

## Reflections ~ Chichester National Park

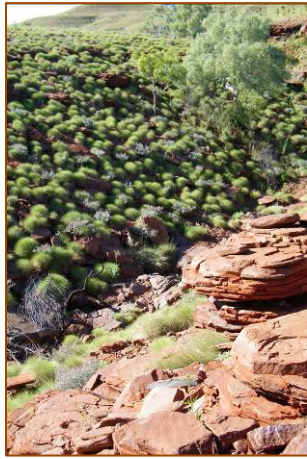
I asked Dave,  
the camp host  
about taking Matilda  
to Snake Creek Camp Ground  
at the Chichester part  
of the Millstream Chichester N.P....  
He looked doubtful  
said the other camp had been full  
the other night and was small.  
I looked at the map  
and decided the best place  
for Matilda was where she was  
at Miliyana  
and I would go for a day trip.  
The 'harmonics' worked well  
and we travelled as smoothly  
as the bumps allowed!!!  
I had to stop  
at the railway crossing  
in the middle of nowhere  
for the train  
which I'd first seen  
back up the track aways.  
It had come, I think,  
from Tom Price  
240 kms to the east  
(and it was only 7:50 a.m.!)



and took a while  
to complete the crossing!  
The landscape changed  
from flat, almost treeless plains  
to undulating countryside  
coloured by rocks,  
various plants,  
spinifex and more spinifex!  
And, bliss, bitumen road for a while!  
The jump-ups, breakaways, escarpments  
whatever they're called  
look amazing....  
there's kilometres of  
very flat land  
and then..... whoops!  
a mesa, a cone shape or other!  
Mt Herbert was the first  
challenge of the day  
but then I decided  
to warm up on the  
McKenzie Springs walk first.  
The spring was used to water  
camels and bullocks  
long ago  
and the trail wound  
around and around  
up and over  
then down and up  
and around and down



again and again!  
I decided not to go  
the whole way —  
the sun was rapidly warming  
the day, and there was NO shade!  
I stopped when I  
was reasonably sure  
the spring's tree-line  
could be seen  
then retraced my steps  
as I still had  
Mt Herbert to scale!  
The rocks on the trail  
echoed musically  
when they were knocked  
by my now tired feet  
and there was more of  
nature's paving along the way.  
Most of the rocks  
have the reddy-brown  
cloak of rust  
but those  
who've been  
recently broken  
show the deep slate-grey  
of their interior.  
The view from the top  
of Mt Herbert  
was spectacular



as I thought it would be,  
but I didn't linger longer  
as there was no shade  
up there either!  
Tight, winding, undulating road  
lead around the corner  
to Python Pool,  
a permanent  
freshwater  
plunge pool  
at the base of a cliff  
in the Chichester Range Escarpment  
(the brochure told me!).  
But nothing could have  
prepared me for  
Python Pool's magnificence ~  
the water  
the cliffs  
reflections  
the vegetation  
the fish  
the wind caressing the surface  
the shade under trees  
at the edge!  
I was lucky to have  
ten minutes of silent contemplation  
before 3 chattering women appeared!  
They don't realise

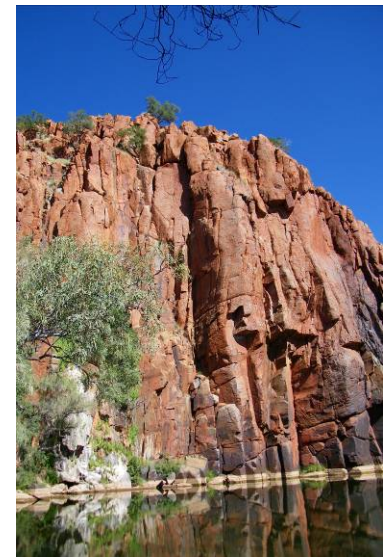


what they miss  
when they're sooooo noisy!  
I watched the cliff's reflection  
when the pool glistened  
like a mirror  
and then when a  
slight breeze  
touched it, it gently rippled.  
I listened to the  
echo of birdsong  
and watched the  
ever-gliding fish  
waiting for an insect  
to alight on the water  
and become lunch!  
I surveyed the rocks  
of the vertical cliffs  
their giant blocks  
stacked one on the other  
to make the sheer sided  
edge of the pool.  
I looked at trees,  
once again,  
growing in seemingly  
impossible crevices  
and I mused about  
the path of the water  
over the cliffs  
and of the damp patches



and water marks  
around the rocks  
that told of evaporation  
shrinking the pool.  
The women kept yapping  
and I left  
glad that I'd had  
*some* peaceful time  
to absorb all I could.  
As I made  
the return journey  
along the now dry  
creek bed,  
a lizard  
a monitor I think  
was sunning himself  
quietly on a rock  
and was quite happy  
to pose while I snapped away.....

The return journey  
seemed like 'peak hour'  
as about 6 cars  
and I realised that  
on the way out,  
there was just me  
and the train!  
Back at Millstream  
I once again



took the scenic route  
back to Miliyana Campground  
and I am startled  
that I took Matilda  
that way with all  
its twists and turns,  
ups and downs  
narrow bits  
and water crossings!



Something caught my eye  
not long ago  
and when I glanced  
out the window,  
having quickly grabbed  
my glasses and camera,  
there was 4, or maybe 5?  
quail  
pecking at the path!  
Was it for minerals  
or the seed  
left behind  
by the star finches earlier?  
Something startled them  
and they scurried  
into the bush  
coming out again  
when all seemed well...  
Whoops! Too soon  
and back they darted.  
One soon ventured out again,  
but not for long  
and I chortled  
as he leaped  
at least 45 cms  
into the air!  
'Danger' gone  
they come out again  
to resume their pecking.



Once again,  
I remind myself  
how lucky I am  
to be able to enjoy  
all that is on offer!