

Southwest Australia

Spring Flowers of the Southwest

A Greentours Trip Report

4th – 23rd September 2011

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Daily Report written by Terry Underhill

Perth to Dongara Tuesday 6th September

We all met up at breakfast time at the Kings Hotel, Perth. With all the kit packed into a trailer, firmly fixed behind our 13-seater min-bus, Mark quickly negotiated the roads of Perth and out onto the Midland Highway. With some gardens having fruiting citrus, large *Ficus elastica*, *Erythrina speciosa* and *Spathodea campanulata* trees in bloom we realised that the region's annual climate is not harsh. Roadside weeds of *Oxalis pes-caprae*, *Arctotheca calendula*, *Romulea rosea* var *australis* and *Freesia leichtenii* made us realise why the immigration authorities try to stop the deliberate or accidental introduction of non-native species.

Our first stop was a comfort stop at Gingin before moving to the cemetery where a small protected conservation corner introduced us to *Stypanda glauca*, *Hybanthus calycinus*, *Sowerbaea laxiflora*, a number of *Drosera* and the highly poisonous *Gastrolobium oxylobioides* - which is non-poisonous to SW Australian mammals, but an extraction from it is being used to poison introduced animal pests. Close to the graves in the deep sand were clumps of *Anigozanthos humilis* in various shades from yellow, orange and red. In the far corner was a stand of the state flower, *Anigozanthos manglesii*. Nearby a weeping *Jacksonia* was still flowering while at its feet were minute *Drosera glanduligera* with 0.5cm orange flowers.

We had to be disciplined and get a good number of kilometers 'under our belts' as the complete days drive was about 400km.

Our route took us through the Swan valley with many hectares of vines. Interestingly the early and late cultivars coming into growth was most noticeable. Cherry land was a mass of closely planted trees making a haze of purple-pink blossom. At times areas of forest and scrub had been burnt and the charred stems of trees and shrubs were just breaking into growth. Most noticeable was the range of *Acacia* and *Eucalyptus* species as we sped along towards Badingara.

Eventually, with tummies rumbling we turned off to the left along Jurien Road, stopping for a Blue-tongue reptile which slowly ambled across the road. We turned into a parking area with a

couple of sheltered picnic benches. Should we eat or should we dine? - most of us made a compromise, as Mark's spread was too good to ignore as was the surrounding flora. A White-cheeked Honey-eater flitted in the nearby bushes, where at their foot a Black kangaroo paw was just coming into bloom. The range of plants in SW Australia is huge somewhere now between 8,500 and 13,000 depending which magazine one reads. We were to quickly compile a list of *Conostylis*, *Dampiera*, *Blancoa*, *Astroloma*, *Synaphae*, *Hakea*, *Conospermum*, *Johnsonia* and *Hibbertia*. Eventually we had to be almost dragged back into the mini-bus, but not for long as a short distance along the road was *Banksia menziesii* in flower. While positioning ourselves to get good shots of the blooms, we came across the Cowslip orchid *Caladenia flava* and shortly afterwards *Pterostylis vittata*, in shades of green. A *Darwinia* was creeping along the ground. In the sand nearby were huge drifts of *Anigozanthos humilis*. We had not had enough time to adjust our seat belts before we were again stopping as the bright red flowers of *Verticordia grandis* caught our eye with *Isopogon* nearby.

There was still a good drive ahead to reach the Badingara Rest House-garage and shop. On the road island were clumps of Grevillea and a large silver-leaved *Eucalyptus macrocarpa*, with a couple of its red flowers open - the largest of any Eucalyptus species. A pair of grackles and a willy wagtail flitted around. We crossed the road and took the winding footpath up a gentle slope, making numerous stops. A good range of *Hakea*, *Hibbertia* along with numerous *Conospermum stoechadis* kept cameras busy. Reaching an area which had been disturbed in recent years by the laying of a gas pipe we came across huge drifts of *Conospermum stoechadis* along with compact blue-flowered *Conospermum nervosum*. A number of us fell in love with two species of *Guichenotia* before we had to retrace our steps, and then drive speedily to Dongara, while the sun turned into a bright, orange ball and slid over the horizon. We were quickly allocated our rooms at the Dongara Mill Motel and in less than 30 min later we were helping ourselves to the hot buffet in the restaurant. A good end to a long but very productive day.

