

Journal

Part II

As our lives changed dramatically after we found Dorothy I have split the journal into two different parts. Part I details our lives once we decided to go travelling and part II is what happened once we finally found Dorothy.

August 1st 2008 (Friday)

Today turned out to be quite an emotional day for both of us. We went into town as usual and after filling up our water container we dropped into the local library and I started to search for the new information that we now knew was somewhere on the internet regarding Belle's identical twin.

It didn't take too long before I found the photograph of Dorothy and her husband Rxxxxxx that was in an article in a Malaysian newspaper (The Star) on the 19th of last month. (Just one day after our 27th wedding anniversary as it turns out).

It is difficult to put into words how I felt when I first looked at the photo of someone who looks just like Belle in every way but is in fact an entirely different person with a completely different life. Emotion overcame me and tears quickly welled into my eyes. Although this is one of the happiest moments of our lives there is also the very sad thought that these identical twins have been separated for almost 50 years! Why didn't the two adoptive families at least stay in contact so the girls could have had some idea about each other's lives? This is something I just can't fathom, separating identical twins seems to me to be an awful thing to do.

I tried unsuccessfully to email the newspaper in Malaysia, but no matter what I tried the emails just kept on being rejected. To be this close to finally getting Belle and her sister re-united and not being able to send a simple email just about made me blow a gasket.

While we were shopping in Karratha I had the idea of going to the local ABC office to see if they could help and if they were interested in doing a story about the search and hopefully soon to be reunion.

I have to digress somewhat at this point to discuss our attempts to find Dorothy over the years.

Belle has known that Dorothy was 'out there somewhere' since about the age of seven but life goes on and nothing really happened until Belle got to the age of about 30. I couldn't understand why she hadn't done anything about looking for Dorothy and we finally sat down and decided to spend some time and money conducting a search.

Belle and Dorothy were adopted by separate families with the adoption being finalised in August 1959 (according to records). Belle knew that she and Dorothy had attended kindergarten together but at the age of just 4, they had no idea they were identical twins.

Our search began when we contacted the authorities in Malaysia and obtained a copy of Belle's and Dorothy's birth and adoption certificates. We now knew that Dorothy's surname was Loader and we had her adoptive parents names as well.

From there we contacted the Red Cross, Jigsaw and other agencies that are supposed to be able to assist but we got nowhere. Later we tried TV shows like Ray Martin, I even emailed Oprah I was that desperate, but the result was always the same.

With the advent of the internet we put messages up on adoption and people-search websites, but still we had no luck. We realised that by this time Dorothy was probably married and her surname had changed.

Years passed but we never gave up hope. Every opportunity we got we checked for 'Dorothy Loader' on the net but it was not until December 2007 that the name finally popped up.

Someone called Dorothy Loader had posted a message on a website called Ask Virtual Malaysia in 2003! So long ago and I had never found the message before. I immediately tried to send a message to the website asking if they still had her email address or any other contact information but I could not get anything to work on the site with regard to sending them a message. I then sent messages to Malaysian TV stations, newspapers etc. pleading for help in getting in contact with this Dorothy Loader. I was as sure as I had ever been about anything that this was the right person – she was in the right place – Selangor, Malaysia – the twins were born in Malaysia, she had the right name and she was asking about Chinese culture and Dorothy like Belle is ethnically Chinese. The only odd thing was that when she left this message she used her maiden name, was this the right person after all?

I ground my teeth in frustration waiting for someone in Malaysia to get back to me. I must have spent endless hours scanning various sites for any other mention of her name but everything I tried came to nothing.

Months went by and nothing happened. Belle has some of her adoptive family still in Singapore, so in July 2008 I asked her to write to them and see if they could find out anything about the website concerned and as it happened another website suddenly popped up with the name Dorothy Loader on it. THIS TIME THERE WAS A PHOTOGRAPH!

Absolutely no doubt now that after all this time we had finally found her. Now all we have to do is make contact.

When we got onto the net this morning we quickly found the site but there were no contact details on the website for Dorothy, so I attempted to send an email to the newspaper, guess what? It bounced!

I tried again, and again, and again but nothing. I tried different offices of the newspaper and same result. Every email I sent came back

undelivered. This was all too much. To be so close and yet so far was more than either of us could stand.

We called in to the Karratha office of the ABC to see if they could help and if they were interested in covering the story. We spoke to Kirstyn March who was both very interested and wonderfully helpful. She passed the message on to an ABC show called 'Can We Help', that does wonderful work re-uniting people who have lost touch.

They called back very quickly and Sian (From 'Can We Help') has now started making the first tentative steps to making the reunion a reality.

This is an amazing event in our lives. We were both in tears as we drove the 40 kilometres from Karratha to our campsite at Cleaverville and the emotional roller coaster is still racing for both of us.

Even though we both knew that Dorothy was somewhere in the world, it wasn't until we looked at the photograph of her and her husband that she finally became real.

Now comes the time of frustration as we wait for the first contact, and the time of doubts and stress as we wonder what her reaction is going to be. Belle has a million and one questions racing through her head and I am pretty much the same. We have led a rather unusual life at times and recently things have not been going our way at all, so could this be some kind of new beginning for us? A way to put a very difficult time in our lives behind us and start again? I have to say that I sincerely hope so.

One thing is sure, if Dorothy wants to meet Belle we will spend every last cent we have to make it happen. We have precious little left after we lost our home but this is probably one of the most important things we will ever do and I have promised Belle that no matter what, if Dorothy wants to make contact, then I will get her to meet her sister in person.



The first photo we ever saw of Dorothy

August 2nd 2008 (Saturday)

Dark moon+1 05:14 1.4 / 11:14 4.5

Emotions continue to well up inside both of us as we struggle to deal with the enormity of the situation we are facing. Looking at all this from the outside it would be so easy to just say, 'well isn't it wonderful that after all this time that Dorothy has at last been found', but there is so much more to this than the joy of finding her.

Last night we lay in each other's arms with tears running down our cheeks. Belle said 'This is crazy, it's not like anyone has died' but that is almost the feeling.

I know that my tears were for two little identical twin girls who were torn apart and never had the chance to grow up together and share the memories that they should have had. More than half a lifetime of lost experiences, of things they should have shared together growing up, it is so inconsolably sad.

I am also experiencing a surprising amount of anger directed at the respective adoptive parents who were too insensitive to see that identical twins should never have been allowed to lose contact. A letter occasionally between the families to keep the girls in touch until they were old enough to make up their own minds about making contact would have been the very least that could have been done.

The fact that this opportunity was denied to them seems to me to be a very cruel callous act.

Belle, being the incredibly loving and forgiving person that she is, does not feel the same way, but I have to wonder, if the initial contact with Dorothy does not go smoothly, will she eventually start to feel the same way I do?

We know too that if we are experiencing all this when we have known for a long time that Dorothy was out there somewhere, that when we do make contact, Dorothy will undoubtedly go through pretty much the same feelings.

Our thoughts are very much with her at the moment as she lives her life blissfully unaware of what is about to descend on her.

Although I find it hard to believe that by this time, she has not found out she was adopted, we both worry that if that is the case, that she may have a very much harder time coming to grips with all this. Although she is still a complete stranger to us, she is Belle's flesh and

blood and we do not want to hurt her.

My biggest concern right at this point is that we are already at a very low ebb in our lives anyway. Things have gone very badly for us over the past couple of years and try as we might we just haven't been able to see any light at the end of the tunnel. If Dorothy was to reject contact I think that could well be the final blow that extinguishes hope from our lives forever.

Even so we have come too far now to turn back.

With all this going round and round in my head I only managed 4 hours sleep last night.

To ease the tension we have been experiencing over the past two days we took the boat out fishing and although we only brought in 4 bream, it did seem to help get our minds off everything that is going on.

Unfortunately we also have other serious issues to deal with as the caravan park our old bus is in, is giving us a very hard time for no apparent reason. It looks like we are going to have to get the bus out of there and sell it or do who knows what else with it and then we will have no home base to go to. We may even have to go as far as taking the matter to court as the caravan park is now illegally trying to charge us \$15 A DAY! to keep the bus there and they charge the other people storing their caravans etc. there NOTHING! Which was the agreement we had with them until they decided to start making trouble for us. Just why they are discriminating against us we can't fathom.

They are trying to claim that because we haven't been there much then we have to pay storage but THEY are the ones who withdrew power access for the bus in February 2007 but told us they would fix the situation and then proceeded to do nothing about it, so we can't stay there even though we want to. I think they must be a bit deranged.

I hope the complaint we sent to DOCEP will sort something out.

August 3rd 2008 (Sunday)

Dark moon+2 05:55 1.2 / 11:55 4.6

We don't expect to be at Cleaverville much longer and the weather was right for fishing today so we took the opportunity of going out for what we think may be the last time this year.

To start off with things were a bit slow but we did catch 4 nice snapper and a big flag out on one of the reefs we fish occasionally. At high tide we moved back to Dixon Island and fished the mangrove area we found this year and caught 5 bream, 1 flathead, 1 mangrove jack. (When I say caught I should really say kept and we did catch a lot of other fish including a good sized cod but we let the rest go.)

All in all it turned out to be a good last fishing day for the season. Although we aren't in a hurry to leave as we want to stay in an area where we can be contacted easily, we will start slowly packing up the campsite now to be ready to head south again when the time comes.



The last catch for the season.

August 5th 2008 (Tuesday)

It is amazing how one simple event can trigger such an outflow of feelings and emotions. Since we saw Dorothy's photo on Friday, Belle and I have been talking about all sorts of things that have happened over the course of our lives.

Belle has one particularly dark period in her life when she was under the care of a married sister that she has never managed to get over, I am aware of the details but that is a story for her to tell in her own time and in her own way when she is ready. The huge mix of emotions have brought this and other events in her life into focus again and we have been just sitting and talking for hours and hours.

August 6th 2008 (Wednesday)

Belle and I have been talking almost non-stop about everything connected with our lives. Last night we hardly slept a wink and we are quite worn out. We talked and talked, we shared some secrets that even after almost 29 years together we had never shared before and we held each other tight all night long. Now there are no more secrets and we love each other all the more for it.

Finally the news we have been waiting for. Sian from 'Can We Help' rang to tell us that they have made contact with Dorothy and she is eager to meet Belle. She did know that she had a twin named Rosabelle so thankfully our fears on that score have been put to rest.

Not long after the first call Sian rang back and now we have a rough time-table of about a month before everything should be in place and we will actually get to meet Dorothy for the very first time. We don't quite know yet if we will be going to Malaysia or Dorothy will be coming to W.A. but I expect it is more likely to be the latter.

Everything is almost taking on a dream-like quality, it seems unreal. As we are about 1700 kilometres north of Perth at the moment, we are going to have to make our way back down the coast a little quicker than we had planned and we won't be stopping at Bush Bay this year but WHO CARES!?!?

We are planning to leave Cleaverville on August 18th and then keep on heading south until we are within easy reach of Perth. We will have to find somewhere to stay with the van near Perth and hope that the property at Oakford will be available. We have stayed there before and it is in a very good location.

Packing up has already begun but it will take a while to get it all finished.

August 7th 2008 (Thursday)

Our second last shopping day in Karratha for the year. We took the opportunity to get some passport photos taken just in case we need to go ahead and renew our passports. Belle's should be easier to renew as hers is Australian but mine is a British passport which means I also have to get a re-entry visa, a bit of a pain but there is no way I want to give up my British citizenship.

August 8th 2008 (Friday)

It has been a week now since some kind of renewal started in our lives. Although finding Belle's twin sister was the trigger for everything that we have gone through in the last seven days we have found that our love for each other has been completely rejuvenated.

Belle and I have always had a very strong relationship and are still very much in love, but I think we had reached a kind of plateau where we were both happy with each other and comfortable in our relationship but the kind of intensity that existed in the first few years had faded somewhat.

The events of the past week have changed all that and we are now back to the way we were when we first met without all the insecurities of a new relationship.

There is nothing more thrilling than to find that after nearly 29 years we are still both not just still in love but completely infatuated with each other all over again. This has probably been the most emotionally satisfying and deeply fulfilling week in both our lives, we hope it just goes on and on and on.....

August 9th 2008 (Saturday)

And still our emotions keep pouring out. I can't believe that after more than 27 years of marriage we are falling in love all over again. This is all just too wonderful for words.

I have never really talked much about our relationship in this journal as for a long time it was part of the westernbelle.com website that we had on the internet and some things were just too personal to share with others but now the website has been wound up and the journal has still continued as a personal recollection of our lives, I think it is about time for me to go back in time and tell the story of how we met.

Belle is 17 months older than me but in an odd circumstance when she came out to Australia from Singapore, she dropped back a year in high school and ended up being a year behind me instead of a year in front which would ordinarily have been the case.

I started university at WAIT (now Curtin) in 1978 but it wasn't until the following year that Belle started. We were both living in the same student accommodation at flat 6, Rotary House on campus but in the previous year I had, had a disastrous relationship with an Asian girl who was studying medical technology. I was very broken up about it and when Belle moved into the same flat I was staying in 1979, although I was initially attracted to her, I deliberately kept my distance as I didn't want to get burned a second time. (Of course Belle is ethnically Chinese and was also studying medical technology so I went on the 'once bitten, twice shy' rule.)

We really didn't have much to do with each other even though we lived just metres apart, one on each side of the main hall that runs the length of the flat.

I don't know exactly when I first started to find myself thinking more about her, but I do know she brought herself to my attention in a way

that we would both remember for the rest of our lives.

The student accommodation had a series of individual dormitories for the 'inmates' but there was a common room and a shared kitchen. Back in those days I was somewhat more of a cook – more by necessity than design – but I could make rather good cakes with coffee flavoured butter icing. I used to leave the cake on the counter in the kitchen and one day I noticed some of the cake had gone missing but there was a little note attached that said : 'Dear Marc, I stole a piece of your cake. It sat there looking at me. Rosabelle'.

I was touched, it was such a sweet thing to happen and this was the trigger that got me to stop avoiding her and from there we started to talk just a little more. I was by this time more or less over the emotional pounding I had gone through the year before and I wanted to get to know Belle better. It wasn't until November 11th 1979 that I knew I was starting to fall deeply in love with her.

A friend of mine (Tom Little) was having a birthday party and somehow Belle and I ended up sitting together down by the lake just talking the day away. I had always been very awkward with girls before, I never knew quite what to say and to that point in my life (and bear in mind I was 19 years old then) I had never even so much as kissed a girl on the lips – I was so very shy and innocent. For some reason I just felt comfortable with Belle, there was none of the awkwardness that I felt with other girls and I started to realise that I had been such a fool for deliberately keeping out of her way for so long.

We talked all day and I remember that evening, when we were visiting Tom in his parent's flat, I think it was Tom's mum or it may have been his sister (after talking to Belle about this I am now reliably informed that it was Tom's aunt) who said something like : 'Is that your lady' in reference to Belle who was sitting beside me. My reply was : 'Not yet but I hope she will be.' I put my arm round her and someone took the following photo:



She's so pretty! How lucky I am that she chose me.

I couldn't sleep much that night and felt I had to write something to Belle to tell her exactly how I was feeling so I did just that and Belle remembers waking and expecting to find a note pinned to her door. She woke up and went to the bathroom but there wasn't a note, but by the time she returned to her room – there it was.

That's the way it all started we have never looked back from that point onward.

Neither of our families were too thrilled about our relationship but just three weeks after this picture was taken we knew we wanted to be together for the rest of our lives. We did wait a while before we actually got married which was on July 18th 1981 but it was November 11th 1979 that I knew I was hopelessly in love with her and there was no turning back.

Now nearly 29 years on I am experiencing all those wonderful powerful emotions all over again and it all seems too good to be true.

I could not have picked a more wonderful person to share my life with. Through all our troubles Belle has always been beside me and I just can't imagine my life without her. She is sometimes naive, always bubbly, sweet, loving, kind and despite all she has been through, she still has an innocent soul. She is in fact one of the few truly good people I have ever met. How on Earth I ever managed to be lucky enough for her to love me never ceases to amaze me.

August 12th 2008 (Tuesday)

Our final week at Cleaverville for the year has officially started and as usual we have some problems developing with the car. We have known for a while that the brakes need doing but now we are getting unpleasant burning smells that can only originate in the clutch. We have to be extra gentle with the car and hope we can make it to Carnarvon as repairing it here will be completely prohibitive. (Karratha is such a rip off joint for that sort of thing.)

This means our plans of getting all the way down to Perth have had to be shelved, but thankfully when we rang Sian this morning, she said that from her end there would be no problem as the ABC could either fly or bus us to Perth – having done one long haul bus trip I have to say that I REALLY hope it will be fly, not bus, down.

August 14th 2008 (Thursday)

Our last trip into Karratha for the year and fill up time for the car. Over \$200 just on fuel plus a new rear tyre (\$289) meant a rather expensive day. It will only get worse when (if?) we get to Carnarvon and have to have the brakes and clutch done on the car.

Now the real work starts as we try to find places to put everything away and there is only 4 days left to get everything done. The first job tomorrow is the routine monthly maintenance of our Honda generator and then taking the wind generator down and replacing the cable supports on the pole. The wind gen will now have to be completely disassembled as we are going to be killing time and not set up anywhere long term until we get back from Perth.

I always hate packing up here, it means the best part of the year is behind us and there is another 8 months at least before we will be back in the north west.

August 20th 2008 (Wednesday)

We spent last night at Barradale and got to Carnarvon today without any further hassles with the car. We will have to stop here a while and get everything sorted out and until the planned meeting with Dorothy takes place we will stay in town at the Norwesta Caravan Park. Normally I avoid caravan parks like the plague but at the moment this is the simplest solution.

We have to get our passports sorted out reasonably soon but may just hold off making the actual applications until after Belle gets to meet her sister. We don't want to spend around \$500 just on passports if it turns out there is no real need to get them. Since we don't have much money to start with we have to make sure that when we spend it, we do so as wisely as possible.

Tasks for the upcoming days:

1. Get quotes to fix the car (done)
2. Fix the car (done)
3. Get passport info and have forms ready to go. (done)
4. Re-start mail re-direction. (done)
5. Belle has to get her regular blood tests and results sorted out. (done)
6. Check email from Sian. (done)
7. Inform Centrelink we have moved. (done)

August 23rd 2008 (Saturday)

Something that would once have driven me almost apoplectic, my computer breaking down, has left me somewhat disgruntled but otherwise unconcerned. I guess the impact has been softened somewhat by the fact that Belle now has her laptop – which I can pinch when she isn't using it, and the fact that we have two external hard drives with all our information backed up, but I have to say I was rather pleased with my understated reaction last night when the desktop stopped working. It looks like it may be the power supply and there is an Acer agent in town so hopefully all I need to do is get a new one and pop it in.

Carnarvon has markets on Saturday mornings so we went down to have a look. I can't say I was overly impressed but the fruit and veg was quite cheap. Since it can all be bought at the plantations along River Road anyway there isn't much point in going to the markets. There was some other arts and crafts type stalls there but nothing that interests us.

We have had a quote on the work that needs doing to the car of \$1450 which is more or less what I expected so we will book it in on Monday and hopefully it will be done within a week or two.

Apart from sorting out the problems we have with Lazeaway and waiting for the ABC to tell us when we will have to go to Perth, the rest of the time here will probably be a bit of a yawn. All the fishing gear is put away so we can't even go fishing from the jetty. Being stuck in a caravan park isn't my favourite thing to do and I will be much happier when we can shift out to Bush Bay and be back to complete self-sufficiency again.

