



King Edward River - Perfect Serenity... If You Survive The Corrugations!

Last time, we had a well-earned rest at Mount Barnett camp ground and explored Manning Gorge. [Go here](#) if you missed it.

Teeth-Breaking Corrugations

Heading vaguely east from Mt Barnett, we decided we just had to see Mitchell Falls. Now to get there, you first have to take on Kalumburu Road. It can't be that bad can it?



A CREEK CROSSING BETWEEN MOUNT BARNETT AND THE KALUMBURU ROAD TURNOFF. WE WERE SPOILT BY THE GRR - KALUMBURU ROAD BROUGHT US BACK TO EARTH!

Well actually, it is.

Drysdale Station is about 60km along Kalumburu Road from the Gibb River Road turnoff. The road's not great, but nothing worse than we expected. It's the next 100km to the Mitchell Falls turnoff that will really test you.



MILE AFTER MILE OF ENDLESS CORRUGATIONS WITH NO WAY TO AVOID THEM.

Kalumburu Road has a reputation as one of the worst roads in Australia. We can see why. The huge corrugations are bad enough. What's worse are the dips and washouts across the road. You simply can't get up enough speed to get on top of the corrugations - just as you start to speed up, another washout appears.

And to top things off, the sky looked pretty threatening. We soon found out that maybe we should have taken more notice of those clouds.



CATTLE CROSSING KALUMBURU ROAD ON THE WAY TO DRYSDALE STATION.



WE CALLED INTO DRYSDALE STATION SO PETA COULD MAKE A PHONE CALL. IT TOOK A WHILE FOR US TO FIND THE PHONE INSIDE THE FRIDGE!



WITH THE WET SEASON JUST OVER, THERE WAS STILL PLENTY OF WATER IN THE CREEKS. KALUMBURU ROAD.

King Edward River Campground - Worth The Drive

Finally the turnoff to Mitchell Falls appeared on the left. A short drive in, across the King Edward River and we'd made it to the campground. And what a welcome sight it was!



THE NORTHERN SIDE OF KING EDWARD RIVER CROSSING. WE WEREN'T EXPECTING TO SEE THIS - AFTER ALL WE WERE NEARLY 500KM FROM THE NEAREST TOWN!



SETTING UP OUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME AT KING EDWARD RIVER CAMPGROUND.



OUR BACKYARD AT KING EDWARD RIVER CAMPGROUND.

The campsite is split into 2 separate areas. We chose a site near the river - absolutely magnificent and we were the only ones there when we arrived. Perfect!

We settled for a patch of grass under a tree, just a short stroll to the river. Of course the kids headed straight for the river and found an excellent swimming hole. Water flowing over rocks provided the perfect natural spa - just what we needed after Kalumburu Road.



THE KIDS FOUND A PERFECT SWIMMING HOLE IN KING EDWARD RIVER.



LOVE THE PANDANUS PALMS ALONG THE RIVER BANKS.



KING EDWARD RIVER FLOWS OVER THE ROCKS NEAR THE CAMPGROUND - A PERFECT PLACE TO HAVE A NATURAL SPA AFTER A HARD DAY OF DRIVING!



ANOTHER CAMPER RICK CASTING A LINE.



BOILING THE BILLY ON OUR CAMPFIRE.



DELICATE WILDFLOWERS AT THE CAMPGROUND.



AN UNUSUAL WILDFLOWER AT THE CAMPGROUND.



FILLING A JERRY CAN WITH PRISTINE WATER AT KING EDWARD RIVER CROSSING.



ONE OF MANY RESIDENT BROLGAS AT THE CAMPGROUND.



A LARGE GOANNA LAZING ON THE WARM ROCKS.



THE BUSH QUICKLY CHANGES TO TROPICAL ON THE MITCHELL FALLS ROAD FROM KING EDWARD RIVER.

This campground is pretty special, one of those places that's instantly on your "favourite campgrounds" list. Like most Western Australian campgrounds, this one has a resident Camp Host in the tourist season - in our case, Bruce from Darwin. He loved the place but was pining for fresh fruit and veggies.

Quiet, peaceful and isolated - really isolated. The nearest towns are Wyndham and Kununurra at about 460km away then Derby at 580km away - mostly on dirt roads.

Wandjina Art Meets Gwion Gwion Art

Two stunning clusters of Aboriginal Art are on display near the campground. Both depict a fantastic selection of both Wandjina Art (which we first encountered at [Galvans Gorge](#)) and Gwion Gwion or Bradshaw Art. For an excellent explanation on [Gwion Gwion Art](#), [go here](#).

By chance we coincided with a tour group who had appeared from Mitchell Falls in a 4WD bus. They insisted we join them, so we were treated to a free guided tour of the Aboriginal Art.

There is some distinctly different art, clearly painted with much darker ochre. These are 17,000 - 23,000 years old and apparently very reminiscent of Indonesian art. As there was an ice bridge between the two countries then, this is entirely possible.



ONE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY ROCK ART SITES AT KING EDWARD RIVER.



WANDJINA ART.



LIKE WANDJINA ART, GWION GWION ART IS VERY DISTINCTIVE.



THE DARKER OCHRES (ALONG THE BOTTOM) ARE EXTREMELY OLD GWION GWION ART.



A DINGO LURKING IN THE BUSH AT KING EDWARD RIVER CAMPGROUND.

Just think about this for a minute. 17,000 to 23,000 years ago - makes the pyramids, Roman conquests, birth of Christianity seem like yesterday in comparison. Especially when you realise Europe was buried deep under an ice sheet back then.

An Omen

That afternoon, people started arriving from Mitchell Falls. The ranger had told them to get out or be prepared to stay for a couple of weeks due to rain.



THE TRAFFIC WAS TERRIBLE AT KING EDWARD RIVER CROSSING! IT WAS ONLY LATER THAT WE DISCOVERED THESE PEOPLE HAD BEEN TOLD TO GET OUT OF MITCHELL FALLS BEFORE THE RAIN SET IN AND STRANDED THEM.

A sign of things to come... just on dark, the heavens opened at King Edward and it poured all night.

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