Hi Vallee Farm Wednesday 7th September

7.15 am and we were having a full cooked breakfast, preparing ourselves for a full day out at Hi Vallee Farm. With the sun shining and a cool breeze we set off at 8.30 full of anticipation. The actual drive to the farm is about 14km along a firm sand road and farm track. With a scheduled appointment there was no time to stop, despite glimpses of a number of roadside plants of interest, one of which could well have been the wreath flower, *Lechenaultia macrantha*. Terry kept his eyes scanning the roadside banks on the return journey, but no luck. However forward viewing was hindered by the low setting sun. Back to our journey and arrival at Hi Vallee Farm, where, just before dropping down to the farm to meet our hosts Don & Joy Williams we watched a group of Western Kangeroos complete with joeys tucked into their pouches. A pair of Australian magpies flew up from our track.

After a very warm welcome Don brought over a large round cake cooked in wood fire ashes, and a couple of billy cans of hot water for tea or coffee. Golden syrup was poured onto the slices of cake "Stops any flies that land on the cake flying away, making their digestion easier" said

Don... We then clambered into the back of a truck or in seated luxury of a 4 x 4 and out into the bush where we made numerous stops and short walks. Alphabetically arranged lists of 500 of the plants found at Hi Vallee had been distributed, some of which we were to find out are very rare with Hi Vallee being a most important place for their survival.

Don gave us a potted history of how early settlers acquired land from the Government, and had a limited number of years to get the land under control so as to produce a living income, despite starting with a lack of roads, electricity and water - life was very tough.

Don's enthusiasm and fund of knowledge helped us fill numerous pages of plant names, along with detail on their identification as well as stories about their collection and ancient and modern uses.

Joy's picnic was taken right out in the wilds, making the day even more perfect. I would be surprised if the keen photographers had not got 100 new plants photographed. We admired the bark of various Eucalyptus, and the flowers of various *Conospermum*, *Acacia*, *Astroloma*, *Dampiera*, *Daviesia*, *Drosera*, *Dryandra*, *Grevillea*, *Hakea*, *Hibbertia*, *Petrophile*, *Stylidium*, *Verticordia* and much more. A popular favourite was a low growing *Tetralochea setigera* with beautifully bell-shaped pink/purple flowers, each one being just over 1cm across. All good things come to an end - we all expressed our thanks to Don, Joy and helper, Richard, while having coffee, tea and various biscuits before boarding our mini-bus for the journey back to Old Mill, Dongara. We had an hour before supper, which was quickly provided from an 'a-la-carte' menu of 6 very tasty meals, ending a wonderful day. In fact a perfect day for flower lovers.

Pinnacles & Lesueur National park

Thursday 8th September

We were away immediately after another superb breakfast, with the sun shining but a strong cooling breeze. After a brief stop at the local supermarket and a quick return to The Old Mill for Mark to get his National Park pass we were speeding south. We turned off by Enneaba taking the Scenic Coast road. We eventually made a stop just before Jurien to admire a roadside patch of pink *Brachycome*. The nearby roadside boundary thicket contained *Templetonia retusa* which goes under the delightful name of Cockies tongue, and *Santalum murrayanum* in fruit, small bushes of *Thomasia* and *Acacia pulchella*, Prickly Moses, one of the few mimosas with true leaves. In the short grass were clumps of *Podolepis canescens*, *Conostylis candicans* and *Lysinema ciliatum*. A little purple red weed was the introduced *Parentucella latifolia*. Crossing the road we came across *Anthocercis littorea*, with unusually shaped yellow flowers, which much to our amazement is in the *Solanaceae* family. There were also small amounts of the white everlasting flower going under the name of *Rhodanthe chlorocephala rosea*.

It was another 40km to Cervantes pillars, with its large tarmacked car park, visitors centre, modern toilets and a boardwalk and road trail of 1.5km. After a few large plants of *Anthocercis* the dominant plants were *Allocasuarina*, and the Parrot bush, *Dryandra sessilis / glauca*, many with the white, narrow-petalled *Clematis pubescens* sprawling over them. After a stay of nearly 90min we made our way north aiming for the Lesueur National Park. On the way we found a small

gully close to a major road bridge mostly constructed with large pieces of what we believed to be eucalyptus wood. Here we had lunch. The flora was mostly introduced weeds, including orange-flowered *Moraea (Homeria) flaccida* and *Romulea rosea* var. *australis*, both from South Africa. The most interesting plant was probably the large hanging clumps of mistletoe, *Amyema miquelii*, on a eucalyptus.