August 25th 2008 (Monday)

Our usual bad luck seems to be dogging us again as when I bought a new power supply for the computer (\$70) I fitted it and nothing happened when I switched it on, so it looks like the mother board is dead – the worst possible thing that can happen to a PC. I may as well just buy a new PC and stop stuffing around wasting money trying to fix this one. The rotten thing is only a couple of months out of warranty in any case.

On top of that I now have a dose of the flu! Why don't sick people stay at home instead of wandering around giving their disgusting germs to everyone else? We went to the library this morning and there was some stupid woman with the flu coughing her lungs out over everyone – thoughtless cow!

One of the reasons I really don't like spending much time in towns is that I always seem to pick up any bug that is going round.

The car is booked in to get the work done on Thursday and Belle has finally had her long overdue blood test so we are starting to get somewhere with the things that need doing.

August 29th 2008 (Friday)

We picked the car up this morning and are now just over \$1500 poorer. The extra money was for the leaking brake cylinders that were found on the rear wheels. Never mind, we have to keep the car in good working order as we are completely reliant on it.

The ABC seems like it is dragging its heels a bit, as every time we ring to see how things are going everything is still going to happen in about a month's time, and we have been ringing for several weeks now. We are getting to the point where we just want to make contact with Dorothy and not be kept waiting any longer. I don't think the people at the ABC have any real concept of how stressful this is becoming or how important it is to us. We are both finding it difficult to sleep and things are getting much too difficult. We have now decided that we want to make first contact by phone now and not wait for the face to face stuff. It really isn't fair of the ABC to just keep stringing us along and denying us the all important breakthrough that we have been waiting for, for so long.

We don't want to waste too much money sitting in a caravan park in Carnarvon and we would be much happier out at Bush Bay so we are thinking about moving out there next week.

The State Admin. Tribunal have set a phone conference about the problems with Lazeaway for 10:30am next Thursday so once that is over we will probably head out and free camp for a while until the ABC gets its act together.

September 2nd 2008 (Tuesday)

Developments in two areas in the last couple of days, one good, one more or less inevitable. First the bad news, DOCEP are useless and have done nothing to assist our situation with regard to Lazeaway. Although the threat of the stupid storage fee no longer hangs over us we are going to have to move the bus as the situation is no longer acceptable. The SAT phone conference is now pointless and has been abandoned.

We are not going to do anything about this just yet as the other news is that the ABC have now had a change of heart and are talking about flying us to Malaysia NEXT WEEK!

Once all that is out of the way, we will have to start looking for a new home for the bus or we will just have to get rid of it.

September 3rd 2008 (Wednesday)

From a high of thinking the ABC was about to fly us out next week to the low of finding out that it is now all being pushed back to the end of September and that they are now talking about bringing Dorothy out here again instead of us going to Malaysia.

When they told us a few days ago that we would soon be flying out to Malaysia, we thought that they finally had recognised the importance of all this to us and that they were finally taking things seriously. Now we are right down in the dumps again and Belle is even questioning just how interested Dorothy is to see her.

We are at the point now of wishing we hadn't involved the ABC in the first place and are seriously thinking of pulling out of the whole business and just getting ourselves over to Malaysia. The costs involved would be a bit over \$5000 if we want to stay there 4 weeks, which we could just about handle but then it becomes a matter of when do we go?

Apparently Dorothy only has leave over Ramadan, September 27th-October 5th or about those dates but us going then would make it even more expensive as here, it is school holiday time.

We don't want the first meeting to be over here, we have decided that since we were the ones to find Dorothy and not the other way round then we should be the ones to fly out and this is one thing we are now not going to compromise on. If that means we have to pay the whole cost ourselves then so be it.

We simply don't want the first meeting to be in a crappy sterile hotel room. The ABC just does not seem to understand that it is not just the first meeting that is important but how that meeting is handled and what kind of environment it takes place in. Even though they seem to be trying to help in their own way they just can't seem to grasp how important it is to us that this first meeting is done properly.

We lost our home so have nothing to show Dorothy but she has a home and a life in Malaysia that Belle wants to find out about. If Dorothy were to come here we would have no car, no way of taking her round, we would be out of our environment and she would be out of hers. The whole thing is stressful enough without meeting in an uncomfortable setting. Why can't anyone else understand this? Perhaps they simply think we are after a free trip but that isn't the case at all – we will pay to get ourselves there to make sure things are done the way we want them to be so although it will be hard for us to spend all that money it isn't an issue when it comes to Belle's first contact with Dorothy.

If the ABC no longer wants to be involved then we will probably give up all idea of getting there this year and will try to arrange to go next February which will be Belle & Dorothy's 50th birthday.

At the moment we feel totally drained and exhausted. What should have been a very happy time has now been completely spoiled by the mishandling of the situation by the ABC. Belle very rarely gets over stressed, in fact in the whole time I have known her I have only seen her get VERY VERY angry on two occasions but this afternoon she got that way again.

She got so mad she even said she wished that we (actually I got the blame) hadn't found Dorothy in the first place, not that she meant it but she was just so fed up and frustrated with everything.

Everything has taken far too long to get sorted out and we are both heartily fed up with being mucked around. All Belle wants is to contact Dorothy and be able to speak to her but still we are being forced to jump through hoops for a simple phone call – this is all just too much.

Even the first phone contact, that would have been exciting, has now had the shine completely rubbed away.

Why the hell can't anything in our lives be simple and straight forward????

September 4th 2008 (Wednesday)

What an awful day, we had no choice but to pull out of the whole situation with the ABC as they can't find enough money to get a crew to Malaysia and can't offer anything but a first meeting in Perth. That just isn't the way we want to handle this and so we had to tell them that we would take over and do everything ourselves.

They did offer to fly us to Perth and then pay half of our fares next year but they don't seem to get the fact that to us this isn't just about money. We have precious little of it, but if it means spending most of what we have to do this properly then that is a better option for us than going about it in a way we are unhappy with.

Words can't express how devastating this has been. Just a few days ago we were all set to go to Malaysia and now everything has collapsed in a huge heap. It was an incredibly heartless thing to do, to tell us we were going next week and then pull it all away from us.

The whole experience has been irrevocably ruined by all this. I just can't see any way of putting the shattered pieces back together again.

Now we have no choice but to wait until next year, let's just hope nothing bad happens meanwhile.

Later.....

The ABC has finally coughed up the contact details we have been waiting so long to get. Belle has now sent the first email to Dorothy which was as follows:

'Dearest Dorothy,

By now you may have received an email from the ABC. The reason I didn't want you to come to Perth was because we would have such a short time together before you had to fly back home again and I was very afraid that we may still be strangers to each other. The setting for our first meeting would be so sterile, contained within 4 walls. It's taken us nearly 50 years to find you and I have to honestly say that I had given up hope. If it were not for my dear husband Marc (who never gave up the search) we may not have found each other at all. They say identical twins have a kind of ESP that passes between each other no matter the distance and not long ago I felt a dreadful fear that you felt that I didn't want to see you. That is far from the truth. I cried so much when I saw your photo in the Malaysian article and I cried a lot that night. I don't know how it was for you being adopted but once I found you it made me assess my own adopted life and how I have been treated in the past by my adoptive family. It seems now that I have found you, my adoptive family are keeping me at arms length and I can't understand why. My husband and I are really the only family we've got so finding you has been WOW!!!! I want our first contact to be truly special. The ABC when they were thinking of flying us to Malaysia instead, even mentioned taking you and I back to our [birth] place in Bukit Besi. It was such a disappointment for us when they changed their plans yet again because I would have loved to have come home with their help. So you see I am so afraid you may not like me if we met here that it would destroy any future meeting. Please email me to let me know how you are feeling. I can't help loving you because you are myself. I hope you feel the same way about me.

Love always,

Rosabellexxxx....'

Now we just have to wait and see what happens.

September 7th 2008 (Sunday)

The email Belle got back from Dorothy has given us some hope that she may come down to Perth and then (crosses fingers and toes) we may be able to fly back with her. That would be a dream come true for Belle (and I) actually flying back to Malaysia with Dorothy would be an amazing thing to be able to do.

Unfortunately the black cloud on the horizon is the d*****d at Laze Away who has now started ringing and making threats about the bus. The moron rang no less than 3 times on Friday making threats about us getting the bus out of there within a week. NO CHANCE! I really don't care any longer what the little twerp tries to do, he has broken the law and he can wait until we get the most important issue in our lives dealt with. We are going to seek legal advice on Monday and see what we can do. Meanwhile I am writing to SAT and DOCEP to tell them what is going on.

The biggest issue we have to resolve at the moment is getting our passports sorted out.

We are waiting (somewhat impatiently) for Monday morning so we can find out what the ABC thinks of Dorothy's proposal and whether they are going to keep going as they said they would.

September 9th 2008 (Tuesday)

The little rat at Laze Away is still pestering us but it isn't going to change anything. The trouble is it is just adding to our stress levels, so much so that we had to go to the doctor today to get some pills that may help to reduce the levels a bit.

We have made an appointment with a para-legal tomorrow to see if we can at least knock the caravan park issue on the head until we get back. I know poor Belle is stressed beyond belief at the moment and this should be one of the happiest times of her life. I feel so sorry for her – more so than for myself as I do so want her meeting with Dorothy to be wonderful and the stress over what to do with our bus is really starting to make Belle miserable.

If we could just pay someone to move everything for us I would, but we are just too far away to organise anything and there is no where organised for everything to go anyway.

On the positive side we did get an email from Adam today saying that the ABC are now working on a detailed itinerary so we do have that to focus on.

To keep my mind off everything I have been trying to keep busy by putting together a series of discs about our travels to leave with Dorothy so that she can at least see some of what Belle's life has been like for the past 11 years.

We are still a bit stressed about what Dorothy may think of our life style but we are what we are and we are good people, so we just cross our fingers and hope that none of that will mater in the end. Belle is quite sad that we can't offer her sister somewhere to stay here when she does decide that she wants to come for a longer visit, but things do change and by that time perhaps our lives may have

taken a new path. Personally I think it would be really interesting to be able to get Dorothy and her husband down here and do some 'on the road' stuff with us so they can see how Belle's life has been for the last 10 years.

2 weeks 4 days (from my current calculations) to D-Day and time is just dragging.

September 15th 2008 (Monday)

Believe it or not we still don't know what on Earth is going on with the ABC and we are getting heartily sick of the whole process.

Laze Away managed to interfere with the story and have extorted \$1210 in payment THAT THEY ARE NOT OWED! The money had to be paid even though it is not owed because the ABC would have dropped everything and so it is nothing more than blackmail and the ABC have actually helped them get away with it.

Right at this moment it looks as though we will lose the bus, the shed and all our possessions down there including photographs, Belle's jewellery and God knows what else. It is utterly useless trying to get the authorities to uphold the law and we stand to lose everything all over again.

As we don't even know if we are going to meet Dorothy, even that seems to be fading into just another forlorn hope.

Our lives are currently at the lowest ebb they have ever been.

September 16th 2008 (Tuesday)

We have finally got word from the ABC that the story IS going ahead, it certainly took long enough to get to this point. The next major concern is getting our passports sorted out and that is where we could really come unstuck.

The British Consulate have told me that I can get a temporary passport issued the same day that I front up with the correct documentation (which I do have) but the snag is the return entry visa to Australia. I have decided that if it comes to it and I can't get one in time, then I will go anyway and sort it out while I am in Malaysia – to hell with it!

Belle has to get her Australian passport re-issued but at least if she can get that she will have no further problems.

The next snag – why is there ALWAYS a next snag ? – is that the ABC want me to book and pay for my ticket to Malaysia! This is simply stupid. I have no problem paying for it but as they are booking Belle's and Dorothy's tickets, the very least they could do is tentatively book mine as well so we are sure we are all together on the same flight and in the same seating. Words fail me!

Here we are just a week away from the day we are supposed to fly to Perth and ABSOLUTELY NOTHING is confirmed. My father always said that Australians couldn't organise a rice pudding, how right he was.

The big shock of the day was the price we were quoted for my air fare to Malaysia and back. We checked a week or so ago and were given a figure of about \$1000 and this was what we were budgeting on. Today we were quoted a figure of \$2080!! I found that very difficult to live with and spat the dummy in a big way. I was so annoyed I was close to giving up again but thinking about how disappointed this would have made Belle and Dorothy I just had to swallow the bad news and resign myself to spending the money.

Dorothy sent Belle a few more photos and Belle gets quite emotional looking at them. I have to admit that it is rather odd to look at someone who isn't Belle but looks just like her. When identical twins grow up together, they and everyone around them just accepts the fact there here are two people who look exactly like each other but when identicals are separated and then re-united it is a peculiar experience. From what we can gather, Dorothy probably has one or more children, if that is so then it will be quite weird for them to have someone arrive who looks like 'mum' but isn't. The whole situation is both very interesting but rather strange at the same time.



Belle's favourite pic of Dorothy

September 17th 2008 (Wednesday)

Still no confirmation of anything from the ABC, 1 week to go and we are hardly any better informed of what is going on than we were two

months ago. We are now being told that we will have the final itinerary tomorrow but I have basically given up hope of them ever keeping to anything they tell us.

At least now we have managed to contact another travel agent (RAC) and have been given a much more reasonable air fare price of \$1450 return. Although it is more than we expected it is a hell of a lot better than over \$2000. Problem is, the ABC are now changing the flight on us again! Aaargh!!

The ABC has now said that they have managed to get Dorothy on a better flight that arrives in Perth at 3pm on the 27th instead of nearly midnight. The snag was that they were then suggesting that we then fly back a day early on the 29th instead of the 30th. That would be very unfair to Dorothy who has never been overseas before. To fly in, do the filming for the ABC, have just one day in Perth, a SUNDAY at that, then fly out the next day would be a really lousy experience for her.

Even though we won't have our own transport available we could still hop a train to Fremantle and show her as much as we can of where we have spent most of our lives. Even though the ABC said that it would allow us to get a hotel room at their expense on our way back, I have the sneaking suspicion that they were just being cheap, as doing it that way would save them paying one extra night for Dorothy in a hotel here. We don't care about getting a hotel room on the way back through Perth, we will just go to the domestic terminal and wait overnight for our flight the next day. Better to do that than have Dorothy miss out on a full day in Perth.

September 18th 2008 (Thursday)

There are times in my life when I really do wonder if the whole world is trying to tell me something. As the ABC has been rather awkward about booking the flights and would not assist us by even making a tentative booking for my flight. Two days ago Belle decided to cover all the bases by making a tentative booking on the Malaysian Air flight just in case the ABC decided not to proceed with the SIA flight, so I was basically holding seats on both flights just in case the original ABC itinerary changed.

Yesterday we got a call first thing in the morning saying that, yes, the SIA flight was the one the ABC had decided to go with and so we cancelled the tentative booking on the MA flight. Next thing we know we get a call from the ABC telling us that they have NOW changed their minds and they are going to go with a different flight. At that stage we didn't know what flight, or airline the new booking was with and it was not until this morning that we found that they had now moved to the MA flight that I had originally been booked on and then cancelled when they said they were still going with SIA!!!!

Two days ago we were given a price of over \$2000 for the SIA flight and so Belle called RAC travel yesterday and got a price of \$1450 as I have already mentioned above. We also started looking at travel insurance as being away for two months could leave us exposed to extra expenses if we fall ill etc. The RAC quoted a figure of \$509... expensive but well, essential, so that is what we were going to go with.

This morning when we FINALLY got the confirmed bookings for Belle and Dorothy from the ABC we tried to get in contact with RAC travel and get my booking confirmed on the same flight. First we got no reply then when we got through there was only one person in the office and they would call us back! Meanwhile we are sweating blood thinking that all the seats could be booked and I would not be able to get on the same aircraft as Belle – this would have put the mockers on the whole thing.

Belle decided to go back to Travel World in Carnarvon to see what they could do, as waiting for the RAC was taking too long. First thing we discovered was that the RAC had given us the wrong quote on insurance and if we had gone ahead with it we would not have been covered for the right region of the world. Next we found out that the insurance for Malaysia would cost \$775 not \$509. Thankfully Travel World discounted this and brought it down to \$620.

After sorting out the insurance we then managed to confirm a booking for me on the right flight for \$1278.50. So after all this time and a hail storm of hassles, all the bookings are finally in place and once we sort out the passport and visa stuff we will be set to go.

We have been through some pretty bad stress in our lives but I have to say that the last two weeks rate as probably the most unpleasant and stressful we have ever had, worse even than losing the house. We have to hope now that it all turns out to be worth it.

There is still no news about whether the bus can be moved or not, so we are no wiser about that but we no longer care.

The cost of us getting to Malaysia with the ABC subsidising our trip we are currently estimating at \$3478.50. The money itself hasn't been the major issue and even though we didn't have a lot to begin with, I would have spent whatever it took to get Belle re-united with her sister. The thing we could have really done without has been all the stress, which in great part has been caused by the ABC either not giving us the information we needed, such as Dorothy's contact information, or not getting their end of things sorted out before telling us what was going to happen. I have lost track of the number of times they have told us something only to change their minds and then tell us something completely different.

Their organisation of this has been very hap-hazard. Although we know there have been other external factors, like Laze Away, causing problems, that was not something the ABC should have taken any notice of and by their actions they in effect helped Lazeaway to blackmail us. This is still something we have to sort out in the courts when we get back.

As things stand now, we fly down to Perth next Wednesday, run around and sort the passports, visas, international driving license etc. out on the Thursday, do some interviews with the ABC on Friday and then on Saturday, Dorothy flies in and the ABC conclude their filming.

We then have two days to show Dorothy around Perth before we all fly back together on the following Tuesday and we are then in Malaysia until November 30th.

To top off the day, when we dropped in to the computer repair shop to see how my computer was going we were informed that when they put a new mother board in and tested it, it caught fire! They have now ordered another one so I won't see my computer again until we get back.

September 21st 2008 (Sunday)

Well everything is now finally booked and paid for (except the passports etc.) but with our usual unwavering ability to get stuffed around it was not possible to get a booking covering 24-30 September in the same hotel so now we have to stay two nights in one hotel (Kings) and then transfer to another (Goodearth).

Strange to think that after all this time, come next Sunday Belle and Dorothy will finally be together. LESS THAN A WEEK NOW!

One recurring question that goes through my mind is; when identical twins are separated and go off to lead completely un-connected lives, would things still have worked out the same way if they had swapped places in the beginning, or would personality differences mean that each life would have been completely different to the way it turned out? The old 'nature Vs. nurture' argument that can never be answered but never-the-less is interesting to ponder on.

I am fairly sure I know how Belle will react when she sees Dorothy for the first time, what I am not so sure of is how I will react. Belle and I are so close emotionally that we tend to feel each other's emotions almost as if they were our own, so I know that the re-union will probably have a dramatic effect on me too.

September 22nd 2008 (Monday)

About a week ago we bumped into someone we met at Bush Bay last year, it was just a chance meeting and apart from just catching up to say 'Hi' we didn't think a great deal more about it. Today when Bobby and Gus called in and we told them about finding Belle's sister they asked if we would like to stay with them overnight when we flew back in from Malaysia. Little did they know that our plans for that night were to spend a rather uncomfortable time waiting in the passenger terminal.

We gladly accepted their kind offer and they have even organised to pick us up and drop us back at the airport the next day for our connecting flight back to Carnarvon.

It's strange sometimes how things work out.

September 23rd 2008 (Tuesday)

Well after all the stress and hassles we are on the 'threshold of a dream' to steal the title of a Moody Blues song. Nothing left to do now but wait for the last few hours to tick away. I can't say I am overjoyed to be flying, in fact I hate flying, but Belle loves it. It doesn't matter how many times I fly, I still get the jitters.

