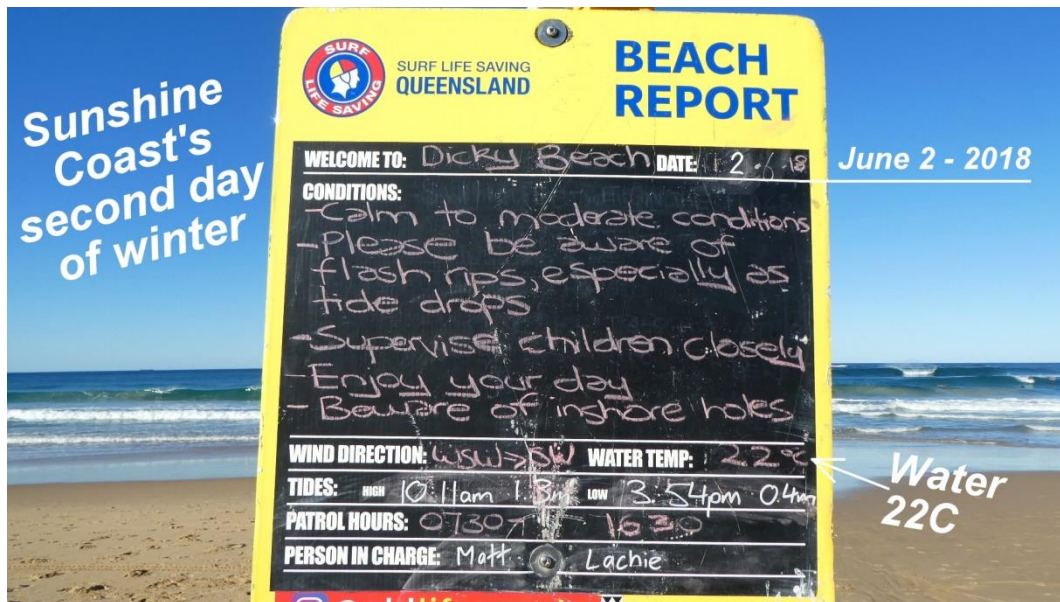


Reason for coming to Caloundra: Having the truck chassis reinforced (in view of our journey along the rugged West's unforgiving roads) and getting the van checked over by manufacturer AOR (Australian Off Road). After both missions accomplished it's time to farewell friends Wendy and Gordon at Montville in the superbly picturesque hinterland of the Sunshine Coast.



*Katherine and Wendy groovin' to James Taylor*

*Celebrating the occasion  
Gordon brings out one of his treasured  
single-malt drops for a "wee dram"  
as the girls rock on to the sound  
of James Taylor*



Farewell salt water & surf...

"Good-bye to the ocean" for quite sometime as we head straight to Australia's furthest point west from here!



Our next salt water taste lies approx. 4700km (2900miles) away on the other side of the our "little island"...



Riding west we find our first hot springs on this trip at Mitchell – soaking creaky bones and stiff limbs in a hot artesian bath after a lengthy drive is always a welcome treat.



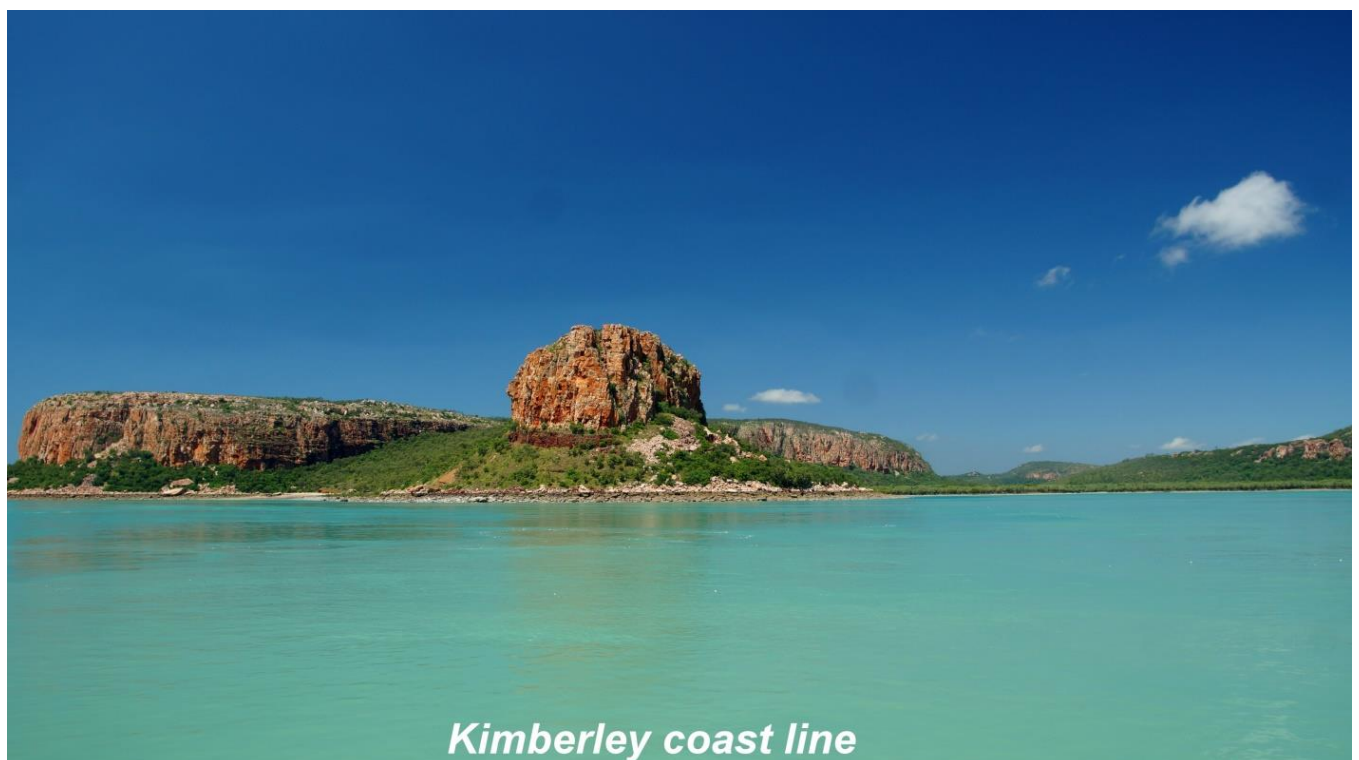
Other than that we are getting used again to the 'way of gypsies' – cooking on the open fire





Hope you enjoyed this first edition of **Kimberley Crusaders!**

We are pushing westward – keeping you posted (at Charleville/QLD at time of sending).





***Berkeley River - Kimberley***

***Greetings from Chris and Katherine***