Just before reaching the entrance of the Lesueur National Park we stopped and wandered among a burnt area, where a number of people had their trousers marked with charcoal. Here we found Enamel, Blue and Leek Orchids, before moving into the park. At our first stop inside the park we found a number of different orchids such as Spider, Flying Duck, Primrose and Common Donkey. We made a special stop for a magnificent bright red *Verticordia grandis*, which had fresh long growths following a fire 1-2 years ago. No sooner had we arrived at Cockleshell Creek we were finding various Spiders and Sugar Candy Orchids and a fantastic patch of Rabbit Orchids, which is somewhat rare and only appears after a fire. We also found a number of Donkey Orchids, before making our way along the dusty, sandy road towards Enneaba and Dongara. As the sun was setting we did come across *Banksia menziesii* and *Banksia victoria* in bloom. We arrived back at the Old Mill at 19.00 and within minutes we were at the buffet filling our plates with yet another scrumptious meal. The day had involved a lot of driving but we found some superb plants.

Geraldton, Northampton to Kalbarri Friday 9th September

Yet again another superb breakfast before leaving at 8.30am, but today it was with the trailer packed with our luggage as we were to travel north to Kalbarri. Once again it was sunny with a cooling breeze. The first part of the route took us through general agricultural land, much of it given over to grazing and for sheep. It was easy to see what the land was like before development as many fields had a stand of ancient trees and shrubs. What was depressing was to see vast areas taken over by alien *Lupinus micranthus* and *Echium plantagineum*, and then to see that small amounts of *Helianthus annuus* and *Nerium oleander* were being allowed to spread, while in the town of Geraldton bedding and roadside borders contained *Lantana camara* which has spread badly in parts of Africa and is poisonous to cattle.

Mark did some shopping at Geraldton while most of us visited the local museum. The museum's bookshop became too irresistible for Tonje and as a result she purchased a very big book on Australian orchids to go with yesterday's purchase of a large book of paintings of the flowers of SW Australia. We found a fantastic flower garden, dominated by large drifts of yellow *Verticordia chrysantha* and pink *Verticordia monadelphica*. There were masses of other plants keeping all the photographers exceptionally busy. We must have spent a good 90 minutes before we were on our way towards Northampton where we were to find a café for lunch. After a tasty midday meal we moved off again, stopping at the roadside for large patches of luminous purple *Disphyma crassifolium*, red grevillea, yellow *Labichea* and the silky bluish *Alogyne*.

A reddish coloured lake with areas sectioned off was a commercial source of Carotin. Soon we hit the coast with the sea at times breaking with large surf and spray. Visiting Castle Rock and

Natural Bridge. The area was alive with masses of a brown moth and Wanderer butterflies, both of which seemed to prefer the semi-succulent, low growing shrub, *Scaevola crassifolia*.

We were to make yet another stop on the outskirts of Kalbarri for *Lechenaultia linarioides*, which like all other stops, produced many other plants.

We were all in our rooms by 17.00 leaving enough time to prepare for a session of plant identification at 18.00 with Mark, using his laptop. At 19.00hrs we drove down into town to the very quiet Beach resort hotel restaurant where we indulged in a wide range of buffet and a-la-carte meals.

Kalbarri

Saturday 10th September

The first part of the morning involved breakfast at Black Rock Café near the sea front, shopping for stamps and buying fly/midge nets, followed by a quick return to our rooms. We all went down to an area on the lawn by the Kalbarri/Murchison Estuary shoreline for Pelican feeding. It turned out that the Pelicans had, since March, been using an area further up the coast so the feeding has been temporarily postponed.

The main part of the day was spent within Kalbarri National Park, driving around, mostly on bumpy partly sealed sandy roads. It is interesting to note that it seems that the most colourful and number of different species of plants are by the entrance areas to the park.

It is just over 20km to the Loop area, just above the Murchison River gorge. One of the stops on the way offered views of the river and gorge framed by *Calothamnus homalophyllus*. Among the broken rocks were numerous plants of *Pityrodia terminalis*, referred to as their Native Foxglove, but looked more like a purple/red penstemon. We had made a couple of roadside stops before reaching the car park near Nature's window - a natural hole in the sandstone offering a view of the Murchison River and gorge. This is probably the most photographed natural feature in S.W. Australia, featuring in most publicity brochures. We all made the trip from the car park to this feature, which took about 60 minutes, arriving back just in time for one of Mark's picnics, which have a wide range of food to satisfy all tastes.

Our next stopping place after quite a long drive within the park was Hawkshead where we could again look down into the Murchison River gorge. Looking down into the gorge we could see feral goats. We had earlier seen a notice board indicating that the Park is trying to eliminate the goats, along with wild pigs, introduced foxes and feral cats, all of which have decimated many forms of native wild life and harming important habitats and plants.