September 24th 2008 (Wednesday)

The flight from Carnarvon was about an hour late taking off but somehow it managed to make up a bit of time on the trip to Perth and we only arrived half an hour late.

The descent was quite rough (Perth airport is usually a bit of a rough ride in) and the smaller plane was knocked about a bit which made some of the less experienced flyers have a few moments of panic.

We were met at the airport by the ABC and taken to the hotel. This certainly made for a nice stress free arrival in Perth. The hotel we picked for the first 2 nights (Kings) turned out to be a bit of a 'dive' but it is only two nights so no big deal and we have certainly stayed at worse hotels before.

Tomorrow is 'run around day' as the passports and visas get organised but tonight we can just sit back and relax.

Dinner was a burger at HJ's, anything to save money at this stage as we will need to be a bit more free with spending once Dorothy arrives. We managed to find a shop to pick up some cereal and milk for brekky but the room we are in has no plates etc. so we had to ask for them to be sent up. Somehow the request got jumbled and all we have to eat breakfast with is one tea spoon – oh well it will take a bit longer to eat that's all.



Our ride to Perth arrives in Carnarvon

September 25th 2008 (Thursday)

Today was 'full on' with trips to Australian Passports, British Consulate, Immigration and the RAC for Belle's international license in the afternoon. I am quite sure that if the ABC hadn't been involved in all this today that we would never have been able to arrange the travel documents in time. It is amazing how co-operative various Government authorities can be when there is a film crew sitting in the office.

The day turned out to be a bit more expensive than we had budgeted for as my re-entry visa was \$240 instead of around \$150 that we had expected. (Last time we went overseas in 2001 it cost just \$70!!)

The filming side of things takes a long time as in order to get a number of different angles and differing shots there are lots and lots of re-takes. The filming part of the day took about 4 hours and in the afternoon we got to have a look inside the sanctum of the ABC and then did a bit of grocery shopping so that we won't starve when we get to the new hotel tomorrow. (The new hotel is quite a bit further away from the main area of town than the hotel we are in now.)

Hopefully the next room will be in better shape than the one we are in at the Kings. This one has broken light bulbs, the fridge door won't close properly and the walls seem to be rather thin as we can hear the TV from next door almost as clearly as we can hear our own. Carpets are stained, the wardrobe door is stuffed, things like guest soaps aren't replaced daily, bathroom ceiling paint is peeling off and the view is of a car park wall – lovely NOT!

On the positive side I have to admit that the hotel is very conveniently located and very close to the centre of Perth. An ironing board and iron are provided in the room and the bed at least is comfortable. If I was going to stay in Perth for any reason other than the ABC story I would certainly choose not to stay at the Kings again.

The day starts at 9am again tomorrow as the ABC pick us, our bags and our food up and run us around to do more filming, get Belle's passport and then in the afternoon conduct a more formal interview at the hotel.

All in all this is an interesting experience and Belle was quite chuffed with being the centre of attention for the day. Finally the stress of the past few weeks is starting to fade into the background, and despite being quite tired we are starting to enjoy ourselves.

Of course the whole thing comes together on Saturday when Dorothy arrives.

We know so little about Dorothy at the moment but from the few emails she has exchanged with Belle I get the sense that they really are very much alike. My prediction is that the minute they see each other they will instantly bond and that from that moment on they will become emotionally inseparable.

I think that despite the long separation and the fact that they have lived different lives in different countries, their basic characters will be as similar as their appearance.

September 26th 2008 (Friday)

Wow what a day! The film crew picked us up from the Kings Hotel at 9am and took us off to South Perth to do some outside filming. After a short lunch break the interview session with Belle was done at the new hotel room (thankfully a much better hotel room) and this went on until around 6pm.

Belle doesn't really feel that the interview managed to capture what she has been feeling. The hectic nature of the past couple of days has overshadowed the enormity of her upcoming re-union with Dorothy and it has taken the edge off her emotions somewhat. She is worried that she will come across as being too controlled and un-emotional about everything, but I think that the meeting with Dorothy tomorrow will set the record straight about how emotional all this is.

It is quite amazing just how much work goes into producing a bit of footage no more than 10 minutes in length.

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One thing I haven't mentioned yet is that on arrival we found that the original producer (Adam) has been replaced by a new producer (Darren). This is something that we have come to be extremely grateful for. Darren is forward thinking, well organised, efficient and best of all compassionate and helpful. These were the qualities we sorely needed when this was all starting to get organised by phone and we now feel that everything is being handled professionally and in a way that we feel comfortable with. To be honest we both wish that Darren had been handling this story right from the outset.

Our cameraman (Carl) is great. We enjoy his sense of humour and he obviously knows his job inside out. We have had two different sound men on the story so far but as soundmen are always the unseen and unappreciated ones, we won't spoil things for them by changing that state of affairs now ☺

Tomorrow of course is the big day. We get picked up at around 11:30am when Dorothy should already be an hour into her flight. The plan seems to be to complete some filming with us and then at around 3pm everything reaches the climax that we have all been working towards for so long.



Belle's interview

Being a bit of a worrier I am now starting to be concerned about what the future holds. Belle has this wonderful chance to get to know her sister for the first time in her life but in just a few short weeks we will be back in Australia again and the two girls will be separated for who knows how long.

Dorothy is obviously very settled in her life in Malaysia and has all her family and friends there. We on the other hand are still on the road and have no ties to bind us. It would be wonderful if some way could be found for the girls to both live in the same country but with our limited resources and capabilities these days, I have no idea how this could ever possibly come about.

It would be tragic indeed if these few short weeks turned out to be the only time Belle and Dorothy ever get to have together. I think when the time comes for them to say goodbye in Malaysia it will be very a painful experience.



Dorothy and Belle with our wonderful film crew:
Richard (sound), Carl (Camera) and Darren (Producer)

September 27th 2008 (Saturday)

The film crew came back to the hotel to do some final interview and 'getting ready' shots and then we were off to the airport. The tension and expectation grew and grew and finally we were told that Dorothy's flight had landed.

After almost 50 years apart, Dorothy walked through the arrival doors and was finally back together with Belle.

The initial reaction of one sister to the other was quite funny, as neither sister could really see much resemblance with the other but everyone around them knew instantly that they were identical twins.

My predictions about how similar the twins were turned out not to go anywhere near far enough. It is almost impossible to believe that after a lifetime apart and living in totally different cultures these two girls are alike in almost EVERY way. From everything to their favourite colour (blue) to their likes and dislikes, the way they eat, and even the way they think they are the same.

The film crew were just as surprised and when they took each sister aside to ask them a few questions they found that the answers they got were the same from each girl. The Nature Vs Nurture argument has come down decidedly in favour of nature in this case.

The surprise for me was not that I was able to easily relate to Dorothy, after all she is just like Belle, but that Dorothy seemed to be pretty much at ease with me. On the way to Kings Park from the airport Belle started feeling ill (as she does from time to time, especially if she gets stressed) and by the time she got back to the hotel all she was able to do was to flake out in Dorothy's room leaving Dorothy and I to get acquainted.

From my point of view it was easy, here was the identical twin of the woman I love most in the world and I didn't have a second's difficulty in relating to her or feeling comfortable in her presence. Dorothy on the other hand was sitting alone in a hotel room with a complete stranger but she didn't seem the least bit phased by the situation. We sat and talked and I cooked dinner while Belle recovered and then the two girls talked and talked and talked. I would rate today as one of the happiest of our lives.

All the hassles and problems we have had over the past couple of months have now faded into the background and all our focus is now on the two girls getting to know each other at last.



I have waited years to see this!

September 28th 2008 (Sunday)

Today we took Dorothy around Perth to do a bit of shopping and to see a few of the sights. Belle and her sister are staying together tonight (and probably tomorrow night as well) to talk 'girl talk' without me around.

While I thought Belle had gone through some tough times in her life we have found that Dorothy has had a much more difficult time. We hope that re-uniting her with Belle will change things for the better for her. At least she now knows that she has two people in her life who will always be there for her and who will stand by her if she ever needs us.

September 29th 2008 (Monday)

Belle and Dorothy were supposed to get some sleep last night but it turned out that they just talked and talked and talked all night. Belle came back down about 6:30am and went straight to bed.

Today we took Dorothy down to Fremantle so that she could see a little more of the metro area in the very short time she is here. Although it was a public holiday the Royal Show was on, so trains were very regular and we didn't have to wait long.

It was a rather long tiring day but we still managed to stay up past midnight. I am very glad that Belle has had this time to spend with Dorothy without any other distractions. I think it has allowed them to really start bonding very strongly.

September 30th 2008 (Tuesday)

We fly out this afternoon and it is sad the Dorothy didn't have more time to spend in Perth. We have decided that it will be easier for us

to help her come down to Australia and spend time with Belle in the future as it will be cheaper than both of us going up to Malaysia all the time. Even though we only have the caravan we can sort things out so that the girls sleep inside and I can sleep in the tent outside. We have just enough seating in the car for three people so when she does come down we can spend time showing her some of W.A.



Waiting to fly out

October 1st 2008 (Wednesday)

The flight to KL was very smooth and we landed almost on schedule. We met Dorothy's husband at the airport and he drove us back to their home and later out to the place we will be staying while we are in Malaysia. The apartment Dorothy has made available to us is very nice. It has meant that we have a lot of extra time in Malaysia than would have been possible if we stayed in a hotel and we are so very grateful that she could help in this way.

Unfortunately the two apartments are quite some distance apart and with our lack of night driving skills, the time Belle can spend with her sister once Dorothy goes back to work looks like it will be fairly limited. Meanwhile we are spending as much time with her as possible and I just love to watch these two girls getting closer and closer to each other every day. I know now that my decision to never give up the search was the right one.

The only problem we have had is the fact that it is a public holiday here and we haven't managed to change any money. We tried the credit card at an auto teller today and it was rejected and it didn't work when we tried it at a supermarket. We have to ring Bankwest and find out what on Earth is going on.

October 2nd 2008 (Thursday)

Thankfully the bank mix up was just some stupid administrative stuff up that has now been solved.

A hectic day running around to various places. The lifestyle in Malaysia is certainly a vast change from the way we are used to living in Australia. Here, apart from working the main activity is eating, in fact it seems to be a national obsession. 5 to 6 meals a day is about normal but we just aren't used to it.

The other difference is the time of day for going to bed. Our usual is 9-10pm but here 1-2am! seems to be usual.

October 3rd 2008 (Friday)

Sadly Dorothy has to return to work this Monday and we won't be able to see her as much. We have arranged a rental car for around \$18 a day and expect to see that on Monday, so we will be able to get around and with luck will be able to navigate as far as Dorothy's apartment and get to see her at least a couple of times during the week. The girls have so much to catch up on and we will never be able to afford to come to Malaysia again so it is vital that they spend as much time together as possible now but we also have to bear in mind that once Dorothy goes back to work she won't want us under her feet all the time.

Belle has to do most of the driving and even her eyesight isn't too good at night so our visits are likely to be limited to daylight hours.

We have been very saddened to find that Dorothy is not in a happy marriage but now that we have found her we have promised to help her as best we can but we are both very concerned about her. We are hoping that just our being here might change things for the better but if not we told her that she can come to us any time she needs to.



Eating out

October 4th 2008 (Saturday)

Today we went out with Dorothy and her family to a Japanese restaurant for dinner. The meal was very good and far cheaper than anything back home in Perth.

I am still getting a thrill just watching the two girls together. Even just going shopping together they are enjoying something that has been missing from their lives for so long and I can see it on their faces. I feel very privileged to be here and just observe them as they begin to grow closer together. Normally I avoid going shopping like the plague but now I am happy to just tag along and watch the two girls together.

The highlight of the day was seeing Dorothy really smile for the first time since we met her. Like Belle, her smile lights up her face and it is so sad to think that she has had very little to smile about in her life. We may be short of money but we have never been short of love so Belle and I feel that despite the outside influences that have tried to drag us down over the past couple of months, compared to what Dorothy has been through in her life, we are truly blessed.

We think we have solved the problem of not being able to see Dorothy during the week by taking a room in a reasonably cheap hotel (70-80RM a night) for 2-3 nights a week. This means only a short drive from Dorothy's home at night and Belle won't be missing out so badly.

It is hard to believe that it was just a week ago that the twins were re-united. They have bonded so quickly that it seems as though they have known each other for years, what a joy it is for me to see them together at last.



Kxxxx and Kaaaaaaa (Dorothy's children) with Dorothy and Belle

October 6th 2008 (Monday)

For some reason the sim card we put into the mobile phone wasn't working properly today but it seems to have gradually sorted itself out – well at least we can send SMS messages but we are yet to confirm we can ring out.

Our first day on our own was both a bit of a relief and a bit lonely. The last 12 days have been completely exhausting so it was good to just sit back and relax, even so not having Dorothy around was a bit sad.

We are going down on Wednesday and will stay in a cheap hotel overnight and we will go down again on Friday to pick Dorothy up and she will come back to stay with us for the night.

Our outing for the day was a walk to the shops next door to the apartment block where Belle found a good stationery supply shop.

The rental car is now not due until around 9pm today so if that arrives as planned we will at least be able to have a look around the local area tomorrow.

October 7th 2008 (Tuesday)

In the end the rental car didn't turn up until about 11pm but at least we are now independently mobile and \$1600Rm poorer with another 1000RM still to pay in November. Today was a quiet day as we visited the local shops and got a few bits and pieces.

Tomorrow we go down to Shah Alam to see Dorothy so it will be interesting to see how well we navigate. We will stay overnight at a hotel down there and next day we will have a bit of a look around that area on our own so that we can learn where things are.

So far the weather has been much better than we expected and although there seems to be some rain each day the humidity isn't too bad and the temperature is quite pleasant.

The stupid phone still won't let us call out but we can SMS so we will have to put up with that until we find out what is wrong.

I managed to get some connections for Dorothy's home theatre system that has been sitting in the apartment unused for a long time and that is now working properly (although it seems like there should be more speakers.)

The other job to do (Dorothy is already finding me jobs to do just like Belle does ☺) was setting up a water filter system that will allow us to get safe water without boiling it. With that done we just had a simple sandwich for dinner and got to bed at the extremely early hour (for Malaysia) of 11pm.



The little Viva rental

October 8th 2008 (Wednesday)

The big trip down to Shah Alam went smoothly and it was only when we tried to get from Dorothy's place to the hotel that we got a bit lost. Thankfully Kxxxx, Dorothy's son, was at home and he was able to guide us to the destination. When Dorothy got home we went out shopping but we were too full from lunch to have dinner so settled for a drink.

We all went back to the hotel so that Dorothy and Belle could chat for a while and again we made it well past midnight before going to bed.

October 9th 2008 (Thursday)

The hotel we stayed in last night (Royal Comfort Hotel) was a bit seedy but it wasn't too bad. The air conditioner worked well but I still didn't get a decent night's sleep. I think I am too worried about Dorothy's domestic situation and things keep running through my head. Come Friday we will have to have a talk to her about how she feels and make some suggestions about how to improve things. All we

want is to see her happy.

We made our way back to Sungai Buloh by about 11am and managed to follow Dorothy's map without any problems. One big difference between the two girls is the mapping skills. Belle just can't deal with maps at all.

We have fixed the phone problem by swapping to one of Dorothy's spare phones so now we can actually make calls and send SMS messages.

October 10th 2008 (Friday)

Belle and I went to see Dorothy at her work this afternoon and her colleagues put on a very nice lunch. It was interesting to see where Dorothy works and it seems as though the people she works with are a pleasant happy bunch.

Dorothy then took us to the library and with luck we will be able to find our way back there at some stage to borrow some books to read or DVDs to watch. From there we headed back to Sungai Buloh for the night.

After dinner some rather deep discussions ensued (until around 3am!) and we now think we have a plan for the future that involves things getting better for everyone. We will cross our fingers and work hard to those ends.



October 11th 2008 (Saturday)

Up to the town of Sungai Buloh today for lunch and to get some more money out of the bank. The Aussie dollar has dropped in value – curses we should have changed more money sooner – and we lost 50c Malaysian on each dollar we converted.

Dorothy had to attend a wedding reception tonight and at first we wondered if she would make it as the weather closed in and a huge thunder storm rolled in. Eventually it cleared and we drove her back to Shah Alam and then waited for her before coming back to SB. Poor Dorothy was ill (like Belle she gets sick when she is stressed out) but still we managed to 'burn the midnight oil' again and by 3am we crawled off to bed.

Late nights, thunder storms and eating out are becoming the three major impressions I have developed of Malaysia since we have been here.

October 12th 2008 (Sunday)

Today was the first time we managed to broach the subject of migration to Australia with Dorothy's husband, Rxxxxxx. He seemed to be quite interested in the idea and we will be very interested to find out what he said to Dorothy on the way home.

I have sent an email to Mara Pritchard at Australian Immigration asking what can be done about helping Dorothy and her family to immigrate and I have to say that Mara is exactly the right person in the right place at the right time. She is an ex-journalist and will know immediately the potential that all this will have.

We are very hopeful at this point and are now focusing firmly on a future where the two girls will be living in the same country.

As the girls get better acquainted we are finding some differences but we now use the 'ying and yang' as an analogy because where one skill that the other lacks each seem to balance each other out in different areas. This is difficult to explain on paper but it sort of goes like this:

Belle has a life filled with love but has very little money, Dorothy is reasonably well off but so far has not managed to have the love that she desires. Where one lacks something, the other seems to have it and vice versa. The main differences between the two girls seem to be due to purely environmental things like work. Dorothy has much better computer and tech related skills than Belle because her work involves using computers etc. Why Belle has such a poor sense of direction is difficult to explain because Dorothy has exactly the opposite.

Following are some of the similarities we have discovered to date:

Both adoptive fathers died while the girls were still children.
Both mothers were Red Cross nurses.
Both their mothers died in tragic circumstances.
Both only received a necklace as a keepsake but would have preferred a pendant.
Both get left and right directions mixed up.
Both get the words of popular sayings mixed up.
Both are left handed even though we are pretty sure that they are mirror twins.
Both have the favourite colour of blue but both prefer to wear pinks.
Both eat food very slowly.
Both eat certain types of food (ie. Crab) in exactly the same way.
Both are very outgoing, talkative and sociable.
They have similar taste in music.
They like the same sort of foods.
Both are very emotional but Belle, unlike Dorothy, does not keep it inside.
Both show a natural artistic talent.
Both have a kind of OCD.
Both see the need to always try and justify their actions to others.
Both drink very little alcohol.
Neither smoke.
Both like to sing.
Both like to fish.
Both like similar television programmes.
Both started wearing eye glasses at the age of nine.
Both suffer from motion sickness and get ill if over stressed.

Now what about the differences?

Belle likes to wear bright colours, Dorothy likes pastels.
Belle wears much more makeup.
Belle also wears many different perfumes.
Belle and Dorothy may both love food but Belle is a lot more fussy about what she will eat.
Their hair styles are markedly different.
Their hand writing is not all that similar but they can easily imitate the others writing if they try.
Dorothy has had children and Belle has not.
Dorothy is quite religious and Belle is not.
Dorothy is much more computer literate.
Each kicks with a different foot.
Their facial expressions are different except when they smile.
Belle is not a 'spur of the moment' person but Dorothy is.

It has been nice to see some positive changes in Dorothy since we first met her. She was rather stiff and wooden when Belle first started to hug her but now she is the one who is initiating the hugs with her sister. The poor girl has been so starved of affection for so long that she really needed Belle to come along and break down the wall that she has built around herself. I have always said that Belle is so affectionate that she could get a rock to hug her back!

The main thing that has come out of this meeting between Belle and Dorothy is that they obviously were in desperate need of each other but until they met neither knew just how deep seated that need really was. I don't think I will ever grow tired of seeing them together and I have witnessed some very touching and beautiful moments between them. If only we can find a way for them to be together from now on.

