

Reflections from Derby....1

Horizontal Falls Seaplane Adventure..

I promised myself something special for the *big* birthday and I loved the Buccaneer Archipelago with E, so back I went.... on a seaplane this time! We would land, go through the falls on a fast boat lunch swim toddle up the creek and more! Picked up by taxi and all 10 unloaded at Derby Airport where we stood and chatted while the essential ingredient was added! Take off was uncomplicated and soon we were heading past Derby's mudflats and across the bay to the rocky bits....



The tide was at its lowest, the patterns so magnificent in the mud and sand. First glimpses of the horizontal falls were tantalising and splash down exhilarating as we taxied to our 'home' for the day.



"We're going out right now so we can see it twice today!" We didn't argue and swiftly put the lifejackets on. Straddling the 'seats' was a lot more comfortable than we first thought and we sped away from the floating dock *fast* !!!!!!!!!!!!!



More splashes,
only
this time they
came from the boat
'cos we didn't want
to miss the last
of the outgoing tide.
I wanted a close up
of the falls
and that's exactly
what we got....
as we rocked and rolled
through the
narrow gap
that millions of litres
of water
rushes through
four times per day.
We could see the tide mark
way up on the rock walls
but it hadn't quite
finished its outward
run yet...
As we got closer
and into the gap
between the rock faces
we could see
the different water
levels
between one bay
and the next....



at least 50 cms...
In the quiet water
of the 'last' bay
Will thought he saw
"Edward"
a quiet old croc
who sits still
while the boat
circles
around him...
But it wasn't Edward
but an unknown croc -
or was it???

The water splashed
and crashed
as Edward
and the other croc
tussled in the water
then Edward disappeared!
We searched for 5 minutes
before he surfaced
a discreet distance
from his foe...
He seemed unharmed
but we circled
twice or thrice
just to make sure!
I wondered
what he was thinking?????
But his tusks looked
ominous!!!!



We returned to 'home base' for a cuppa and a swim' in the shark cage... complete with goggles and a 'window' to get up close and personal with the sharks... Tawny nose sharks who felt like leather, had smallish mouths and many, many teeth arranged in four rows. I couldn't resist and grabbed some stale, 'elastic' bread to feed the baby golden trevally fish..... After lunch of fresh wild barramundi we were in the boat again this time for a gentle



trip up Cyclone Creek where all sorts of boats can shelter from cyclones safely. Will took us to his 'house'

so he could release one of the baby fish I'd helped him snatch.... And while we were there he fed his other 'pets'... with leftover bread..



"Kevin" the bat fish

We continued up the creek through another funnel, not quite as narrow as the ones at the falls.



The rock formations
astounded me
(as always)
as we continued
up the creek...

and none so more
than a strata
of round river stones
buried long ago,
unlike any other
rocks around today.
The original river course,
it's thought.
We kept wandering

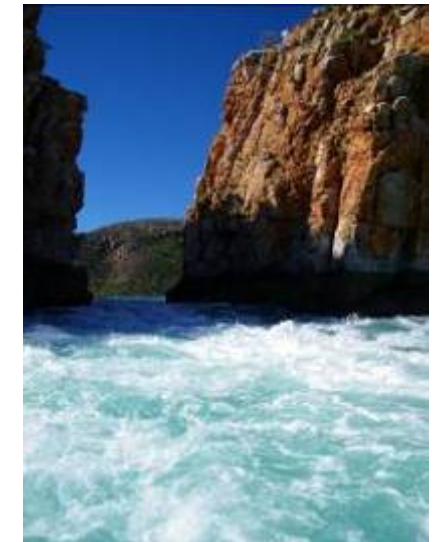
through the mangrove filled
waters
under the watchful gaze
of huge escarpments
which towered
above
the incoming tide.
We just kept wafting
along the creek
until it was time
to put the foot down
as the tide would be right
for another
thrilling ride



through the 'falls'...

It was incredible
how much the water level
had risen
while we were
meandering
along the creek
and when we returned
to the falls -
they were going
helter skelter
through their gaps
which are over
40 metres deep
and shift
about 1 million litres
per second...

I can believe it!
But, boy, was it exhilarating!
And we went so fast
through and then spun around
to come back again
.....and again!



We travelled swiftly
back to the pontoon,
said goodbye
to the sharks
who were still
circling
in the hope
of more food
then



to grab our gear
and over to
our waiting plane
in our favourite boat!
More splashes
as the plane
seemingly effortlessly
but with a few splashes,



rose from the water
and we were in the
air again...



There was time
for very last
glimpses
of the falls
as we headed
up
and on our
way back
to Derby...
But not before



we'd flown
over a
very lucky
settlement,



the mud flats



Matilda

and Derby...

What a day?????