After a wander around an area close to an entrance, where we found among many treasures, particularly *Anigozanthos karribiensis* and *Anigozanthos manglesii quadrans*, we drove back to our rooms. During the day most of us had kept our eyes down scanning the ground for plants, while Richard had been looking skywards, seeing a number of various birds including an eagle, which all the rest of us missed.

For the second night running we met for about 45 min in Mark's room and worked on the identification of some of the day's plants. It was then off to the Black Rock Café where we had a tasty meal.

Mullewa to Three Springs Sunday 11th September

Breakfast at Black Rock Café at 7am was not of a high standard. After a 10min stop back at our rooms we were away at 8am. We drove through Kalbarri N.P. aiming for Northampton but a roadside floral display became too irresistible and we stopped finding one good plant after another. We had stopped for a display of pink *Schoenia cassiniana* and white *Rhodanthe chlorocephala* subsp *splendida*, but we found an unusual climber in the convolvulus family *Duperreya sericea* with 1cm blue flowers, sprawling stems of *Dichropodium preiseii* reminding one of a *Dianella*, pale pink *Eremophila clarkei*, and two more everlasting flowers *Cephalipterum drummondii* and *Waitzii nitida*. From Northampton it was a case of travelling due East, using a mixture of sealed and unsealed roads to Mullewa, where a quick call at the Information Office confirmed that the Wreath flowers were OK at the well-known site. Although this meant adding about 80km to the days driving, everybody felt that it was worth. The Wreath plants, *Lechenaultia macrantha*, were growing in the sand at the side of the unsealed road, with a background of *Acacia*, *Grevillea* and *Eremophila*. There were a few *Hibbertias*, *Brunonis caerulea*, known as Australian Cornflower and *Keraudrenia* - a purple Firebush. A low plant at the back of the sand with small orange trumpets was *Balaustion microphyllum*.

All this excitement brought on our appetites so we only moved a short distance, where, under the shade of a Eucalyptus we had our picnic. What a range of tasty food Mark had prepared for us. Richard drew our attention to a flock of 30 or more budgerigars, a bird which tends to keep in large family flocks, and is often quite elusive. When we returned to Mullewa, short visits were made to the Information Centre for books, or the nearby shop for ice creams.

The next main stop was Coalseam Reserve, known for its huge drifts of Everlasting flowers, and one of the first places in Australia where coal was mined, from a surface seam. We had early seen huge areas of farmland smothered with the alien *Echium plantagineum*, and, unfortunately there was a lot in parts of Coalseam Reserve. A short visit was made to the reserve's viewpoint, before taking the last leg of the day's journey to Three Springs Tourist Lodge where we had a very friendly welcome. Mark held a discussion on the naming of orchids before we had a very delicious supper.

Yarra Yarra Lakes, Watheroo Nation Park, Moora New Norcia to Perth Monday 12th September

Three Springs Tourist Lodge went out of their way to provide us with a lovely breakfast, during which time we were able to watch a Long-billed Honey-eater flitting around the garden. Terry had been out earlier walking around the town, and commented on how clean and tidy

everything was. Three Springs is a small town with a great community spirit, indicated by numerous facilities and projects, one of which was a path with pavers donated by everyone, each with their own name. Terry had noted a good specimen of *Kennedya nigricans*, therefore on leaving Three Springs Tourist Lodge, we all took photographs of it. We then took an unsealed road to the edge of the Yarra Yarra lake complex. We noted a few ducks and a couple of Black Swans far away on the other side of the first lake, and closer views of a Black-winged stilt and a Red-necked Avocet.

It was then back to Three Springs and the long drive South to Perth. We made a number of stops for everlasting flowers and *Banksia prionotes* as well as an orange/brown bush of the very spiky *Daviesia incrassata* spotted by Heather.

At Watheroo National Park we took an unsealed road into the park eventually finding a place to park. Earlier in the day we had found some groups of the Cowslip Orchid, *Caladenia flava*, but we were able to add *Pterostylis vittata* and the Enamel Orchid to our list. We had a light lunch at a café in Moora, the owner lady being a talented artist. Mark bought one of her line drawings of a Corella.

From Moora we decided to cut across country, but not before admiring a drift of *Rhodanthe chlorocephala rosea*. Our chosen route was described as a special wild flower route, but we must have picked the wrong day as it was not a colourful route, although a number of roadside stops were good for birds. At 4pm we decided that we should stop stopping and head for Perth and the Sullivan Hotel, but not before we had found a number of different forms of Spider Orchids, Jug, Greenhood, Yawning leek, Little Laughing Leek Lemon-scented Sun and a Pale China Orchid; enough to keep us happy.