October 13th 2008 (Monday)

A very quiet day in the apartment at Sungai Buloh. Time to catch up on all those late nights. Spent the morning getting one of Dorothy's old printers working. It took several hours and almost all the cleaning fluid I bought but it seems to be working reasonably well now.

October 14th 2008 (Tuesday)

Just a bit of shopping at 'Central', the local shops today and the rest of the day more or less relaxing.

Hard to believe that two weeks have already slipped by since we got here, time is going much too fast and it won't be long before we have to say goodbye, best not to think about it yet though.

Tomorrow is house chores day and then on Thursday we will go down to Shah Alam again for the night and back here with Dorothy on Friday evening.

October 15th 2008 (Wednesday)

Time for some reflection on the past three weeks now.

While I have dwelt in some depth on how the two girls have reacted to one another and how their relationship is progressing, I haven't said much about my feelings and how all this has affected me.

I think perhaps if we had found Dorothy in a happy and stable marriage things would have been a lot simpler for me to deal with. There

was always going to be some possibility of my developing some feelings for her because I love Belle so much and Dorothy is her identical twin. To some extent I expected to have some of the same feelings I have for Belle transfer to Dorothy but I was completely unprepared for just how similar the two girls are and I did not expect to find Dorothy in such a poor emotional state.

We have talked a great deal with her about her circumstances and when I look into her eyes I see Belle looking back at me - or at least another version of Belle. To see that level of emotional pain and loneliness is heart breaking and to have to just stand back and keep my distance makes it even worse.

My instinct is to reach out to her because I know exactly what she needs but to do so would not be right. Belle and I have discussed how I am feeling and she understands why and she doesn't mind but from my point of view things seem to be very complicated emotionally.

Because Dorothy is so much like Belle and she has been in so much pain I feel very protective towards her and I wish there was something I could do to alleviate her distress. Thankfully Belle can fill that role to some extent and can put her arms around her sister in a way I would never be able to do without compromising my feelings. Our hope now is that we can help Dorothy resurrect her marriage and that she can find the emotional love and support she so badly needs. If she cannot find the love she needs then emotionally things will remain complicated for me. The biggest worry, if indeed worry is even the right word here, is that if things don't get better for Dorothy then she may at some time reach out to me, if that happened I would be completely helpless as I simply could not turn her away, to do so would be like turning Belle away and I could not do it no matter what the consequences of that might turn out to be.

For the moment I have to make sure that I behave entirely properly as it would be just too easy to start to develop much deeper feelings. Hopefully with time I will get used to all this but I suspect that I will continue to have some difficult emotions to deal with and will just have to keep myself at arms length. It probably seems odd but I am so freaked out by this that I haven't even been able to give Dorothy a hug and I wonder if I will ever be able to allow myself to do so. I think she probably senses some of this as well and since she has made no move in that direction either it seems that she understands just how easily things could head in a different direction. My emotions tell me to do one thing but logic tells me that I have to take another path.

Going back to some of my earlier musings about what would have happened if the girls had been swapped round in the first place, I now think that if this had been the case the girls would have simply swapped places and that their lives may very well have turned out just as they have. Dorothy even brought this up during one of our conversations and obviously the thought of 'what if' has crossed her mind as well. It is weird thinking that if Belle's adoptive mother had simply picked up the other twin, then I could now be married to Dorothy - these thoughts do very strange things to my head!

One thing I have always wondered has been clarified for me at least. As Belle only speaks English and has no discernable accent I have always wondered how I would have felt about her if she had an accent and did speak other languages. Dorothy has managed to answer that question for me and I now know that it would not have made any difference at all, in fact I find the way Dorothy speaks to be quite cute.

I feel as though I want to rescue her from her unhappiness but I haven't got a clue how to do so without stuffing things up even worse than they are now. Lots of late nights and soul searching just haven't been able to give me any sort of answer yet. The emotional side just wants to bundle her up and go back to Australia and take care of her but for now at least that is just not feasible.

October 16th 2008 (Thursday)

Went down to Sri Muda again to stay the night at the budget hotel so that the girls could spend a bit more time together. Up past midnight.

October 17th 2008 (Friday)

Made it to TESCO supermarket with the help of another of Dorothy's excellent maps and had lunch. Then we went back to her flat to wait until she finished work. We all made it back to Sungai Buloh just after dark and the two girls put their heads together and decided to do some singing. After a bit of rehearsal they sang a song together titled 'Nobody's child'. The sentiment behind the song and their own stories brought a lump to my throat as I listened. Just as well I was smart enough to catch the moment on film so it has been preserved. Most of the time these two spend together now is precious but there are moments like the singing that are pure magic.

After 3am again when we all got to go to bed but the late nights are so worth while as even now we can feel our time here starting to run out and every second they have together is beyond value.

October 18th 2008 (Saturday)

Another delightful day watching the twins growing ever closer together. Where Dorothy was once a bit hesitant to hug Belle, now she is initiating the hugs and we can tell that this is a bit of a turning point in how she views life. We can only hope that she will continue to remove the emotional walls that she has been building around herself and she will eventually find real happiness in her life.

Belle cooked one of our favourite dishes for dinner (Belle's own recipe for prawn & sun dried tomato pasta) so that Dorothy could at last taste some of her culinary delights and once more bedtime was sometime around 2:30am.

October 19th 2008 (Sunday)

A relatively quiet day with lunch at Sungai Buloh town and then back to the flat where the girls decided to play 'make up'. Watching them together it is impossible to see them as nearly 50 years old, they are just two wonderful sweet young girls having fun and doing the things that have been missing for so long in their lives.

I took quite a few photos and when we looked through them together on the computer we found quite a few where it was almost impossible to work out which twin was which. In the three that follow I doubt anyone could accurately tell which is Belle and which is Dorothy. I have known Belle for 29 years and if I had not taken the shots myself, even I could not tell who is who.



Who is who here?

I know I've said it before but I really do feel so privileged to be able to watch them and to share in the absolute delight they seem to find in each others company. Dorothy is starting to smile more now and when they both smile at the same time it is just like the sun coming out from behind the clouds on a dull drizzly day.

With the end of the weekend Dorothy had to head home again ready for work tomorrow and the fascinating tableau I have been watching all weekend came to a close until next week. How we will cope when we have to fly home I just don't know.... I can no longer imagine a life where the two girls have to remain separated.



Two of the most beautiful smiles I have ever seen

October 20th 2008 (Monday)

A quiet day at home in Sungai Buloh. The only outing was to pick up some curry for dinner. The monsoon season is on the way and since we have been here it rain heavily most afternoons. The humidity is always high but so far it has been bearable. We are only going to Central Market tomorrow and then on Wednesday we will go down to Shah Alam central to pick up Belle's new glasses. Thursday is another 'don't know what to do day' and then we may see Dorothy on Friday night as plan 'A' is to head up to Penang for a couple of nights this weekend. Plan 'B' is to go to KL on Saturday and then Malacca on Sunday so whatever happens this weekend will involve some travel.

October 21st 2008 (Tuesday)

A fairly quiet day, just a trip to Central Market and then out again to pick up some Indian food for tea. One big difference between Malaysia and Australia is that it is much cheaper to eat out here.

A cheap meal out for two can be as little as 4.00 ringgit (a whole \$1.80 in Oz dollars!) That buys some roti cani (Indian bread) and a couple of types of dhal. A more expensive meal like the one we had at the Japanese restaurant can set you back 29.00 ringgit a head (\$12.60 Oz dollars). Although our income is small in Australia when we come here and convert to ringgit we are relatively well off.

Wages for locals here are as low as \$14,000 ringgit a year (\$6,086 Oz) so food is generally available very cheap if you want just good wholesome tasty filling food without too much meat. Once you start adding in any significant quantities of meat then the price escalates astronomically.

Some of the best food we have had has been from small local eateries. Char sieu pork, roti and dhal, rending and satay have been our favourite dishes so far. Being a basically Muslim country it is hard to get pork here so you have to visit the Chinese areas. Indian dishes are mostly mutton and chicken based but they are cheap and really tasty.

The expensive food here is usually things that are basically western in nature. The meal we cooked for Dorothy the other night would be reasonably cheap at home even though it has prawns in it but here it cost quite a lot more because the ingredients were not local; the cheese and cream both came from Oz.

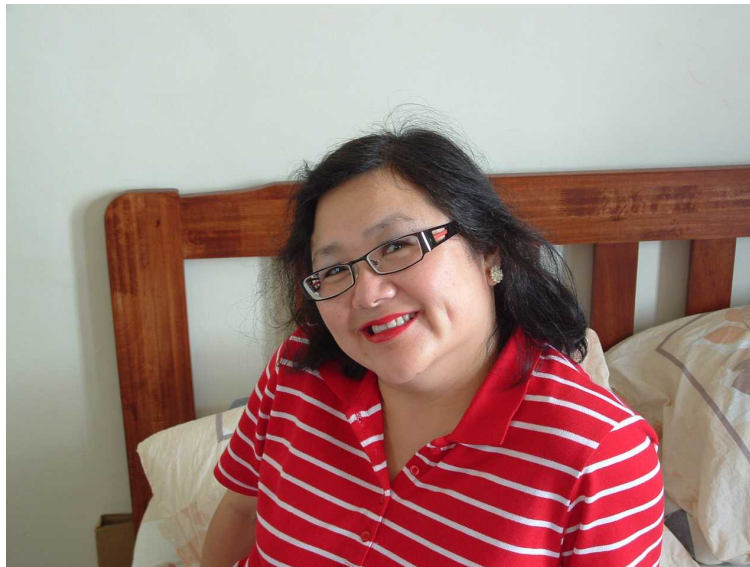
Dorothy phoned back to say that plan 'A' was on so we are off up to Penang this weekend.

October 22nd 2008 (Wednesday)

Made our way down to Shah Alam central today to pick up Belle's new spectacles. Two pairs for 590.00RM that equates to about \$123.00 Australian a pair. You can't even get lenses for that price in Australia now! Belle even got glass lenses here that she can't get at home anymore.

Stupid Bankwest has been stuffing us around again and we had to ring them a second time because they had cut off our credit card without good reason. When I get home I am going to have some rather terse words with the morons responsible for this!

Picked up \$30 worth of rendang for the next two nights dinner and we will get some roti, rice and vegies at the local restaurant to go with that.



Belle with the new specs – trendy!

October 23rd 2008 (Thursday)

Managed to go to the local internet café (\$2.50RM per hour) and retrieved some emails. Have sent some more info off to immigration and Dorothy will have to put together a detailed resume for herself and Rxxxxxx to send as well.

Its been a long week this week as we haven't gone down to the cheapie hotel to see Dorothy. Much better when we break the week up that way and get to spend some time with her.

October 24th 2008 (Friday)

Dorothy and Rxxxxxx arrived at Sungai Buloh late as Rxxxxxx only got off work after 8pm. We are all heading up to Penang tomorrow so we are quite excited about the trip.

October 25th 2008 (Saturday)

We were away fairly early and stopped for a break at Ipoh. The area around Ipoh is quite mountainous and the climate much cooler than down near KL.

The drive is reasonably easy as the roads are direct and in good shape. The only hassle is a series of toll gates that cars have to pass through and the charges are quite high.

By about 1pm we had arrived at Penang and Dorothy's childhood friend, Leong, had organised a nice house for us to stay in for two nights. The place we stayed was a fishing village well away from the centre of Penang and it was the place Dorothy grew up from about the age of 5 to about 9 years old. It was interesting to see the area where she spent these years but it was even more interesting to see

the reactions of the people who knew her and who had no idea that she had a twin sister. Although we could not communicate directly with Dorothy's friends we were plainly able to see their amazement when they saw Belle. I think Dorothy was quite delighted to be 'showing Belle off' to her friends.



'Hang on, you're not Dorothy!' – or words to that effect....

In the evening we were treated by Leong to a wonderful dinner and we met a few more of the locals including an Aussie Ex-pat from Perth and his wife (Calvin and Lai Hong) who we got on very well with.

October 26th 2008 (Sunday)

Plan "A" had been to head up to Alor Setar today to meet Rxxxxxx's family but for various reasons this was put off and we spend the day mostly lazing around the fishing village and sitting by the beach under a shelter enjoying the breeze – this was really nice!

The evening was dinner at the local restaurant again but I wasn't up to anything complicated and just stuck with fried rice.



A lazy afternoon by the sea – perfection!

October 27th 2008 (Monday)

Originally we had been due to head back to KL today but a plan was hatched at the last minute (something we are not quite used to yet) to head up to Alor Setar anyway and see Rxxxxxx's family. By the time we got there it was already into the afternoon so plans changed again (reaction to circumstance instead of pre-planning seems to be the way of things here) and it was then decided to stay overnight and for the workers (Dorothy and Rxxxxxx) to pull the Aussie trick of taking a sickie, well actually Dorothy took annual leave without much notice but it all amounts to the same thing.

We were again in a situation where we were unable to communicate with most of the family but one or two members did speak English so we were not totally isolated from the goings on.

The hospitality was wonderful but the hiccup was the twins managing to have their first 'hissy fit' together. They are both a bit wooden

headed, or should I say stubborn as mules, so I expect it will take them a little while to recover and regain some of the lost closeness. I do hope that they both have the sense to see that such things are inevitable and that no matter what, blood is blood.

October 28th 2008 (Tuesday)

Up very early and back to Sungai Buloh for us. Sadly the girls have not yet managed to get over the upset yesterday which was very evident by the fact that they did not hug when they parted today. I am going to have to have words with Belle about this as I will not let a silly spat become a big issue, the next time she sees Dorothy she must hug her as usual and get over this silliness.

Belle, as she is want to do sometimes, used the wrong word at the wrong time so I will have to explain to her how she should have handled things.

One result of all this for me has been the ability to start to separate their identities in my mind. Until now I thought I could see a clone of Belle inside Dorothy struggling to get out and this accounted for some of the emotional confusion I have gone through. Now I can see them as clearly separate and this has helped me to start to sort out some of the strange thoughts that had been messing with my head. I will still have to be very careful with my emotions though as Dorothy certainly does have a profound effect on me.

Dorothy is still of the opinion that going to Aus with her family would be the best option but after the things I have noticed this past weekend I really have changed my opinion on this. There is just no closeness there and I now think there is little or no possibility of rebuilding any. Whatever she eventually decides to do it will be a tough decision for her but no matter what we will be there for her.

Because I tend to let my heart rule my head I have my own very firm opinion on what she should do but I have to admit to a conflict of interest here and I must keep my own counsel on the issue.

October 29th 2008 (Wednesday)

Nearly a month gone already since we were in Perth, how quickly it has flown.

Today we went out to have a look at the local pasar malam (night markets) that operate here each Wednesday night. Not quite the huge venture we saw in K.L. back in 1992 but reasonably impressive for a small local area. Lots of food, drinks, fruit and sundry 'stuff' for sale. Belle was happy as there was a satay man and she picked up 20 beef satay sticks for just 5.00RM (\$2.08 Aus).

Not much else to comment on at the moment but a good time to reflect on driving in Malaysia. We have only driven a little bit since we have been here but there are some important rules we have learned so far.

Marc's Malaysian Road Rules

1. Try never to stop for any reason, including red traffic lights.
2. When changing lanes or turning try never to wear out your precious indicator lights. If at all possible get into the wrong lane at traffic lights and then cut across everyone else as you move to the lane you should have been in, in the first place.
3. At round-a-bouts just charge anything smaller than you that you think you can bully.
4. Take no notice of motorcycles. If they value their lives then they will get out of your way.
5. Take lots of notice of anything bigger than you and if you value your life you will get out of their way.
6. Have lots of patience as everyone here is a crappy driver so just get used to it.
7. Speed limit signs are for decoration only, you do not need to take any notice of them.
8. Pedestrians don't damage cars too much if you only run into them at low speed so it is quite alright to charge at them as they vainly try to cross the road. It is even better to find foreigners trying to cross at a marked crosswalk, you can really give them a scare as they will expect you to stop.
9. To overtake; drive as fast as you can right up to the rear bumper of the car you intend to go past and then haul your car right making sure to miss the car in front of you by a millimetre or two and then dash past ignoring any oncoming traffic (see rules 4 and 5 here for helpful hints on what to ignore) and try as hard as you can to cut off the car you have just overtaken as you pull in again.
10. If someone should take more than a millisecond to start moving when the traffic lights turn green lean on your horn and let them know that at least you were ready to go.

The roads themselves vary from very good (for the bigger highways) to pretty awful and full of potholes (for minor roads). Traffic lights are often 'on the blink' and police are conspicuous by their absence. Most signage is ok on highways but in some places you need to have a good command of Malay.

The road network is at best confusing and expensive toll roads dominate most major routes.

Having said all this it is still safer to drive here than in either Thailand or Bali. Most road users, although driving as though they are completely mad, are very tolerant and a mild honking of the horn is all you can expect if you do something stupid.

Started sending to Dorothy from this point.

November 2nd 2008 (Sunday)

Another weekend has slipped away from us before we even knew it was gone and now we are facing the downhill run to the end of our time in Malaysia. We only managed to see Dorothy from Saturday afternoon and through most of Sunday this weekend which really is less than we would like but we have to remember that she has a life going on that involves much more than just us, so we just have to be patient and enjoy the short time we get to spend together.

Dorothy jokingly said as I walked down with her to her car that we would probably be glad that she was going home at last and I said that each time she had to go we were sad but that just doesn't cover how we feel.

Before we met Dorothy, Belle and I made up 100% of everything we cared about, now we have found her we now only make up 66%, Dorothy is the one who now makes us complete and without her around something is always missing. The apartment is not the same without her here and she is the main topic of our conversations during the week. Our lives have changed forever. One thing we never really thought about was just how quickly a bond would form between us and how painful each separation will be.

She spoke to us for the first time today with tears in her eyes about how our leaving at the end of the month affects her but I don't think she realises yet that although Belle and I may have each other, without her we are also now alone. A vital part of our lives is missing when we are not together. I said to Belle when Dorothy had gone today that the three of us together just seems so right. I already get choked up thinking about how hard leaving for Aus will be and I know the last night here will bring little but tears. Until then we need to stay strong and positive and basically have as much fun together as we can.

Before we go I hope we can put in place a solid plan and a timetable for Dorothy to come out and see us next year, I think we are all going to need something like that to cling to, to keep us going. She is thinking about next September but that seems much too far away at the moment. We shall have to see how things go and how much money we have available when we get home. Personally I am hoping that her Company will be able to give her some leave without pay so that she can double the time she can come over for and we can easily give her enough money to cover any lost wages. Flying down for just a week would be awful – far too short and difficult for us to show her around much.

The next few weekends are planned out already, with next weekend earmarked for a trip to Malacca, the following weekend to KL on Saturday and then seeing Dorothy's work mates for lunch on Sunday. The weekend after we have Saturday free and then meet Dorothy's church friends on Sunday. The final weekend we will be down at the budget hotel on Saturday and then – the most awful day, leaving on Sunday....I can hardly bear to think about that. Never mind, we still have much to share together and sad thoughts need to be put aside for now.

As the time ticks away every second we spend with her is more precious than gold and if I can I am going to find excuses to get a couple of extra nights down at the budget hotel. The girls both worry about spending money but money means nothing in all this, in fact it is for times like this that we have money in the first place. What on Earth is the point of money if it can't give you a bit of extra time with those you love? A week up here on our own, well 5 days really, seems too long and I know we will regret it if we don't make the effort to be with her.

November 3rd 2008 (Monday)

After just over a month in Malaysia we have had a chance to reflect on life back in Australia and how that differs from what people have over here. We grumble a lot about things at home but compared with life in Malaysia we live in paradise!

