

Reflections – Karijini National Park....

The Visitor's Centre is first
and then the drive down
to Dale's Campground
about 10 kms away...
The Camp Hosts
allot my site
and setting up is done...
It's been a big day
so R&R for the afternoon
is followed by
Happy Hour
with Gail and John
who I met at Indee.
We're joined by
Ingrid and Case
Kiwis of Dutch descent
who are getting funnier
with more wine!
I navigate my return
with the help of wine
and the torch
around their 'loop'
passed the toilet
and into my 'loop'.
Refreshed after a great sleep,
I walk to Dales Gorge....
the 'pink' walk, Level 2
warms me up for
the more challenging
'green', Level 3 walk
down into the gorge.
And as I walk
along the rim of the gorge



I gaze with wonder
at the colours
of rocks, plants, trees
and spinifex
that surround me
in this ancient place.
The gorge is deep
and goes for a long way
a gouge through
the seemingly rolling hills
that form the background.
The Fortescue Falls
appear
through a gap in the foliage
though the water
cascading down the rocks
can be heard
from way down the track...
I marvel at the perfect paving
as I wind my way around
then
down, down, down
the steps I totter –
the steps again are made
by 6 foot tall men
with much longer legs
than I!
The rock stacks
that are the gorge walls
are like a stack
of counters
except these are
made of rock,
not plastic



and
as the water
does its work
the rocks
become smooth
and shiny
though their
layers
of colours
remain.

The noise of the cascades
gets louder
as the falls get nearer
but nothing can prepare
you for the deep turquoise
of the pool
it thunders into...
I sit
and take it all in

and as I do,
the ever-present
willy wagtail
flits from his branch
at the top of the falls
dances to catch an
insect
then lands again
on the branch.
I sit mesmerised
and cannot
imagine
a better place
for a bird



to live!
I could sit here
all day,
every day
but there is more to see
along the track
so I leave
the water
and the willy
and head in the direction
of Fern Pool
just nearby.
A native fig
spread VERY wide,
around 50 metres
in diameter I estimate,
stands watch
over the track
and, once again,
I am flabbergasted!

Its HUGE, spreading branches
are so long
and straight and healthy
and I try to estimate
how many floods
of water have tried
to wash it away.
I find its roots burrowing
into rock fissures
and waving in thin air
and it looks so
very healthy
living in a seemingly
hostile environment.



The sound of splashing heralds my arrival at Fern Pool.. another oasis surrounded by sheer rock walls and hardy plants with water cascading over the rock ledge at one end, in which there are some hardy swimmers for the water is cold! I sit for a while but the noise of the swimmers grates in this environment and I head back the way I came after observing another tenacious tree, a huge paper bark this time, clinging to the rocks. I like return walks as I see different things on the way back – this time noticing delicate flowers unseen before. They hang high up on the rocks



waving in the breeze but they are so beautiful! As I rest at the top after climbing the stairs out of the gorge a bird, a robin I think sits on a nearby branch and all around me are more beautiful flowers – some on shrubs, some individual plants and I can't help myself – I just have to take them with me!



Happy hour is at my place
tonight
and we all chat
about what we have seen
and done today.

Gail is tired from her adventures
Case is pleased 'cos he 'shot'
a different bird today.

I offer a ride
to Case and Ingrid tomorrow
as they don't want to
take their little motorhome
on the rough, rocky roads
and I am going to Weano Gorge
anyway.

Are we there yet????

It takes over an hour
to bump along
the horribly corrugated road
to Weano Gorge...

we slowly came to a stop
as budgies were spied
in the wild

flying as though
they had ground following radar

and Case 'shot' them
with the lens

that's as long as his arm!
The juddering in one's body
takes a while to calm
after we stop

at Weano Gorge!
But it's worth it



when we get underway
and walk along the rim
until steep steps
lead us down to the pool
and the gorge.
We walk around the corner
to where
it is necessary to wade
if we want to proceed
but we choose to stay dry
and return the way we came
which leads us right along
Weano Gorge
going slightly uphill
as the water flows
silently beside the track.



The rock formations,
stacks on the mill,
are the same as yesterday's
though this one
is given a wide berth
'cos it looks



a mite unstable!
The route up and out
is gentler this time
though slippery too
with its scree of rock.
The termite mounds
are huge,
made of deep red soil
and plentiful
though not too close
to the neighbours...
And as we reach
the lookout
and my body screams
"NO WAY!"
Ingrid encourages
and I stay long enough
to take photos
of the four gorges
that meet in one place
W.... A.....Y.....
down there!



We gaze over the edge
at the seemingly terraced
cliffs opposite
and, once again,
nature outdoes man
with its garden design!
Throughout the day
hardy plants
produce beautiful flowers
for us to gaze at
and today's are just as wonderful
and different
to those that have come before!



Imagine my surprise
as I surveyed the information
at the Visitors Centre
after bouncing back along
the road,
when I recognised Olive,
my assistant when
we worked together
at Rangebank Preschool
all those years ago!
She and husband John
have come the same way
(basically)
as I
and here,
5000 kms from home
we meet again!



The rain pitter patted
on Matilda's roof
last night,
the wind picked up
and when morning came
it was very cold,
freezing really.
The wind sliced through
clothes to freeze the skin
and I searched through
the stored winter clothes
and found some treasures..
Warmer now,
I determined that I would walk

regardless of the biting wind
but when I looked out the door
I thought it strange
to have a boat
in the next site!
I wandered around
to farewell Ingrid and Case
then headed off
to walk the opposite way
around the rim of the gorge –



I find that new sights emerge
when I walk the opposite way
and I am not disappointed today.
I notice the cliffs
seemingly shaped with pinkish
shears
and that the rain overnight
has not radically altered
the waterfall
but I do find 'new' flowers
and birds...
I will potter for the rest of today
ready to move on tomorrow
to Tom Price.