Perth - Kings Park

Tuesday 13th September

At breakfast we said farewell to Maurice and Jennifer, who having had a week with us had a walking tour organised in the far south west corner.

At 9am the rest of us walked a short distance to the Adelphi Hotel, where from the back is a long series of over 200 steps leading up to Kings Park. It is very popular with keep fit enthusiasts, who were jogging up and down. Heather spent a lot of time waiting patiently for a particular photograph, while Richard was equally patient bird watching. The rest of us tried to soak up the very wide range of native plants, most of which were labelled... It was about eight hours later that we all began to go back to Sullivan's Hotel leaving enough time to wash and change for dinner. A tasty meal ended yet another very enjoyable day.

Ellis Brook, Boyagin to Hyden

Wednesday 14th September

Richard was out before breakfast, birdwatching around the lake across the road from our hotel,

where there were Black Swans, Moorhens, Coots, one of which had young peeping out from mum while sitting on the nest, various ducks, cormorants and Australian Darter. Our minibus and trailer had been swapped for a standard mini-bus as we were now a smaller group. After numerous traffic lights, all of which seemed to turn to red as we approached, we left Perth behind us and reached Ellis Brook Nature Reserve. We took the steps up towards Eagle View, the dominant plants being *Calothamnus rupestris*, *Calytrix variabilis* and *Xanthorhoea preisii*. We found a few *Thelymitra antennifera* and Pink Enamel Orchids and clumps of *Darwinia citriodora*. With time running out (we had a fairly long drive ahead), we made a brief stop further up the valley where there were numerous shrubs of *Trymalium floribundum* and a single plant in flower of what we thought was *Grevillea wilsonii*, but was probably *Grevillea bipinnatifida*.

It is basically a long boring haul to Hyden as much of the land has been cleared for agriculture, with vast fields of grain, rape or meadows. We moved on to the Boyagin reserve. A lack of notices on the main roads, made finding it a little difficult, but find it we did. It was time for our picnic which was laid out on very heavy-weight concrete tables. Next to the car park are a couple of granite outcrops, at the foot of the nearest were drifts of pink daisy-like *Lawrencella rosea*. On the outcrop were masses of the diminutive pink *Stylidium calcaratum*. Isolated dots of pale yellow were the Lemon-scented Sun Orchid, *Thelymitra antennifera*. At the margin, under the shade of trees and shrubs were a few curiously shaped Fringed Mantis Orchids, *Caladenia falcata*.

Because of the long drive still ahead, we left while still wanting to investigate the little nooks and crannies of the outcrop, where in the shade grew *Cheilanthes* ferns.

We made a stop for fuel and ice creams, but basically it was a case of 'eating up' the kilometers. We registered at Hyden at 5.30pm and were in our cabins by the saline lakes within half an hour. At 8pm we were at the Wave Rock Hotel in Hyden where a superb buffet tempted us to overeat.

Wave Rock, Lake King to Hopetoun Thursday 15th September

We made a short visit to Wave Rock before breakfast so that we could enjoy the geological feature without people in view. After breakfast at the Wave Rock Hotel we went back to our chalets. 15 minutes later and we were making our way back to Wave rock. There was a nice clump of *Caladenia longicauda eminens* and a number of *Caladenia roei* in a fenced off area next to the car park, but all within macro focusing. We walked from Wave Rock to Hippos Yawn, a large natural feature resembling a huge Hippo mouth, finding a number of different orchids, *Dodonae* was in flower and fruit. Some of the group took the loop route, while others retraced their steps, taking a little longer than planned.

After leaving Wave Rock we made a number of roadside stops, our first being for a golden-yellow *Grevillea excelsior*, which of course resulted in many more plants, which included a little green bird orchid, *Pterostylis barbata*. Another stop was at a granite mound, a section having a low wall as part of a water collecting system with large circular metal storage containers. If the sun had come out there would have been a spectacular display of Lemon Scented Sun Orchids. As it was the drifts of white *Borya sphaerocephala* were very attractive. A *Stypanda*-like bush could

not be named by us or the flower experts at Raventhorpe's Flower Show, where we had a brief visit to admire their show of about 700 different local wild flowers.

At Lake King we used a picnic table for our lunch-time spread, afterwards making our way to Hopetoun, albeit with a number of roadside stops, only ending our botanising when the light levels were rapidly dropping.

We were allocated our chalets and met up at 7pm for supper at a recently opened café. The food was good and nicely presented.