There is no decent medical system in Malaysia, if you get sick and can't pay then basically you are left to die. People are exploited by their employers (converting from Australian dollars to Ringgit we actually get more on a pension than Rxxxxx does working almost all week!) there is no national pride in the country and everything is dirty and poorly maintained. There seem to be no set standards when it comes to buildings and the discrimination against the smaller ethnic groups is not only evident, it is supported by the government. There are few nice parks and places for people to relax and the only thing Malaysia has going for it is the cheap food.

Australia by comparison really is a 'land of milk and honey'.

Back to yesterday's topic again.... Belle sometimes has the ability to say some quite profound things that on reflection are also very disturbing. She did it again when she was thinking about Dorothy and spoke about how Dorothy will feel after we go home and she comes up to Sungai Buloh for the first time as finds the place empty. I now can't get the thought out of my head and I can't help putting myself in Dorothy's place and thinking about how she will feel.

Dorothy puts on a hard face for the world but I have seen behind the mask and I know she is as soft as Belle inside. It was with these thoughts running through my head that I woke this morning with tears in my eyes. I had to struggle to keep Belle from seeing how I was feeling as I didn't want her to start thinking more about it as well.

Thankfully I am more in control of my emotions now and I have to try and keep my mind focused on more happy thoughts. There are certainly times when I wish I was a bit tougher emotionally... too old to change now though.

November 4th 2008 (Tuesday)

Nothing much to do at the apartment today so we decided to go out to Sungai Buloh and back to The Store (even though we were only there on Sunday with Dorothy.)

Belle found some more stationery to buy so what the weight of our bags is likely to be by the time she is finished I have no idea at all!

It is quite hard to fill in the time between weekends but the time we have with Dorothy more than makes up for a bit of boredom during the week. I have already finished reading the books Dorothy brought over and although I know I should be doing some work building the search engine I started working on, I haven't really got the motivation to work too hard on it at the moment. We probably should also spend a bit more time looking around, after all we have the hire car to use, but we don't have much interest in sight seeing on our own either.

We (well I really) have decided that it would be better to go down to Shah Alam on Friday to pick Dorothy up and then the three of us will get a room at the budget hotel for Friday night and this will make getting away early on Saturday morning much easier, this also has the added bonus of having a few extra hours together.

Belle has finally surrendered on the Tia-maria issue, I knew she would eventually and I can be quite persuasive in my own way ☺

Tomorrow we will probably go down to Giants again and then perhaps to Shah Alam Central as I want to get some decent photos of the big mosque and gardens down there. It is more just a case of, anything to while away the time during the week. We have to try and

remember the Pasam Alam tomorrow night as we really enjoyed going there last week. Thursday some work is due to be done on the apartment so we will be in all day and tonight we are expecting a set of keys from the flat above to arrive as some inspection regarding water leakage needs to be carried out.

Friday we will head down to Shah Alam around mid-day and book in at the hotel. After lunch we will go over to Dorothy's and wait for her to get home.

Note: Dorothy says remind her to confirm the Malacca hotel on Sat. Hope we can remember to remind her being as we are old and forgetful now....

November 5th 2008 (Wednesday)

The keys to the apartment above have not yet arrived but as the tenants seem to still be up there we will wait patiently for them to turn up.

A lovely cool morning courtesy of the rain means that we may stay in today instead of heading down to Shah Alam as planned. With little to do, it is time to do some pondering and record a few thoughts, facts and observations.

The first subject to write about is one that has dominated our thoughts and hearts since August 1st – Dorothy. So far I haven't sat down and recorded much of her story so now is as good a time as any to do so.

Like Belle, the memories of her early years are a bit faded but she does remember more than Belle and apparently the two families were neighbours. The girls not only lived next door to each other during that time but they were playmates. When the families moved Belle's went to Singapore and Dorothy's eventually ended up in Penang.

Dorothy was adopted to be a companion and playmate for another 'adopted' girl named Ann. Ann (if I remember what Dorothy told us correctly) was actually the child of her adoptive mother's sister who was unwanted by the aunt and taken in by Dorothy's mum. There is no mention of her mother ever having a child of her own but Ann was a blood relative while Dorothy was not.

I think I have mentioned it before but Dorothy's adoptive father was English not Australian as we had been led to believe. While he was still in the picture her life seems to have been a relatively stable and happy one. When she was nine years old her father went to England leaving the family virtually destitute. I suspect there is more to this particular part of the story than Dorothy remembers or was told but the years have effectively covered over the past.

Dorothy and her family were then forced into a life of hardship and uncertainty. The stability of her childhood evaporated as the family moved from place to place without ever finding security. She did not have the chance to enter higher education and had to find work in her late teens. Her father did make a brief re-appearance (I think she said she was about 13 at the time) but was very ill and died just 10 days after re-locating the family.

As we had suspected, Dorothy was not originally told that she was adopted. Her adoptive mother was Chinese so unlike Belle there was no obvious difference in the racial makeup to tell her any different. Her sister Ann seems to have found out about the adoption before Dorothy did and her attitude completely changed at this time.

Dorothy's sister Ann (now married and living in England) seems to have been jealous of Dorothy and as Ann was actually a blood relative she started to treat Dorothy very poorly after she discovered Dorothy was not related by blood.

Dorothy found out she was adopted by accident when she was 16 and I can't imagine how much of a shock this must have been to her. Having grown up all your life thinking you were your mother's real child and then finding out you were not, is something that can leave deep emotional scars. Belle was lucky in a way because she knew from an early age that she was different to her adoptive family, no one actually had to tell her she was adopted as it was obvious.

Being adopted means that your birth parents have already abandoned you and this on its own can cause great distress. Add this to discovering at the tender age of 16 that you are not who you thought you were and things get even more complicated. I know Belle has a lot of insecurities buried deep inside her and I can't help but feel that Dorothy must be the same.

Although Dorothy speaks a number of languages and is more closely associated with the culture here, she is still regarded as something of an outsider. Belle falls very much into the western culture and can only speak English but even though Dorothy had a much more Asian upbringing and lifestyle she still gets called 'banana' by the locals. Why banana? Because a banana is yellow on the outside and white on the inside. So like Belle, she is neither western nor fully Asian and has had to make a place for herself somewhere between the two cultures.

I feel sorry for both girls in this respect as they have no real roots. Although I don't think about it much, if someone asks me what I am, I always identify myself as being English. Even though I have spent 39 of my 48 years in Australia I will always identify myself with the country of my birth and the history and culture associated with it. Neither of the girls (especially Belle) really have a cultural identity to hold on to. This is just one of the many insecurities in their lives.

When, at the age of 24, Dorothy chose to get married, she seems to have selected her partner on the grounds of his ability to provide for a family rather than any notion of being in love. Belle on the other hand married purely for love, she must have as I had nothing else to offer at the time and I don't have much more to offer even now! We were both broke, we had dropped out of university (Belle only went back to complete her degree much later when we were both working) and were unemployed. Even so I remember the early part of our marriage as being one of the happiest. We lived in a small rented one roomed flat and had two push bikes that we used to go shopping on. We had virtually nothing but each other but that was all we ever wanted so we had everything our hearts desired.

From what I can see it is love that is most important thing in life as it is possible to be poor and happy and equally possible to have money and be miserable. (Mind you I wouldn't complain if we were rich and happy!)

It seems to be the lack of deep emotional love that is missing from Dorothy's life and knowing Belle as I do, I believe that the root of all Dorothy's sadness comes from this lack of a close personal bond and the genuine affection that flows from such a thing. Like Belle she needs the security of a deep and abiding love and not just love but friendship. Belle and I have always been in love but we are also best friends and soul mates. Hopefully we will be able to share some of that with Dorothy and she will find, at least in part, some of what has been missing from her life.

Dorothy has had 4 children in all but two did not survive. Again a huge cause for insecurity in her life. The final blow to her emotions came when her mother died. Dorothy obviously loved her mother dearly and I don't think she has ever managed to get over the tragic circumstances of her death. She blames herself even though she has no reason to do so. She has never had anyone to love or to love her like her mother and the lack of affection in her marriage meant that she had no emotional support when her mother died. This single fact makes me so sad that we could not have found her earlier. If only we could have been there for her when she so desperately needed someone close to give her the love and support she needed I think her life would have been much happier.

The future is a very uncertain creature but I think we have at least managed to bring hope into her life, something that she has not had for far too long.

Well the rain has lifted and I have to do some clothes washing ready for the trip to Malacca this weekend so other topics must wait until another time.

... later ...

We did manage to get down to TESCO Extra in the end which turned out to be for the best as their price on Kahlua (that Belle prefers to Tia-Maria) was 20.00RM less than at Giants. We were going to have lunch there as well but after enquiring about several different dishes that were 'off the menu' we both got fed up and came home. We bought some rice balls (bacang?) from TESCO and thought they would do nicely for lunch but the moment I bit into one I spat it out. The rice was sour tasting but Belle is continuing to press on regardless, lets just hope she doesn't get sick as a result.

Even though I am gradually winding back the amount of driving I do I have found it necessary to take over while here in Malaysia as Belle gets very intimidated by the driving style here. She lost her confidence after almost getting cleaned up by a truck and she did not drive well after that. As long as I either know the route or have someone to guide me I get by pretty well and having driven many hundreds of thousands of kilometres in all sorts of conditions and in all sorts of vehicles I have some good experience to draw on. I know that eventually I will have to stop driving completely but as long as I feel my driving is still safe enough I will keep going.

New topic – food in Malaysia.

After a few weeks here we have managed to sample quite a few different types of local fare and the big impression for us is the lack of meat and vegetables.

The main ingredients for most meals are noodles or rice (or if you go Indian, a flat bread of some kind like roti.)

If Dorothy is a good example then Malaysians eat between 3 and 6 meals a day and start to fret if they are hungry and can't find something, almost anything, to eat.

Because this is a Moslem country it is not easy to get pork dishes but these can be found in the Chinese areas.

Dishes and impressions to date:

Rice.

Rice in meals varies from the fluffy white variety that is plentiful and cheap to the more unusual sticky rice, rice balls and assorted mixed rice dishes that usually cost a lot more than the normal plain boiled or steamed variety. Rice is a staple here and is to the Malaysians what potatoes are to the English. After being here for a while I have to admit to having a huge craving for some nice roast potatoes nestled on a plate with roast pork with crispy crackling.

Rice is nice but it just doesn't satisfy your hunger long term like good old spuds do. It's no wonder everyone here is constantly eating.

Noodles.

Two main types, rice and egg, that are cooked in an almost endless variety of ways. The main styles of cooking are wet, as in a very soupy dish, or dry which usually means fried. The wet variety seems to be very popular but my personal preference is for dry.

Of the two main types I definitely prefer egg noodles. Rice noodles are plain and tasteless as well as having – to my mind – a rather unpleasant wormy texture. In soups they bring to mind eating tape worms and I just can't get round the unpleasant effect that has on my tummy.

Roti / Naan / Thosai and other Indian loveliness.

Indian food, as in most places we have been, is earthy, cheap and very tasty. Again there is a lack of meat in many dishes but a simple Indian chick pea dhal is 'heaven on a stick' in any case so meat doesn't really matter.

Of all the different national dishes available, Indian appears to be the cheapest. A plain roti with gravy costs about 67c Australian. If you aren't fussy then it will do as a complete meal and where else can you get something so tasty and filling so cheaply?

I have to admit that Indian food is probably my favourite. If I have a choice then I will get a good Indian curry and some flat bread in preference to just about anything else. The complex rich flavours that combine with a desire to use my fingers and feel the food as I eat it gives huge satisfaction. Indian food is REAL food. There's nothing like tearing into a nice fresh murtarbak with your fingers and dipping

it into the gravy and feeling the juice run down as you gobble it up. Eating like this is a visceral experience far removed from the civil formality of western restaurants.

Indian deserts are sweet, sticky and sumptuous. Syrups, sugars, powdered or condensed milk and stickiness seem to be essential requirements for an Indian sweet dish. Everything about Indian food is exotic and delightful.

Chinese food.

The Chinese will eat just about anything that moves and their taste in food is somewhat more adventurous than mine. I tend to draw the line at things like fish head soup and chickens feet but even the Poms (my lot) eat jellied pigs trotters and tripe so there is not a huge cultural divide food wise.

Although I enjoy most styles of Chinese cooking I find that on its own it does not give long term satisfaction. I need other cooking styles to fill in the gaps when I tire of Char siew pork and stir fries and noodles or rice.

I simply don't like soupy dishes and tend to avoid rice noodles so that does limit my choices a bit when it comes to eating Chinese food.

The Chinese dishes here tend to be slightly more expensive than either Indian or Malay and this may suggest the fact that the Chinese are in general better off than the other races.

The pows I have tried here are rather less impressive than the ones we get in Australia. Some have left me feeling decidedly queasy but Belle does not share my opinion of this particular delicacy. One trap is to check what kind of pow you are buying. Malays eat pows too but they are not a patch on the Chinese variety.

Malay food.

Malay food can be very tasty (a-la rendang) and spicy, or it can be bland and tasteless. There doesn't seem to be much that bridges the gap in between.

Satay and rendang are our definite favourites but many Malay deserts have an unfortunate resemblance to cardboard.

Pork is of course 'tidak halal' and no real Malay will as much as touch it. Sadly pork is possibly my favourite meat so living in a country where my sources and choices of pork deliciousness are few, would eventually drive me crazy.

One ingredient in Malay dishes that needs special mention is a small benign green looking thing called a chilli padi. Now most of us are familiar with the normal red chilli and we know that dishes with lots of red oil floating on the top are inclined to be a bit warm. Well what I didn't know was that the hottest most scorching, mouth melting, brain frying beast of a chilli in the entire universe is green and looks for all the world like just one more bit of harmless green vegetable on your plate.

Lucky me! I popped one into my mouth and had a really good chew on the little critter before the full effects started to dawn on me. I might as well have been chewing on a piece of volcanic lava! My lips burned, my tongue burned, my throat burned, I could hardly breathe and my eyes almost fell out and rolled around on the table. The effects of this lasted for all of half an hour while I crunched my way through a couple of glasses of ice. I swear I could feel the steam coming out of my ears. The locals seem to be quite immune to the effects of these volcanos in peas clothing and happily munch their way through dishes impregnated with the little horrors.

As for me, I now have a new phrase in my Malay vocabulary: 'TIDAK CHILLI PADII!'

Malay desserts tend to be a bit of a trap for the unwary as they look delicious and are in general highly coloured. Sadly most of them taste like flour and water paste. They lack the massive sugar smack you get with Indian desserts and they have very little flavour. One of the few exceptions are the little rolled up green pancakes filled with coconut and dark brown sugar.

Fruit.

I love tropical fruit. When we are in Australia our usual sources of fruit are oranges, apples, pears, grapes and stone fruit like plums when in season. For a while we lived in tropical north Queensland and had the chance to try all sorts of interesting tropical delights that are either not available or horrendously expensive elsewhere in Australia.

Now spelling wise I am not 'up to scratch' on many of the names of these fruits but my favourites would have to include mangosteens, durians, longans, lychees and mangoes.

There are all sorts of other unusual fruits available including dukus (langsats), chikus, snake fruit, rambutans, jackfruit and a host of others that are worth testing out.

Fruits I would normally avoid are star fruit, jambu, dragon fruit and anything else that may be crisp and juicy but has no flavour.

Generally fruit is cheapest at local stores and roadside stalls and is most expensive in the big supermarkets like TESCO. Quality varies from place to place and from day to day so you need to be wary when buying fruit.

Western food

While in Rome we do as the Romans do and we avoid eating the types of food we may eat at home. What on Earth is the point of coming overseas to exotic places and then eating pizza or fried chicken?

It seems sad that western food is making such big inroads into Asian lifestyles. It seems as out of place here as a turd in a soup tureen.

November 6th 2008 (Thursday)

We have been trying to get in contact with the car rental people as the next payment on the car is now due but despite leaving messages no one has bothered to get back to us. Because they haven't bothered we don't know where we stand with regard to the rental and this is the sort of thing that causes westerners stress. Perhaps they are happy enough to sort it out later but as we haven't got a clue what they think we worry about getting the matter finalised.

This gets me on to the topic of 'Malaysian time' or the 'Malaysian way.'

To the western mind, which I have to say is very time orientated and organised, the way of life here is very laid back. This seems to lead to a situation where priorities are not well defined and important things take a back seat to trivia.

There seems to be a mind set here that says it is ok to tell someone what ever they want to hear even though you have no intention of following through with what you say. In the western world this would lead to acrimony and stress but here if someone says, 'I will call you on Monday' and then they never bother, it is accepted as part of the way of life. You just re-schedule for another time.

Malaysian time also seems to have the same flexibility built in. 11am can mean just about any time after 11am but no one gets stressed out when appointments are not kept.

Malaysians may be renowned for their hospitality but they are not known for much else. While the country seems to have aspirations of being an Asian 'tiger' it has to be honestly stated that Malays are not the most conscientious and hardworking of people, in fact they are quite lazy.

You look at the new modern buildings from a distance and you think, 'that's nice, look at how well the country is progressing' and then you get up close and see the poor workmanship, lack of attention to detail and poor design. Almost everything here seems to be like that; it looks good from a distance but when you check the detail you find that it is full of flaws.

The building standards here are either very lax or if laws do exist, they are completely ignored. Buildings that people live in here would be condemned and knocked down in Australia. I would not like to be living here if there is any reasonable sized earthquake, I think half the buildings in the country will simply pancake.

Because this is an Asian country there is also the problem of 'face'. This concept dominates many Asian societies and saving face at all costs takes precedence over being open and honest about things. The western way is to be very direct and get things done as quickly and efficiently as possible. If one person doesn't agree on something then the majority rules and things get pushed through anyway. The Asian way is to avoid embarrassment at all costs and to 'beat about the bush' for as long as it takes for everyone to come to some sort of cobbled together agreement. It actually amazes me that anything ever gets done at all.

In Australia if there is some procedure in place that is stupid, or that doesn't work, we don't hesitate to complain about it and try to get it changed but in Malaysia no one says a word. If some crazy orang puteh arrives and complains about something, everyone is very accommodating, they sagely nod their heads and agree that 'indeed it is terrible and something should be done about it' but the minute the mad whitey goes away everyone goes back to doing the same crazy thing they have always done. This is most exasperating as there isn't a snowflake's chance in hell of ever getting anything properly sorted out.

As Calvin (an ex-patriot Aussie) said to me, 'To survive here you have to be an island of calm in a sea of madness'.

Well the workman who was supposed to arrive today never turned up and didn't even bother to call – no great surprise. His excuse to Dorothy was that his drill was broken – I don't believe that for a minute – we think he has realised his quote was too low and is now back-peddalling in an attempt to get out of doing the work. I much prefer a more straight forward approach to things.

Somewhat belatedly we also heard back from the car rental people who had to be told that we are going away for the weekend and they will have to come and get their money sometime next week. They are supposed to phone on Monday but I am not going to hold my breath.

November 7th 2008 (Friday)

Hooray! Friday at last! We head down to Sri Muda before lunch and then in the afternoon go across to Dorothy's to wait for her to get home from work.

We booked in to the Comfort Hotel just before mid-day and then went over the road to get some char siew pork and Belle also ordered some won ton dumplings then proceeded to eat too much.

Mid-afternoon we went over to Dorothy's place to wait for her to get back from work and in the evening she took us to an interesting night market nearby known as Uptown.