Fitzgerald National Park to Quaalup Friday 16th September

Within a very short time of leaving Hopetoun the weather became drizzly with an increasing wind, but our spirits were uplifted by the botanical wealth. There were vast stands of tall *Hakea victoria* with brightly coloured leaves reminding one of ornamental cabbage foliage, and numerous plants of the famous Quaalup Bell, *Pimelea physodes*. The wind made photographing difficult and we were to experience short, light, squalls for most of the day. After tea/coffee and biscuits below East Mt Barren, we retraced our steps to Hopetoun and then drove north to Raventhorpe. We called at their very good information centre, their shop having a good selection of flower related books, leaflets and goods. A leaflet indicated a 20km drive to lookout point, so we decided to 'give it a go'.

The lookout feature was a log barrier about 3m x 1.5m and made of 10cm round logs, overlooking Hopetoun some distance away. Here we found *Banksia lemnniana* with pendent flowers instead of the usual *Banksia* upright ones, *Beaufortia orbifolia*, and the delicate Bell Sun Orchid, *Thelymitra campanulata*. In between the squalls we had our midday lunch, before returning to Ravensthorpe, and the road north of the park, making a number of stops. Not far from the turning to Quaalup we found a number of orchids including the Small Bee Orchid *Diuris laxiflora* and *Pyrorchis nigricans*. We also stopped to photograph a herd of wild camels and later on a porcupine.

It is a long drive south on unsealed roads to the Quaalup Homestead, made all the more difficult by locked gates (we had the lock's combination numbers) to reduce traffic through this part of the park in an effort to control the spread of Phytopthera, die back, disease. It was late evening when we arrived and were allocated our rooms.

We had an excellent meal before retiring to bed, hoping that the weather would dry up overnight, because movement within the park would be banned if the weather was wet, as moisture increases the chances of spreading Die Back.

Point Ann & West Mt Barren Saturday 17th September

We all commented about noises during the night which sounded like a plumbing problem, which turned out came from Quaalup's tame Emu, Edna. Both Terry and John making respective night calls to the toilet some 20 yards from our chalets met Edna, Terry virtually bumping into her as she was standing under the canopy of his chalet room right by his bedroom door. She is semi-tame and only recently returned from a five week walkabout within the park. It was breakfast at 8.30 to allow some to have a lie-in and others to do some early bird watching. We were concerned that should it be raining or the air so damp that the ground was wet, we would not be able to move around the National park because of the likelihood of spreading die-back - Phytophthora disease. As it so happened it was sunny but with a cool breeze, but the sun was quickly warming things up. We were informed that there was still a problem with moving around the park because of the disease, but Carlsten, owner with Karen of Quaalup Homestead could drive us around. We had to be at the first locked gate at 9 o'clock. It was then a non-stop drive to Point Ann where fantastic sweeps of white sand dissolved into a sea which changed through pale to dark blue with distance and darker patches of rocks and probably sea weed. We walked around the cliff edge photographing numerous plants including banksias and *Pimelea rosea* with Wanderer butterflies. Then we noticed the dark shapes through the clear water of Southern Right Whales, one with a calf, very slowly drifting by allowing time to take fantastic photographs. Eventually we walked back to the parking bay and a sheltered picnic area, so we stopped for lunch. Afterwards we made a short stop at the next beach, a vast expanse of very fine silver-white sand as Tonje wanted a 10 minute swim.

Next stop was Mt Batten, where we walked part of the way up, until we felt that the flora was not changing, so we returned to our vehicles and walked slowly down the road, until we were picked up.

At 6.30 Karribank produced another very tasty meal. Afterwards we enjoyed a show of the day's plants shown by Mark before we retired to bed.

Quaalup Homestead Sunday 18th September

The sun was shining at 6.30am although to the west there were some dark clouds, however, at breakfast time the sun was hidden by dark clouds and it was lightly raining. We decided to take the Quaalup's nature walk, where some of the plants in the natural area have been labelled. At times it rained moderately heavy, then brightened up and we were hopeful that it was a front passing, but it would rain again. Richard had been out earlier, seeing a Wedge-tailed eagle, but no self-respecting bird was going to be on the wing during the current wet spell. For part of the walk we were accompanied by Edna the emu, but shortly before it rained 'Edna' disappeared. Despite the weather we were able to enjoy numerous plants including *Gompholobium venustum* - a low growing pink pea, the ground hugging *Petrophile longifolia* and the lovely yellow spikes of *Banksia attenuata*. Eventually we arrived back at the main Quaalup site and retired to our rooms agreeing to meet at Mark and John's room for lunch at 12.30 and back at the Homesteads dining

room at one o'clock for tea/coffee and waffles with jam and cream. Terry decided to brave the weather, (it had stopped raining but looked threatening) and went for an hours walk up the road. He found a number of orchids, many interesting *Fabaceae* and some new *Hakeas* and *Dryandras*.

After lunch Terry, Mark, John, Richard and Tonje went up the road spending three hours in gentle sunshine just mooching and photographing bits and pieces. The sun on the vast amounts of *Hakea victoria* were remarkable, as were the stands of bright red *Banksia coccinea*. A bright pink pea and a similar shaped blue one turned out to be just two coloured forms of *Gompholobium venustum* although some authorities have split them into two separate species, *kinghtianum* and *cyaneum*.

We had another lovely meal - starting with Pumpkin soup, followed by stuffed peppers and ending with a semi-cooked fruit salad with cream

Quaalup, Boxwood Hill, Albany, Turndurup to Porongurup Monday 19th September

Breakfast, packing and farewells and we were off at just after 9.0am, but within a few metres of Quaalup's gate we were admiring a small spider orchid - *Caladenia radiata*. Having passed through one of the locked gates and admiring the morning sun lighting up numerous stands of *Hakea victoria*, Just along the road we had to stop to admire a Wedge-tailed eagle - what a magnificent large bird it is! At one point we had to carefully negotiate the soft road surface as workers prepared upgrading the road. We stopped at Boxwood Hill Road House for purchases of snacks, which allowed us to borrow the key to their toilets. Terry pottered around finding toothpick Grevilleas, Spiny box poison and *Synaphae petiolaris*.

On the road to Albany we made a number of roadside stops. A highlight had to be bushes of *Hakea cucullata* with a boss of pink/purple flowers within the cup-shaped leaves, although the Green Bird Orchid - *Pterostylis turfosa* and Rattle Beaks Orchid - *Lyperanthus serratus* must be good seconds. We made a food shopping stop at Albany's Woolworth super market. After a short excursion around Albany we went towards Turndurop, passing the coast with numerous Little and Great Egrets. At Turndurop coast we visited the Gap, where the rough sea surged in sending spray some distance into the air and inland. The Natural Bridge had rough sea surging underneath. All very photogenic although it was difficult to keep the fine spray off the lens. We then, in the fading light, drove to Porongurup and Karribank, where we were allocated our rooms and prepared for supper - a very tasty meal, nicely presented.

Twin Creek reserve, Stirling Range - Bluff Knoll Tuesday 20th September

Richard was out with his binoculars well before breakfast, finding many active birds. We visited Twin Creek Reserve which was purchased by the local community when they realised that its

varied habitats contained a number of rare plants. Shortly after arriving at the reserve, Terry and John disturbed a large Blue-tongue lizard.

After about 90 min of wandering around we drove back to the Porongurup Village shop and café for drinks. It was about 30 minute drive from Porongurup to the Stirling range, where Mark made numerous stops and slow passes looking for *Isopogon latifolius*. Out of luck he settled for a picnic stop. Our next main stop was Bluff Knoll Corner where 8 different orchids were found, including Zebra and the diminutive *Caladenia barbarossa* - Dragon Orchid.

It is only a few kilometers to the Bluff Knoll car park, where the start of the 2-4hr walk to the top of Bluff knoll commences. We all opted for the first short stretch of hard surfaced path. Nevertheless we did find *Beaufortia decussata*, and the beautiful pink bells of *Darwinia oxylepis* - Gillam Bell. Fully satisfied with the day's excursion we made our way back to Karribank, arriving around 5.45pm allowing time for hot showers before another tasty and well-presented meal. Afterwards Mark, using his laptop, went through some of the plants we had seen during the day.

Stirling Range - Cranbrook Wednesday 21st September

The forecast at breakfast time was of a cold, wet front passing through, but we still decided to keep to our plan of visiting again the Stirling range, making stops as and when we saw something of interest. We had only travelled a short distance before the climbing *Hardenbergia comptoniana* took our attention with the red pea-like Coral Vine *Kennedia coccinea* covering the ground. There were also clumps of *Leucopogon verticillatus* and weeping bushes of the yellow and orange Fabaceae shrub *Bossiaea linophylla*. We passed by three wallabies in a field and soon reached Mt Barker, a wealthy looking town. Just outside of the town we began driving on a series of unsealed roads making a number of stops. Our main route was the Stirling Range Drive. Mark was delighted when we at last found a group of *Isopogon latifolius*. Terry investigated a little gully where water from the road drained into the undergrowth finding small domes of *Andersonia grandiflora*, a member of *Epacridaceae* with red tubular flowers. We had a couple of very light showers, but nothing to shout about. We took a short walk up the Mogog Mt Trail finding a number of Spider and Zebra Orchids before returning to the Mt Mogog Flat where there was a picnic table. A notable feature here was the fantastic silver and white trunks of Wandoo Eucalyptus, many of the older ones showing signs of many forest fires.