One of the many great advantages of being with Dorothy is her local knowledge. We have been able to get to places that are only really well known to the locals and that way we get to see and experience things that the usual tourist would miss out on. The best thing about it is that we are getting to see and experience things that Dorothy has been living with for years and that way we are able to have a small glimpse into a little of what her life has been like.

We all retired to the Comfort Hotel for the night and had our usual 'chin wagging session' but despite having to drive down to Malacca the next day I still found it very hard to get off to sleep.



Dining 'Uptown'

November 8th 2008 (Saturday)

We were up just before dawn and got away to an early start to avoid the traffic. I was elected driver and Dorothy was navigator. Belle brought up the rear and didn't have to do much but look at the passing scenery.

Everything went well to start with and we made our way out of the built up areas and headed south. Not long after dropping in to a rest stop I was overtaking a rather slow moving truck when a small black car moving at at least 150kph came tearing up behind us and started flashing its headlights trying to get me out of the way. As I was in the process of overtaking another vehicle I concentrated on doing just that and as the car behind me was making a big fuss I gave them a nice friendly Australian wave (the one with the middle finger raised in 'salute') This seemed to bring out their best warm and friendly nature and they promptly got in front of us and started braking heavily waving friendly salutes to me in return. Thinking this was some sort of Malaysian cultural exchange I returned the favour by overtaking them and returning their friendly waves as I did so.

I was about to continue happily on my way, all warm and safe in this vision of friendly Malaysian driving habits but the occupants of the little black car were obviously afraid that I had not seen enough of their cultural ceremony so they came past us again practising their best Malaysian 'waves'. Thinking that it would be rude to simply ignore them I gave them the best one fingered Australian salute I could manage and this seemed to make them want to invite me to stop and join them in some quaint Malaysian custom on the roadside verge. As we were in a hurry I could not oblige so giving them yet another friendly 'wave' I drove round them and continued on my way. They seemed to get the message that we were in a hurry and could not stop to chat and gave me many interesting versions of the Australian wave as they drove off at a great rate of knots into the vanishing point on the highway.

It was about this time that I noticed that Dorothy had come over 'all queer' and was sitting white knuckled and almost shaking in the seat next to me. She was muttering words like 'gangster', 'parang', 'knives and guns' and seemed to be under the terrible mis-apprehension that the little black car was in fact behaving in an unfriendly manner towards us. I felt sure that this simply could not be the case as Malaysia is known for its friendly hospitable people and that she had to be mistaken. My reassurances seemed to fall on deaf ears so I thought it would be best to promise not to practice any more Australian waves while she was in the car.

Unfortunately at some point during, or shortly after this charming Malaysian encounter, we had shot past the turn off to Malacca and were about to discover yet another wonderful aspect of the road system out here. Large highways here have a nice big centre divider that makes it completely impossible to turn around if you happen to miss your exit. This then results in detours of, well in this case I would estimate around 100 kilometres and more and larger toll fees. As it was well past breakfast time we stopped for lunch at Yong Peng and 'enjoyed' some nice dry cardboard chicken and bland tasteless rice garnished with even more tasteless soup before retracing our steps north toward Malacca.

Eventually we made it through the increasing traffic to somewhere near the middle of Malacca where Dorothy took over the driving and we arrived at the hotel. We had to wait a while to check-in and so wandered round the tourist trap next door that, like the hotel, also goes by the name of Tan Kim Hock.



Tan Kim Hock - Tourist trap

After spending some time at the tourist trap we tried some durian chendol that sadly turned out to be a bit awful. This is supposed to be famous but it must be a rather unfortunate kind of fame.

We finally managed to get up to our room and were pleasantly surprised by the initial appearance. Then we had a quick hour's rest and became increasingly aware of the massive air conditioning plant that was running a few feet away behind a paper thin wall.

Despite a sound like that of a Learjet landing in the next room, we actually did manage to fall asleep for an hour and once refreshed Dorothy's appetite dictated a quick walk around to find the nearest place to buy some food. On the way out of the room I closed the door only to find that the door knob had come off in my hand. After a bit of fiddling I managed to get it back in place and working again but that door knob would come back to haunt us later on.

Just outside the hotel Belle found a hawker selling mangosteens so we picked up a couple of kilos for later consumption and dropped them back in the room.

Quite close to the hotel we found an Indian 'coffee shop' and sat for a while enjoying the food and chatting. Only a few short steps from the Indian joint was something Belle had been hoping to find – a dim sum house called Dim Sum Garden. It wasn't open until 6pm so we sat chatting until just before 6 when we walked back to have a look. The owner (Lily) was very friendly and the girls sat down and told her their story. Lily offered to take us down to Jonkers Street but we had already eaten. Instead she gave us a couple of parking permits to use the next day while we were looking around the town.

On the way back to the hotel the mangosteen man was still there so another couple of kilos were bought at a slightly lower price.

After another rest and more chatting up in the room, we went back down to get some ice for the hard won Kahlua. The lady at hotel reception organised some ice for us so (we thought) we had been spared another walk down the road to buy some from the coffee shop we had visited earlier. It was not until we arrived back at the room that the door knob once again came to our attention, this time because, try as we might, we could not get the door open. Help from the hotel staff was summoned and they had to break in to the room and then we were shifted to the other end of the hall and a smaller room with a fold out bed. At least this room was quiet as we were about as far from the air conditioning plant as it was possible to get and still be in the same hotel.

Now we discovered that the ice was chock full of chlorine and was completely unusable. Down we went again and over to the coffee shop to get a big bag of ice (1.00RM) and then back to the new room for a long anticipated night cap. We had just decided to call it a night when the tenants of the adjoining room arrived home and decided to sit up watching TV and making a bit of a racket. By this time my eyeballs were just about hanging out of my head and I was exhausted. Despite the exhaustion I am quite a light sleeper and could

not get off to dreamland with all the noise going on next door. We had swapped the constant drone of the air conditioning plant for something much worse.

The girls organised for me to go back to the other room to sleep where exhaustion soon overcame loneliness and I finally flaked out. Sometime before dawn, when I was sure the noisy neighbours had gone to sleep, I went back down the hall and settled back in to wait for the new day. (Turns out that just minutes after I went to the other room, the noise from next door stopped anyway but such is life.)



Dorothy negotiating lower priced mangosteens for Belle

November 9th 2008 (Sunday)

Belle's mind was firmly fixed on dim sum so we went back over to the Dim Sum Garden for a good feed before hitting the streets of Malacca. On the way we spotted the mangosteen man again so Belle bought another two kilos (after Dorothy negotiated yet another discount – she is very good at this!)

Knowing how well Dorothy can eat, we were surprised when she only had a few bits of dim sum before declaring that she was full. The reason turns out to be that meat is only usually eaten here in very small quantities and eating more than the usual miniscule amount quickly fills up anyone not used to eating more. We on the other hand are more than used to eating big servings of meat so by the time breakfast was over we had consumed the better part of 20 dim sum dishes.



Yummy Dim Sum

Then it was off into town to have a look at the historic buildings and especially the remains of the old Dutch fortress that once dominated the shoreline. Thanks to land reclamation in the area, the fortress now sits quite a long way from the sea and the only real section of fort left is a small gateway. On top of the hill are the ruins of St. Paul's church and from the top you get excellent views of Malacca.

The area all round the hill is very tourist orientated with stalls selling all sorts souvenir trinkets. There is a canal nearby that is quite picturesque so we sat down for a while enjoying the best chendol we have had so far.



After wandering round the fort area for a couple of hours we drove back to the hotel (only making a couple of un-planned circuits of the area first) for a rest.

The first part of the drive back up from Malacca was smooth and peaceful but I couldn't help thinking that Dorothy was a bit disappointed that I didn't practise waving at anyone again – still a promise is a promise so I refrained from making any more friendly gestures to the locals.

During the drive the clouds gathered rather thickly in the heavens and it wasn't long before we were driving through a torrent of rain. I am not at all happy about driving in conditions where the road markings start to vanish and I was more than happy when Dorothy suggested a brief detour to Kajang for a nice feed of satay. The rain was still pelting down so I escorted the girls, one at a time, from the car to the restaurant using the umbrella. I was a little surprised and genuinely pleased when Dorothy put her arm around me (even if only briefly) as we were walking under the umbrella. The gesture just seemed so natural and I have to admit that when the rain eased off I was a little disappointed that there wouldn't be another short walk under the umbrella on the way back to the car ☺

The satay was good value and good quality but all too soon it was time to get back on the road and finish the drive home. Driving in the downpour of rain had taken its toll on me and by the time we were passing through KL we had decided to stop over at the budget hotel for the night instead of heading back to Sungai Buloh.

When we got to Sri Muda we found the hotel was booked out and after looking at another (much more seedy version) nearby and deciding against stopping there, Dorothy said that she wanted to come back to Sungai Buloh with us and get Rxxxxxx to pick her up later. We did feel that it was too much to ask Rxxxxxx to come all the way out, especially after working all day, but I could also see that Dorothy wanted to do all she could to keep the weekend going and not to have it end too soon. We felt exactly the same way so after some token resistance we gracefully surrendered to the idea and Dorothy drove us up.

Sadly time eventually caught up with us and quite late in the night we had to say goodbye and a truly magic weekend was over. Time really is slipping away from us now far too quickly.

I think Dorothy has had more fun in the short time we have been here, than she has had in a very long time and it is wonderful to see her laughing, relaxing and enjoying herself. She has a sense of humour that in some ways is a little closer to my own than Belle's and she isn't averse to giving me a 'bit of stick' occasionally. I am very happy that she feels comfortable enough to do this as in Australia it is quite normal to tease people you are very close to. Of course I don't let her get away with it scot free and I am just as happy to tease her a bit in return.

Although I am not all that surprised that Belle and Dorothy grew close very quickly, I have been quite surprised by my own feelings. There is certainly the potential for things to get a little complicated from now on but this weekend we have started to talk openly about our feelings and as long as everyone is comfortable and nothing gets rushed then I can only see the three of us getting closer in future. I know from my point of view that the world seems a much brighter place when all three of us are together.



My favourite photo of the girls so far

November 10th 2008 (Monday)

We have booked another night at the budget hotel this Wednesday as we want to go down to KL and have a look round during the day and we don't want to bother driving back to SB after a long day out – that is the technical reason anyway. As long as I have a good technical reason for going to the budget hotel I don't get any grief from the girls about wasting money.... I am sure I will manage to find at least another couple of these technical reasons so we can be down there each Wednesday until we leave.

We hope to do another overnight trip away before we have to go home and we are crossing our fingers that it will work out. Even if it turned out to be only half as good as this past weekend it will still be brilliant.

I should be doing some clothes washing today but I am still pretty 'knocked up' from the weekend. I will just concentrate on writing this up today and getting the video footage edited. It is already mid-day and the journal has taken almost all morning (not including the entry for the 8th that I wrote last night) to finish.

Current plans for the last weeks here:

Wednesday 12 Nov.

Get down to KL on our own using the railway system and get to see a few touristy bits and pieces. Stay Wed night at the budget hotel and hope to see Dorothy.

This Weekend. 14/15/16 Nov.

Dorothy coming up to SB after work.

Get to KL with Dorothy and get some film and pics of the girls near iconic buildings do some shopping etc.

Originally we planned to book in at the budget hotel Saturday night but this would mean Dorothy would probably not be up at Sungai Buloh again while we are here so now we think going back up there after KL would be better and we can spend more time with her. Try to do ESP and interview as there is so little time left to do it any other time.

Down to Sri Muda on Sunday to meet some of Dorothy's friends.

Next Wednesday 19 Nov.

More or less the same thing as 12 Nov. Stay at budget hotel again.

Weekend 22/23 Nov.

Plan A was another night away but now it will be a day trip. We don't care as long as we are with Dorothy.

Wednesday 26 Nov.

More or less the same thing as 12 Nov. Stay at budget hotel again.

Weekend 29/30 Nov.

Saturday: Lunch planned then back with Dorothy to budget hotel.

Sunday: Don't want to think about it.....why on Earth didn't we make it December 1st to fly out? We would have had one more whole day

to spend together!

November 11th 2008 (Tuesday)

Even though there are still 18 days left before we have to go home we are starting to feel the terrible impact of how leaving will make us feel. In the last few weeks we have grown closer and closer to Dorothy. I always thought that when the time came for us to go it was going to be very sad but I completely under-estimated just how devastating it really is going to be. Last night Belle and I were sitting on the sofa and we both just burst into tears and put our arms round each other trying in vain to find some sort of comfort.

Dorothy may have had a tough life but she is an absolutely wonderful person and we are both completely captivated by her. The thought of more than a few days going by without seeing her is unbearable and our emotions are becoming more and more difficult to control. Dorothy has had to be a lot tougher mentally than us and I know she is struggling to keep everything under control but when the dam wall breaks I think there will be a huge flood of emotions from her, I just hope she doesn't wait until we have gone to allow that to happen – we will need to be together when it does.

We are starting to do more about getting Dorothy permission to come and live in Australia. At least if we can get some sort of positive answer to that before we go, there will be something to hold on to. Belle is writing directly to the Minister for Immigration pleading for special consideration because of the unique circumstances and also sending a letter to Darren asking for whatever support the ABC can give.

Finding and meeting Dorothy has been the single most powerful and emotional experience of our lives. In just a few short weeks we have come to love her more than mere words can express, she is now part of us and we cannot let her go.

November 12th 2008 (Wednesday)

Today we drove down to Shah Alam and caught the train into Kuala Lumpur. Even after driving down to S.A. it was quite a long train ride into the city (\$2.80 per head) and Belle wanted to go and have a look At Sogo shopping Centre. Turns out this is about the most expensive shopping centre in Malaysia so we didn't buy much. About the only thing we did buy was some chocolates and since Dorothy mentioned that she likes the Belgian shell chocs we got her a box of those. Dorothy, like Belle, won't buy herself anything like this so they both need someone else to buy them teats. Belle usually makes a fuss if she spots me buying chocolates for her but when it came to Dorothy it was actually Belle who suggested getting them – no doubt she loves her sister as Belle is never cavalier about spending money on other people. Love is about the only thing that makes spending money easy for Belle.

Since we have been here I have never had a qualm about buying things for Dorothy, to me it seems more or less the same as getting things for Belle

We had lunch at a cheaper less up-market joint but the food was good and at least in our eyes reasonably cheap (RM6.00 a plate). When it came time to go home we managed to hop on the wrong train but thankfully we didn't get too far before realising our mistake and we went back to KL Central and corrected the error.

We arrived at the budget hotel just before 5pm and Dorothy came over just before 7pm. After a bit of a chat we went out for dinner together. Much nicer than spending the whole working week up at SB on our own. Dorothy stayed until after midnight but with work looming the next day she eventually had to surrender to time and went home.

There are times when I wish I knew a little bit more about what is going on in Dorothy's head. Because she has built a bunch of protective walls around her she can be very hard to read at times. I know there are things going on in there but I want to know what they are and so far she has only opened up a bit. I hope she will at least start to break down some of those barriers before we have to go.

November 13th 2008 (Thursday)

Checked out of the hotel, picked up some char siew (normal thing for us to do when we are here now) and went off to TESCO. Belle found something else to get for Dorothy but as this may get emailed tomorrow I won't spoil the surprise.

We were back at SB not long after mid-day and I had to start doing the long overdue clothes washing. It was starting to come down to a choice of wearing smelly clothes or nothing at all, neither of which would be much appreciated by anyone else.

Tomorrow is house chores day, floor mopping, dusting and general tidying up so that everything is nice when Dorothy gates here Friday night. Good to be busy anyway as it keeps my mind occupied.

November 14th 2008 (Friday)

I finally managed to get up the courage to send Dorothy something I had written about the feelings I have for her and crossed my fingers that I hadn't made a big mistake. In the evening we did get round to sitting down and talking about the situation but there is certainly more to think about and talk about tomorrow.

Having the same feelings for both Belle and Dorothy is very complicated and difficult to fully deal with. Belle is actually quite ok with the whole thing but I am still struggling to accept how I feel and obviously it is all quite strange and unusual for Dorothy.

November 15th 2008 (Saturday)

Yet another sleepless night as my mind was in turmoil. Dorothy suggested that the feelings I have developed for her are simply deep seated caring or compassion for her situation but after thinking about this pretty much all night I have come to the conclusion that the way I feel about her is actually the same as I feel about Belle. These feelings have been developing for some time and originally I thought that it was pretty much due to the fact that the twins are so similar. I have spoken earlier in the journal about the fact that at one stage I thought I could see a version of Belle inside Dorothy struggling to get out but since the trip to Penang that view changed and I now see Dorothy as a completely different (albeit very similar) individual.

There has to be more to it than just the similarity between Belle and Dorothy. Whatever the reason I now find myself very much in love with two separate people and even though it is completely unconventional and very unexpected, I don't feel any guilt or difficulty in admitting to the feeling.

The weirdest thing of all is that Belle has been almost trying to push Dorothy and I together in some ways but neither Dorothy or I feel all that comfortable with taking things any further. For my part I am simply happy just to be able to continue with things the way they are. While I am fully content to have these feelings on an emotional level, I would find it difficult, if not impossible at the moment, to have things go any further than that. I have always been somewhat conservative and I am basically quite shy but I can't put aside the feelings I have and now I must trust that there is a reason for my life taking this unusual path.

Dorothy and I still can't bring ourselves to hug. Belle can't quite understand this as she loves hugging and she can freely hug both of us but I think that once I put my arms around Dorothy I would never want to let go again and neither of us would quite know how to handle it. Part of me hopes that we may find a way past this barrier before I have to go home but I feel that true love is, in any case, all about caring more for someone else than you do for yourself so as long as I can help Dorothy find the happiness she deserves that is all I could ever ask for.

Back to somewhat more mundane issues....

Today we all went into KL by rail and had a look around Chinatown. Belle managed to buy a few things she had been looking for but really it was all about spending quality time with Dorothy. The weather wasn't exactly kind but we enjoyed the day regardless.

Dorothy's wicked sense of humour surfaced again as we were walking around; she was telling the stall holders that Belle was my wife and that she was my girlfriend – I really can't say that I objected ☺



Bargain hunting can be a serious business

The subject of getting Dorothy to migrate to Australia is rarely far from the surface these days but I know she is still struggling with the whole idea of having to walk away from 24 years of marriage. I think she realises deep inside that there is nothing left for her here and that her best option is to make a break but I also know just how difficult that will be for her. There is still the forlorn hope that Rxxxxxx will eventually wake up and give her what she needs but sadly this has gone on too long and while Dorothy seems to have done everything humanly possible to keep the marriage alive, Rxxxxxx has never responded and there really isn't any sign that he ever will.

November 16th 2008 (Sunday)

This morning when I woke the two girls were fast asleep next to each other and for a while I just sat up and watched them sleeping. I find some of these moments so touching and beautiful. Something so simple and innocent but also something they have been denied for all these years; the closeness, the togetherness that they have needed for so long. After Dorothy had gone into the lounge I just couldn't help myself, I sat on the floor imagining two little girls all alone in the world for such a long time and I broke down and cried.

Later I managed to film an interview style session with both Belle and Dorothy and to my surprise it was Dorothy who provided the most emotional moments. She has had to be so brave, so strong, in a life that, until now, refused to give her the love she needed. I am so pleased that she trusts us enough to allow her vulnerable side to show from time to time but she really does need to let herself go more often as it is unhealthy to continually bottle all your emotions up inside. She still seems to view crying as being weak but it really isn't at all. I think allowing yourself to show your true feelings to those you care about is in itself, an act of courage.

There is one particular section of the interview when Dorothy really allows her true feelings to come to the surface and even though I have watched it half a dozen times now, my eyes still flood with tears each time. The only good thing about the fact that I am currently coming down with the flu is that when I get the sniffles Belle can't tell if it is because of the footage of Dorothy or the flu that I get a runny nose ☺

We went down to Sri Muda to meet some of Dorothy's friends from church where she had the opportunity to 'show Belle off'. I can see how much she loves the fact that she now has Belle in her life and she takes great delight in introducing Belle to the people she has

known for so long.

Back at Sungai Buloh, Dorothy cooked dinner and for the first time we got to see how she 'stacks up' as a cook. Dinner was delicious so Belle obviously now has some competition in the culinary stakes.

Once again the weekend came to an end around 10pm and the apartment seemed that much more empty once Dorothy had gone. It is so sad to think that next weekend is the last full one we will spend together up here. We just have to get Dorothy out to Australia, we will wither and die without her. Not even two weeks left here now.....All we need is to get some official word that says Dorothy can come and live in Australia, at least once we have that then we really have something to live for and to work towards.

November 17th 2008 (Monday)

Clothes washing time this morning and the next job is editing the footage I shot yesterday. I will also need to get on the net and look for the correct Epson drivers for Dorothy's printer. (no it didn't work.....).

Oh well by the time I got the footage all edited together it was too late to go down and get on the net. Will have to go tomorrow before we go to Shah Alam.

November 18th 2008 (Tuesday)

Must get on the net today as I have some stuff to send to Aus. and I need to get a set of drivers for Dorothy's Epson Stylus c59 printer. Not feeling all that crash hot as the flu or cold or whatever it is takes hold but as long as Dorothy's friend doesn't mind entertaining a bunch of sick people then I am still good to go down to Shah Alam tonight.

...later...

Went down to SA around 4pm and arrived at Dorothy's place just before 5pm. Very heavy rain caused flash flooding on the roads and we were stuck in the car until nearly 6pm. Dorothy was held up in traffic and arrived a bit late and eventually we went over to her friend (Joan's) for dinner.

On the way home we managed to take the wrong turn and got lost before back-tracking and finally getting on the right road. We had problems with the windows and our glasses fogging up and I found that I cannot read the road map at night as there isn't enough light to enable me to focus properly - my eyes really are getting very bad these days. Some tense moments in the car before we got ourselves sorted out.

Somehow I managed to fall asleep sitting up in the lounge room but Belle, being a busy body, couldn't just leave me there and woke me up at 3:30am and told me to come to bed. Almost as soon as I lay down I started coughing and I haven't managed to stop since - it is now 4:20am and I have had to take more pills to try and get back to sleep.

I am still waiting patiently for Dorothy to send me some of her journal. I have been sending her this one since November 2nd but so far nothing but silence in return.....

I tend to be very open and don't hold back my feelings when writing this. Even knowing that someone else will be reading my words doesn't change what or how I write. I am hoping that once Dorothy does decide to start writing her thoughts down that she will be just as open about how this weird situation is making her feel.

I have to admit that in all the time I have been keeping a journal (since May 14th 1997) I have never found myself with so much to write about or so many emotions to deal with. There is no way we can know what the future holds but I am just following my heart and hoping that that will be enough.

Well its almost 5am and the pills are starting to kick in, sadly even if I do drop off I only have 30 minutes before the wailing twit downstairs starts to wake everyone up.

Hmmm... since I have a sort of captive audience I will leave one more comment on an unrelated topic.

Dorothy has not had any proper blood tests or health monitoring for a long time and we are both VERY WORRIED ABOUT HER! Someone who can find money for tithes for the church should be able to find money to take PROPER CARE of her own health. Maybe she didn't care much before we met her but now she has other people to think about and we definitely think she should put her own health above that of dishing out money to others who are not nearly as important. Missing a month or two in tithes to pay for proper health checks is of no consequence and we want to see her starting to take much better care of herself. She needs to stop playing around with this issue and get the tests done and continue to get them done regularly. We are lucky in Australia as the Medicare system takes care of us but even if we had to pay the money I would ensure that Belle had her regular monitoring done. NOTHING is more important than your health!

(Dorothy, since I know you are going to be reading this I am going to say it directly: "Stop messing around and get the necessary tests done, we are very worried about you! If you genuinely couldn't afford to get the tests done I would pay for them but since you are throwing money away in tithes I don't feel justified in doing so. The church can easily do without your money for a while so you can get the tests done. Get your priorities straight, YOU COME FIRST! Do you think that your God wants you to die for the want of proper care? I want you to promise to get yourself tested properly, if you really don't have the money then we will help. Belle's rather practical comment was: 'If you die you can't pay any more tithes anyway.'")

The things we know about Belle's conditions are that she has thalassemia, Hashimotos auto immune disorder, high cholesterol and she is allergic to penicillin. You need to have all these checked out and you need to start having other tests like pap smears and mammograms done.

November 19th 2008 (Wednesday)

The 'fix it' man finally turned up this week after suffering the tragedy of a broken drill last week. An extra fan and light were installed and although the work was ok as far as Malaysian standards are concerned it would be unthinkable in Australia. Here it is quite acceptable to run conduits along ceilings and walls to get power to new areas. In Australia ALL wiring and plumbing is hidden from view.

The job didn't get finished so he is due back tomorrow to install a washing machine and a couple of power points.

I am very out of sorts today, maybe it's the flu, maybe it's thoughts of having to go home and leave Dorothy on her own here, maybe it's the lack of progress in getting an answer from Immigration, maybe it's all the above. All I know is I am a very grumpy bum today. Belle and I were quite niggly with each other.

November 20th 2008 (Thursday)

We are both flu victims now, just as well there is no need to go anywhere today. The rest of the work on the flat is due to be done so staying home should help us both recover in time for Dorothy's arrival tomorrow. Hopefully she isn't as sick as we are.

With all this time on my hands I have little to do but sit and ponder why things turn out the way they do. Why didn't we find Dorothy before this? What is so special about this point in time? Looking at the way things have turned out there are all sorts of co-incidences that came together over the years to make this time possible.

If we had found Dorothy way back in 1989 when we first started searching I wonder how differently things would have turned out. Even if she had been more into computers in 1999 and had looked for herself on the web, I think everything would have been completely different. In all the years between 1999 and 2008 she never looked up her own name on the net, you have to wonder why...

Now Belle and I are in a position where we are basically free to do more or less what we please (within budgetary constraints) and we have been able to spend much more time in Malaysia than we could have at any other point. Even that would not have been possible if Dorothy hadn't decided to buy a second apartment. Dorothy had also reached the stage where she felt cut off from her family, she was alone and desperate almost not caring if she lived or died. Putting all the life lines and co-incidences together tends to lead to the conclusion that something different has to happen in all our lives now. Why life has to be so difficult I just don't know. We are at a cross road, which direction will life take us this time?

Everything in our lives now hangs in the balance. All our dreams and wishes for the future are more or less in the hands of other people. This is so emotionally draining and frustrating. Add to that the fact that in 10 days we will be on the way home.... I would give just about anything not to have to go.

Dorothy, of course, is firmly of the opinion that her God is behind all this, and given the number of things that had to come together in order for us just to find her, it is tempting for most people to see a plan of sorts behind it. Unfortunately all I see is just a series of related and unrelated events that happened in a way to allow us to find ourselves here. Strangely enough I actually envy Dorothy her ability to believe in a God. I never will have that belief but I can see how it helps to make sense of a very cruel and unfathomable world.

I also have to ask myself why, when Belle had given up, did I keep looking for Dorothy? In my mind at least, it was to find the missing part of Belle. Like Dorothy, we had also reached a point in our lives when we were drifting aimlessly. We had no goals, no purpose, no meaning, we were like ghosts drifting through the world with no real family and nowhere to call home.

The minute we found Dorothy everything in our lives began to change, even how Belle and I related to each other was profoundly influenced. Then when we finally got to meet her and found she was in a similar position there was finally some sort of light at the end of the tunnel.

If Dorothy had been happily married we would simply have met, she and Belle would have formed a bond of sorts and we would have gone home, back to a life of drifting around without meaning.

The way things actually have turned out so far is very strange. All three of us needed each other in different ways and it is hard to believe just how well we get on together. I don't expect everything to always be as smooth as it has been so far but I also don't think the bonds that have formed will ever be broken.

As for my part in all this, well I have probably already said enough (and maybe too much) on the subject. I know that how I feel has complicated what is already a complex situation but fate or God or whatever force there might be in the universe has seen fit to bring us together so who am I to say what is right and what is wrong? I am quite afraid that my emotions are setting me up for a lot of pain at some stage but what else can I do? I am held captive by my feelings so all I can do is follow my heart.

Last minute instructions from Dorothy; say a prayer that the rain stays away long enough for her to get up to SB early tomorrow night. Well she should be proud of me, I even put my hands together and said 'amen' afterwards! I feel a bit of a hypocrite – an atheist saying prayers, what next! but then I would do just about anything she asked of me.

November 21st 2008 (Friday)

'That girl' is starting to have a big effect on my way of thinking. One little prayer leads to another, especially when you are desperate and now I find myself actually talking to God! I have so much I want to tell her but now I know that her feelings are quite different from mine I have to try and hold it all inside me. I feel something is breaking inside but I have no choice but to deal with it on my own.

I really am afraid that I am going to completely break down when we get close to leaving.

Went up to The Store at Sungai Buloh again today but didn't buy much. Time is not the only thing starting to run out now, money is getting a bit short as well. We are starting to contemplate the next time we get to see Dorothy and are actually thinking about coming back to Malaysia again even though it means around \$3k in air fares. It will all depend on how quickly we can get the immigration people in Australia to do something but if it starts to drag out we won't be able to just sit around and wait to see Dorothy again.

We have to sort the bus out (assuming there is anything left to sort out) when we get back. If it is still there then we think Wandering would be a good spot to go until everything else gets sorted out, at least the rent there is cheap even if it is a long drive to get to the shops.

Steve and Becky want us to look after their house again but this time they are talking about us being there from January to March. (They even said Dorothy could stay too if she was able to be in Australia during that time.) If it was possible then it would give us a great base and being in the south west during summer would be the best possible time – have to see what Dorothy thinks and if it would be possible for her to get leave sometime during our time down there.

If nothing has happened re-immigration by the end of March then we will be looking at moving north again. Assuming that happens then it will be August before we head south and if Dorothy has not been able to come over between January and March, we expect she will be planning to come over to see the spring wildflowers. (It really would be much better if she could come while we are at Steve and Bec's place as the south west corner is a great place to explore. It really would be amazing if the girls could be together for their 50th birthday!)

If she has been over and things are still dragging then I think we will seriously consider coming back to Malaysia (assuming that is still possible both financially and accommodation wise) once we are back near Perth. Well that is the thoughts for next year at the moment, plans usually change rapidly as things move in their own direction but there has to be some sort of basic plan to start with.

At some point during the afternoon Belle commented that it would be good if Dorothy came up to SB straight from work and brought the tiffin carrier with her instead of going back to SA. Well weird or not Dorothy turned up much earlier than expected having come straight here from work and guess what, she had the tiffin carrier with her! I am really starting to wonder if there is some sort of telepathy going on between the twins. Now I am more intrigued than ever to do some ESP testing and see if any sort of link can be empirically proven.

November 22nd 2008 (Saturday)

Today the three of us mostly mooched around Shah Alam central and had lunch at the same Japanese restaurant we went to on October 4th. How long ago the first meal there seems and how quickly the time has passed. This time next week it will just about all be over.... I just can't even start to think about that now so I have to stop writing.

We tried to do a sort of ESP test using cards with pictures that neither twin had seen before. Although it was hardly conclusive and no cards were picked in the correct sequence, it was worthy of note that Belle correctly picked 4 of the 8 pictures correctly and Dorothy got 2 out of 8. Even though none were in the right sequence, since neither twin had seen the images prior to the test it is interesting that so many cards got identified when I really didn't expect any to be correct.

November 23rd 2008 (Sunday)

3am and sleep won't come again. I am so tired but I can't fall asleep. Things are getting more and more difficult and being 'so close and yet so far' from Dorothy is driving me nuts. I am getting too emotional to write about it now...

later...

We went down to Central to pick up a few things and even just being there and thinking that it could be the last time we are there together started me off again. It got to the point where I just had to walk outside for a while to recover as I didn't want the girls to see how it was affecting me.

By this time next week we will be flying over Australia. If only I could be sure that we would all be together again. Life can be very unpredictable and we don't know from one day to the next what is going to happen, there is no guarantee that we will ever see each other again and I am just not coping at all well now. I am trying very hard for Dorothy and Belle's sakes not to let the emotions show but holding it all inside is almost physically painful.

Just a few precious hours left today then Thursday night, Friday and Saturday.

In the end Dorothy decided to stay the night and go to work from Sungai Buloh in the morning. This gave the girls the chance to play 'dress-up' and I was lucky enough to get some lovely pictures.

Dorothy cooked dinner for us and it was the best meal we have had since we came to Malaysia. She really is an excellent cook. Not only that, she did the whole meal, soup, fish, chicken and potato, beans, cauliflower and prawns on just one burner!

November 24th 2008 (Monday)

Because Dorothy hasn't driven to work from here before she had to get up quite early but Belle & I made sure we got breakfast ready for her, perhaps a small sample of what life could be like if we can get her to Australia?



All I can say is 'Wow!'

To this point in time, the girls have managed to spend 36 (out of a possible total of 59) days either together either as full days or at least a few hours. I think now they are completely inseparable emotionally and it was just wonderful that we had the opportunity for things to have worked out this way. By the time we have to go we will add 3 more days making 39 in all, not enough to compensate for all the missing years but enough to really find out how we all feel about each other.

This has been a wonderful beginning and now we can make plans for a future where the girls can be together.

I still can't explain exactly why our lives have taken this turn and I don't know where it is going to lead us. I have stopped trying to work out things that I don't understand and I am just going to accept things as they are. Like Dorothy I am just going to have faith that these things are going on for a reason.

I love Belle for the soft wonderful caring soul that she is, for all our years together and for the love and affection she has always shown me. I love Dorothy both for her great similarities to Belle but also for her differences. I see in her a great personal strength and under the shell she hides behind I see a wonderfully warm and loving soul. She wrote last year:

'Of course it is still my dream one day to meet someone who really loves me as I am. A man who will shower me with love, whom I can look up to and shall be my strength and meet my physical needs.'

Well at least the first part of that wish has now come true even though the rest of it may be a little complicated to sort out. All I want her to know is that she is now truly loved for herself.

What an unexpected but wonderful experience this has been so far. I pray that somehow the universe finds a way of giving each of us all the things our hearts desire and before long we will all be together for the rest of our lives. I could not imagine a more meaningful existence than loving and caring for these two beautiful women.

November 25th 2008 (Tuesday)

This time next week we will be waking up in Carnarvon... hard to accept that at the moment. Just two months ago we were still waiting to meet Dorothy for the first time, it seems like a lifetime now and in some ways it is. What a strange journey we started on when we first saw her photo in The Star. I really can't remember a time in our lives when we have been happier than the past two months. Everything just seems to have fallen into place at last.

Dorothy too has changed since we first met. Some things that she was struggling to accept she has finally 'seen the light' on and I think her mind is more at peace with regard to that. The problems with Rxxxxxx that had taken over her mind and almost obsessed her have, at least partially, receded into the background. Even though there may be some tough times to get through, I can see she is almost a different person to the one we first saw in Perth. It has been so wonderful to see her happy. I think for the first time in ages she is getting back to being her real self again.

At least when we get home we have a lot to do that will help keep our minds occupied. Dorothy has her work and in no time Christmas and New Year will be upon us, then with luck we go down to Cowaramup to look after the house and before we know it Dorothy will be with us again (crosses fingers).

The worst part today is seeing all the suitcases starting to fill up. Belle has to leave some things here and so do I as the light coloured shirts would quickly get ruined if I wore them in Aus. Even so we are struggling to get everything else packed away.

We have decided not to bother going down to KL again this trip, our minds are just too occupied with other things to bother about sight seeing or shopping.

As the time to go approaches I can feel the emotions starting to build up. I am NOT going to enjoy going home. I am starting to get quite despondent, how can life be so complicated and cruel?

One thing I have noticed that is quite peculiar. Originally when I looked at Belle and Dorothy all I could see were the similarities between

them, now all I can see are the differences. In fact I am now almost unable to see them as identical twins. I am not at all sure why this has come about. They do say that as identicals grow older they become less and less similar but how does that fit with the fact that originally I saw them as being very similar? Perhaps it is due more to the fact that I am now viewing them as separate individuals and my mind is not willing to see them as being so similar. I know they have both never seen each other as looking the same.

November 26th 2008 (Wednesday)

We are going up to Sungai Buloh for the final time today. We need to get out of the flat for a few hours just to clear the cobwebs away.

We confirmed that Beccy wanted us to be at Cowaramup from early January to the end of March and we have told her that we will take her up on the offer. Dorothy is now trying to arrange things so that she can come over during that time (plan 'A' is February 1st to 14th.) If that works out then they will at least be together for their 50th birthday. The best birthday present would be permission for Dorothy to live in Australia!

Last chance to go to the local pasam alam tonight and then we will spend tomorrow tidying up around the flat before going down to pick Dorothy up.

It is almost impossible to believe that just 2 months ago we were on the eve of meeting Dorothy for the first time. Somehow it all seems unreal, how can all this have happened in two short months? If someone had told me back then what was going to happen I would have laughed at them! Not one of us could have predicted back then that our lives would have been changed in so many wonderful and interesting ways.

I wonder what was going on in Dorothy's mind at 8:06pm on September 26th? What did she think Belle and I would be like? Nothing like the crazy people we turned out to be I bet. I am sure she could never have even guessed back then what an odd pair she would find herself stuck with ☺

Looking back at the journal entries I made before we met Dorothy I did predict that she would be a lot like Belle, I just didn't know how right I was!

We have shared such marvellous times together in the last few weeks and not only have I been so wonderfully privileged to be an observer, I have also been taken in as 'one of the girls' a rare thing indeed for any man to get that level of acceptance. The delight I have felt in watching the girls together has been matched by the delight in watching Dorothy start to shine from the inside again. A light has been switched on inside her that had all but gone out and it shows in her face and her every action when the three of us are together. Last weekend she was positively glowing.

She is an absolute joy to be around and each weekend we have both looked forward eagerly for her face to appear. The days without her have been lack-lustre and rather empty but now we have to face not just days but entire weeks without seeing her, not a nice thought.

Her sense of humour, her quirky little phrases, her laugh and that lovely smile that she had kept hidden for too long, all these things Belle and I have become so accustomed to we will now have to do without, how much more empty life will be.

November 27th 2008 (Thursday)

Got the flat tidied up in the morning and then went to TESCO Extra on the way to Dorothy's place to get some food for tomorrow's brekky.

We all seemed determined to stay up as late as possible and didn't even go out to get dinner until after 11pm. It was about 4:30am before we all finally surrendered and crawled into bed. Belle said some rather strange things to Dorothy and I guess I have to set things straight here so the Dorothy will know exactly what I mean when I say that I am in love with her.

Since Belle has been my one and only love in intimate matters, I would find it very difficult, if not impossible to be intimate with anyone else. I can't say that I would rule it out for all time but I am self conscious, shy and not at all ready to even consider such a thing. The love I feel for Dorothy covers just about every feeling I have for Belle with the exception of any thoughts of physical intimacy. Hugs, holding hands, maybe one day even a kiss – in the FAR distant future, I could handle but anything more is too much for me to even contemplate.

My feelings are very strong and very real but they do stop short of any thoughts of a sexual nature. I hope that sets things straight ☺ I would like a very close relationship with Dorothy but without any thoughts on either side of more than I mentioned above.

I have to be honest and say that the feelings I have frighten me. Why? Mostly because in being so open about them and revealing them I have made myself very vulnerable.