Shortly after lunch the weather turned very wet and miserable so we made our way back home via Cranbrook. On the way the weather improved and we had a number of excellent roadside stops. A little Café in Cranbrook was an ideal place to get an afternoon tea or coffee. A major surprise of the day was a short visit to Cranbrook Wildflower trail. The area had masses of Spider orchids, mostly *Caladenia longicauda* subsp *longicauda* and thousands of the small Bee orchid - *Diuris laxiflora*. The numerous tight flower buds of *Thelymitra antennifera* - Lemon-scented Sun orchid, made us realise what a display there would be when the sun warmed them up. There were other things as well including *Burchardia multiflora* and *Tribonanthus australis*.

Back at Karribank we had just about enough time to have a wash and brush-up before yet another tasty meal.

Two People Bay, Porongurup Thursday 22nd September

The forecast was unsettled with the showers, although it was a perfect sunny morning, ideal for a 6am start for Two People's Bay NP near Albany. We hoped to hear and perhaps see the Noisy Scrub Bird which was believed to be extinct, but is now about 1000 strong. It is supposed to like Eucalyptus hollows and is difficult to see at the best of times. We were not surprised to not see or hear one, but at least we found some nice plants such as *Adenanthos obovatus* - Basket Flower, *Xanthosia rotundifolia* - Southern Cross, *Boronia ovata*, *Nemcia (Gastrolobium) retusum*, and a *Lyperanthus serratus* - Rattle Beak orchid.

Back at Karribank we had breakfast at 9.30am when Heather and Tonje joined us, for the drive to the Tree in the rock area in Porongurup NP. It is a debatable point if the lovely purple *Hovea elliptica* or massive Eucalyptus took pride of place. In the sunlight for me the trees were the winner. One or two of the large ones had to be felled, and a rough annual ring count produced approx 200 years of growth with 12 forest fires during that time. We next visited Castle Rock picnic site where we had lunch with 2-3m high bushes of pink flowered *Mirbelia dilatata* under a nearby large Eucalyptus. The plant looked from a distance like a pink form of *Gompholobium scabrum* - Pink Lady. Afterwards it was a mixture of stops and starts calling at Mount Barker and a nearby granite hillside used as a telecommunication centre ending back at Porongurup. Supper was at 6.30pm followed by a plant session.

Dryandra to Perth Friday 23rd September

A 7.30am breakfast and away at 8.15am heading for Mt Barker; the start of a 400km drive back to Perth. Once we hit the main road we were able to cruise at around 120km an hour. We made a stop to photograph bushes of bright red *Kunzea baxteri*, before eventually turning off looking for Dryandra Park/Reserve. It was exceptionally dry, with very little in bloom.

One had to hunt for the few interesting plants, three of which was a Toothpick *Grevillea hookeriana*, *Beaufortia incana* and *Lambertia ilicifolia*. After a number of wanders we found a picnic site. Afterwards we continued towards Perth with another roadside stop only finding a selection of sundews, particularly *Drosera erythrorhiza* - an Ink Sundew with bright red foliage in a ground-hugging rosette of 6-8 leaves. At Sullivan's Hotel we had plenty of time to tidy up before the evening meal. Heather gave a vote of thanks on behalf of all the clients

Perth district and departure Saturday 24th September

At 8.0am and breakfast time we said goodbye to Richard who was leaving for a 3-day one-to-one birdwatching excursion. Heather in the meantime was already on her planned photo shoot in Kings Park. At 10am Mark drove Terry, John, Betty and Tonje to Bungen Park on the outskirts of Perth. It did not look promising but provided a nice range of new plants. We were able to identify virtually all we found, most notable being *Adenanthos barbiger*, white flowered *Conostylis setosa*, *Hibbertia amplexicaule* with large yellow flowers reminding one of *Hypericum calycinum*, *Pimelea sauveolens*, *Philotheca spicata*, bright red *Grevillea wilsonii*, *Banksia grandis*, *Scaevola glandulifera*, *Burchardia congesta*, *Agrostocrinum scabrum* and even a new spider orchid for our lists - *Caladenia macrostylis*. We had a simple picnic before being driven back to Kings Park for 3.0pm. Here we bade farewell to Mark who had to go to the airport for an early flight. All the rest of the group met up in Sullivan's lounge at 6.0am. Terry had a light snack, sorted out everyone's meals for 7.30 pm as he had to leave then for his flight home. Everyone else left some 90 min later for their long flights home.