November 28th 2008 (Friday)

Second last day here and so far I am managing to keep it more or less together. The only hiccup was this morning when Dorothy was singing in the bedroom and I started to get a bit choked up. The thing that upset me wasn't the thought of us leaving on Sunday but the fact that she has had no-one in her life who has really loved, appreciated and cared for her the way she deserves and I don't think she even realises just how amazing she is. She asked me yesterday how I could love both Belle and her, my only response can be, how could I not?

I made a cooked breakfast today as it was 2 months ago that we all sat down and had our first cooked brekky together, a bit of an anniversary of sorts.

Belle got a haircut today and it has definitely given her a closer look to Dorothy's.

We went down to SA again and ran round the shops for a while before coming back up to SB for the final time this trip. I almost lost it when we came through the door but shot off into the bathroom for a few minutes before anyone noticed and managed to recover. Sooner or later I am not going to be able to stop myself from going over the edge.....

I won't get another chance to send the journal until we get to Carnarvon so this will be the last chance for me to put my thoughts down for a while. Once we leave Carnarvon I am not sure how long it will be before I can get on the net again so there should be a few entries built up by the time I do.



If only life could be like this all the time.....

November 29th 2008 (Saturday)

We said goodbye to the apartment at SB for the final time this trip and made our way down to SA. We had quite a busy day running round sight seeing, lunching with Dorothy's friend, Vivien, from work and shopping some more. I think we were all eager to keep our minds busy and not think too much about tomorrow. We all stayed at the budget hotel – in the same smallish bed no less, and went to sleep earlier than we had first planned.



Visiting the mosque at Shah Alam

November 30th 2008 (Sunday)

As I type this I am sitting outside gate C4 at KLIA waiting to board our flight home. Leaving Dorothy this morning was every bit as painful as I expected it to be. Belle was the one who didn't break down and cry at the hotel but she did once we were in the taxi on the way to the airport.

With every mile further away from Dorothy my heart broke a little more. The only thing that kept me sane was the thought that in 2 months time she will be making the same journey out to see us again.

At least we finally got that first proper hug! I wonder why it took so long? She said that she would hug more next time we meet and that is a promise I intend to keep her to!

Check in wasn't quite as bad as expected and it is now 9am, not long before boarding.

Dorothy is going out to SB again today to collect some meat we forgot in the fridge. I feel for her as she walks in and sees the place empty for the first time in 2 months. I hope she knows now just how much she means to us and how much we both need her in our lives.

...Later...

The flight down to Perth was uneventful except for one strange man sitting there with tears running down his cheeks for a rather long time. I think the other passengers must have wondered what could have made him so sad..... but I knew because I was him...

The weather in Perth is perfect at the moment, 24C with clear blue skies and cool mornings and evenings, just right for someone I know overseas ☺

Gus and Bobby met us at the airport and took us up into the hills to spend the night at their home. They fed us a nice BBQ dinner then we had strawberries and cream for dessert. We then sat and watched footage I took while we were in Malaysia plus the interview with Dorothy & Belle. By the end of that I was just about in tears again.

We SMSed Dorothy as soon as we arrived to let her know we were safe and then called her from Gus & Bobby's house.

Hi Dorothy, my dear sweet girl. I am taking a break from the usual journal entries to write this bit directly to you. We will be back in Carnarvon tomorrow and as soon as I can I will get on to the internet and send you this.

I just can't believe how awful it was to leave you today. With every mile we got further from you the sadder we got and the more it hurt inside. I know we have to all try and focus and be strong until we are together again but it is SO hard to do at the moment.

Even though we are looking forward to February I just don't know how we are ever going to let you go again.... All I can hope is that we get permission for you to be with us soon or I will have to think about other ways of getting you to be with us. I do have one final rather drastic plan that we can use to ensure you get PR status here but that would really be a last resort as it would be complicated and would take time. It does mean, however, that there is a plan of last resort that is legal and will work if we have no other choice.

I was terribly upset to hear the sadness in your voice when I asked how the day had been for you and you said 'Not too good.' Just take it one day at a time, stay strong and stay safe for all of us. If only I could hug you again now and chase away the pain.....

We love you dearly, you are everything to us. Even now we are almost a day closer to being with you once again. Before you know it you will be on the way..

December 1st 2008 (Monday)

Our friends Gus and Bobby are such nice people. We really haven't known them all that long but with some people you just hit it off right away. They have a lovely home and they were so interested in seeing the footage of Belle and Dorothy together. I hope they get a chance to meet Dorothy one day.

They drove us down to the domestic terminal and we caught the flight up to Geraldton and then Carnarvon. The ride was a bit bumpy in places but overall not too bad. I managed not to get teary today but this time it was Belle's turn.

I think Belle has finally realised how lucky she is to live in Australia after spending time in Malaysia. She even says she is proud to be an Australian citizen.

We are now back in the caravan but with our usual luck the car isn't working. We had a new clutch put in (\$1500 worth of work) before we left and now the clutch isn't working so we are waiting for the RAC to turn up and tell us what is wrong. Of course we don't have any food etc. either so have to get to the shops and even more important I want to get to the internet and email my girlfriend ☺

Meanwhile the RAC man has turned up and had a look and the car wasn't as bad as we first suspected. The clutch fluid had drained over the 2 months we had been away and a bit of adjustment was all that was required and it didn't cost anything.

Picking the mail up was the most stressful event of the day because of the problems with the bus. We think at this point that the bus has already been removed but we will be able to find out on Thursday for sure because that is when the S.A.T. has scheduled a conference. Either way I no longer care. If we lost the stuff in the bus it is nothing compared to what we have found in Dorothy. She is now the only thing in our lives that matters.

One thing I forgot to mention before is that customs did pinch the pressed flowers that Dorothy put on the pencil holder she made for Belle. We did expect that to happen but it was sad to lose something Dorothy had put time and effort into making.

Dorothy emailed to ask about timing for her flight and she has pushed the date up to January 25th or 26th. We don't care what time the flight gets in so the earlier date is better for us. It will depend on how easy it is for her at the Malaysian end.

As she now intends going back on February 15th that means a whole 3 weeks together!

No matter what happens with the bus we plan to be on the road south by Friday. If the bus has in fact gone then we will just take our time going south as there won't be any need to rush. We won't have access to the internet for a while but will SMS Dorothy when we are in phone range to tell her where we are.

Belle has to see the doctor tomorrow and I have to start checking the car and caravan and get it all ready for travel. This means checking all tyre pressures, oil levels, fluids, coolant etc. and then making sure the generator is starting properly, getting loaded up with fuel and water and making sure the porta potty is ready.

It is 7:57pm (our time) or 6:57pm Malaysian time so Dorothy is probably at home (perhaps folding the washing and watching TV) it is so easy to imagine her there now.

When we walked into Woolworths in Carnarvon today it was almost as if we had never left. If it wasn't the memories and photos we have then it would all seem like just an amazing dream.

I have a little project to attend to and that is to make copies of some of the Australian documentaries I have in the DVD collection. There are some really good ones about Australia that I can send to Dorothy.

Looking back.....(10:09pm **December 1st 2008**)

Well now that the first meeting is all over and the first big trip is done I can sit back and reflect on what it has meant to us. To start off with even finding Dorothy was just a dream. We thought it would be nice to find her and for she and Belle to finally get to know each other but even in our wildest dreams we could not imagine a scenario that was even remotely like reality.

Belle and Dorothy have never been able to look into a mirror and see their twin. I thought I could at one stage see one in the other but now even I have difficulty. Yes they are very similar in some ways but they are also quite different too.

Belle has so far been the 'emotional' twin but I think that now Dorothy too is becoming more and more emotional as the enormity of what it means to really love and be loved starts to dawn on her. I don't think she has ever had this kind of relationship in her life before. She obviously loved her mother but from what I can gather there was little actual affection shown. Belle and I are absolute terrors for showing how we feel about others and because we both love Dorothy so much we can't help but be a bit 'over the top'. I think at first she found this quite uncomfortable, nice in some ways but not something she was used to and therefore something to be held at arms length just in case she got hurt.

Now, however, I think she has surrendered to the power of love at last. We might be a couple of crazy mixed up people from Australia who have weird complicated lives but we both love with all our heart and soul and that just has to be infectious. We have to love the way we do because holding back in any way really isn't proper love. Yes you can get hurt from time to time but if you never truly give your heart to someone else then you never get to know how wonderful it is when they love you like that in return. (A lesson it took me far too long to learn.)

Dorothy thinks that God is the greatest power in the universe but I think that love is more powerful than even God if one does in fact exist. Nothing else can make you feel as good as loving and being loved in return, in fact I don't think we can ever be complete without experiencing that feeling.

I know that Dorothy has now bonded completely with Belle and Belle has done likewise with Dorothy. I really don't think that Dorothy was at all prepared for a strange man like me though. I have to admit that as far as men go I do have a very big emotional side to my nature and I'm not at all afraid to show it. I really have Belle to thank for that as she has always shown me that showing your emotions to someone you love can be a real strength.

I still can't believe how quickly the last two months have gone. One minute we were flying out of Carnarvon full of fears and anticipation and the next we were flying back in filled with more love and positive emotions than either of us have ever experienced before in our lives.

At first when we met Dorothy I think we were more worried about her than anything else. She had been unloved and unappreciated for far too long. She was stuck in a life she could not stand but she had no where else to turn. I think that almost straight away she saw us as a way to escape and to start with we were worried that she might run away from a life that was still salvageable. I think we spent the first three weeks in Malaysia trying to work out if her marriage could in fact be saved but events took our minds down a different path and finally we decided that we could see no hope there.

All the while I was starting to have feelings for Dorothy that I knew I shouldn't be having. I battled with those feelings for quite some time and I have to be honest and admit that even from the first moment we met I felt some sort of connection with her. As I regarded it as inappropriate to start with, I just had to suppress it and try to focus on other things. Once I came to the conclusion that her marriage had been well and truly over for a long, long time, I finally gave in to what my heart had been telling me almost since day one; I was crazy about her. I thought that the 'fun' part would be telling Belle how I was feeling but Belle always manages to surprise me and she understood completely.

Once I got enough courage up to admit all this to Dorothy I think she was both quite shocked and sort of flattered as well – more shocked though and she took quite some time to get used to the idea that Belle and I were quite comfortable with the odd situation. In some ways I think I am still rather shocked myself that this could happen. I may have had puppy love feelings for girls in high school but until now, Belle has been the only woman I have ever had serious feelings for, now I also have those same feelings for Dorothy.

You might think that on reflection Belle might have second thoughts, knowing that I actually love her sister. In fact the opposite has happened, she is more and more positive about the whole thing and even today said something along the lines of 'Thank you for loving me and my sister.' She thought it was wonderful when I hugged Dorothy yesterday! As for me, well I love both girls with all my heart, there simply isn't any other way of putting it.

What happens from here is anybody's guess. In case Immigration decides to be difficult I have come up with a rather complicated and long term but workable solution which I talked over with Belle today. The idea is a 'last ditch' one if all else has failed but it would work and it would be legal. The idea is simply that if we can't get Dorothy PR status in Australia through any other means then a couple of divorces and a marriage would solve the problem – that is how far we are prepared to go to get her here – Belle thinks as a last resort it is a good idea but of course Dorothy would have to agree too. It really would only be considered if there was no other way but I am convinced that it would be successful.

The next major event is Dorothy coming over in January 2009. We should have good internet access both before and afterward so

arrangements and then parting may be made a little easier this time round – although thinking about the parting side of it – that is NEVER going to be easy!

As for Dorothy's trip, I am starting to work out all the things we want to show her. Now might be a good time to start a list: (no particular order here yet). (Dorothy – you can look some of these place names up on the net if you want to find out about them first).

- 1) Fishing in the boat along the Blackwood River near of Alexandra Bridge. Picnic.
- 2) Fishing in the Hardy Estuary near Augusta.
- 3) Sight seeing at Augusta and Cape Leeuwin. Fish & chips.
- 4) Margaret River and the coastline. Yallingup and Gracetown. Swimming.
- 5) Boranup Forest. Picnic.
- 6) Visiting the vineyards, cheese factories, chocolate factory, berry farm and other similar places.
- 7) Cape Naturaliste and Dunsborough. Sight seeing.
- 8) Busselton. Swimming? Sight seeing, shopping.
- 9) Jewel cave and maybe one or two others in the area.
- 10) Bunbury and Australind. Sight seeing and shopping.
- 11) Nannup and the river pools. Swimming?
- 12) Donnybrook. Apple farm.
- 13) Pemberton and the karri forests. Places like Heartbreak Trail and the Warren River.
- 14) Big Brook Dam. Swimming.
- 15) Manjimup.
- 16) Windy Harbour.
- 17) Bridgetown.
- 18) Walpole and the Valley of the Giants.
- 19) Collie, Collie River, Wellington Dam. Swimming.
- 20) Mandurah and Rockingham on the way down or on the way back.

That's a good enough start.

Well I've been drivelling on too long again and it is now 11:29 pm so I had better get ready for bed.

December 2nd 2008 (Tuesday)

I am really starting to stress out now as the worries about the bus, travelling south and missing Dorothy all combine making me unsettled and finding it difficult to think straight. I have managed to lose the scissors at the moment and my thoughts are all over the place. (Really did lose those scissors and had to go and buy more...)

Time got away from us and we only got down to the internet café just before 10am (our phone's free hour is 9am-10am) but as I got on to the net to read Dorothy's latest emails Belle got on the phone just before 10am so that we could talk to her.

It was lovely to hear her voice but the phone line wasn't as good as it could have been and I had a bit of difficulty catching some words. Even so, hearing her calmed me down a bit and Belle knew I needed to hear Dorothy's voice today.

The best news is that Dorothy has booked her flights and we will see her on January 25th. We will probably have to book a motel for the night somewhere along the route to Cowaramup so we will get some info today and select something suitable. We need to book ahead of time as the 26th is Australia Day and it is a long weekend.

Flight info:

25th January 2009	Depart KL	Flight: D7 2714	@ 0800 Hrs	Arrive Perth: 1450 Hrs
15th February 2009	Depart Perth	Flight: D7 2715	@ 1605 Hrs	Arrive KL: 2105 Hrs

After reading Dorothy's email relating the Nov 30, I do have one little admission to make ☺ I deliberately didn't use up all the Lomani cologne and left a bit there as I suspected she might just sniff it as a reminder. I didn't expect her to sniff my sweaty T shirt though – but Belle did! Belle said that Dorothy might even spray some of the cologne on a pillow and then cuddle it, lucky pillow ☺☺

The days are passing quickly enough at the moment but I don't much like the evenings – too much time to sit and think and even though Belle is here, there is still a feeling of loneliness. This weekend will probably be the worst time as that would normally be the time that Dorothy spends with us.

I am hoping we get some more of Dorothy's journal over the next couple of days as if we leave on Friday then we won't have internet access again for a while and there isn't much of her writing to keep us going yet.

We will probably postpone Christmas this year and have all the usual Christmas fare when Dorothy comes over. Not that we do much more than have Christmas dinner anyway but it would be much nicer to have it with her.

I have almost finished a disc with about 6 hours of Australian documentaries so I will try and get that off in the post tomorrow.

My Malaysian souvenir (IE. the cough) is still going strong and I have started taking vitamin C again in the hope it will help.

December 3rd 2008 (Wednesday)

I did think that as each day passed and we get closer to seeing Dorothy again that the empty feeling inside would start to fade away a bit – it hasn't – it just gets worse.... Perhaps once we are on the road and moving south things will get a little better, I hope so as I am so very sad at the moment.

Hmmm, ok my brain wasn't working when I wrote the last email and gave the address for Cowaramup. I checked with Belle and it

should be: 64 Curtis Street, Cowaramup, W.A. (Where did the other address come from?? I must be going bonkers.)

Countdown: 7 weeks 3 days...

I wish I could get myself motivated. We are supposed to be on the move the day after tomorrow but I still have to check all the tyre pressures, wash all the bird poop off the car as it has been sitting under a tree for two months and has about 5 kilos of the stuff on the bonnet, start packing things away and make sure everything is tied down and folded up correctly. The gas bottle needs refilling, then comes the car plus the 3 x 20 ltr jerry cans of diesel and a 10 ltr fuel container of petrol for the generator. I haven't even checked the generator is running yet.... My mind is not on anything properly at the moment... have to get into gear tomorrow or we will never get away. Need a new ratchet tie down strap for the boat trailer. Also get some info on motels in the Perth area heading towards the south west.

Dorothy's plane comes in at 14:50 which in real time is 13:50 because of daylight saving. Take about 45 minutes to clear customs etc and we should have 4 hours of daylight to start heading south. This probably won't be enough to get all the way down to Cowaramup but allowing about 70 kilometres an hour that's around 280km... checks map...

Meanwhile... a phone call from my girlfriend! Yay! It lifts my spirits up just to hear her voice, even if it is breaking up a bit on the phone ☺

Well back to that map... Cowaramup is actually less than 300km from Perth so with a bit of luck we just might make it before nightfall. Traffic shouldn't be too bad as everyone who is going away for the long weekend will already be where they want to be by Sunday night. This trip definitely comes under the heading of 'suck it and see' – Translation – this is Aussie slang for, I don't know what the result might be but I'll try it anyway ☺

I guess we'll get some idea of how long the trip will take as we have to drive up in the morning anyway to collect Dorothy. At least the car should be pretty empty as we will unpack it once we get to Bec's place. Oh, have to remember to email Bec and tell her that Dorothy is now booked 25-Jan to 15-Feb. I think they will be very eager to meet her.

Steve and Bec are another couple we have met who we immediately got on well with. We didn't get much of a chance to spend time with them last year but I think given the opportunity we would be good friends.

They say you should never wish time away as you will never have that time again but stuff it! I wish the next 7 weeks would fly as if they were only 7 hours....

December 4th 2008 (Thursday)

Well the S.A.T. hearing was a complete waste of time. They have not supported us and now we expect to just have to walk away from the bus. If things were in a more advanced state with regard to getting Dorothy over here and we had a home organised then there might be some point in trying to salvage some of the things down there, as it is it could be months or even years to get things sorted out so we have no choice but to just walk away from everything in the bus and shed.

The worst part isn't so much the loss of material goods (even though there is around \$25,000 worth of things there plus bus, shed & trailer) it is the loss of personal items like photographs, documents and all sorts of bits and pieces that can't be replaced.

Well we just have to put it behind us and look to the future, after all we lost just about everything once before and managed to survive and now we really do have something to live for.

It's funny when you read back through a journal like this and see how long things took to evolve. When Belle and I first fell in love and decided that we were meant for each other it took three weeks. Looking back at what I have written since we met Dorothy I have realised that I knew I was in 'trouble' after just 2 weeks and 4 days. October 15th was really the time I knew I was getting very emotionally involved. It was the Penang trip that made me realise that I would have to eventually say something and the Malacca trip that made my mind up.

I guess I have to stop worrying too much about the whys and wherefores of all this and just be grateful. After all not very many men get to be in love with two wonderful women at the same time and not get into terrible trouble because of it ☺

Well tomorrow we are off down south again. We are still going to Wandering to start off with and from there we will go and see if the bus is still there or not. If we can at least manage to salvage the personal belongings, especially the photos that we want to show Dorothy as well as some of the electrical goods and the split system air conditioner it won't be too much of a loss. All we can do now is hope.

Time to make a list of what we want to salvage if possible:

Art supplies - pencils, pastels, paints, paper, Bed base, bread maker, Books cooking, Books craft, Rotisserie, Can opener electric, CDs music, Clothes, coffee maker, Craft supplies - Cross stitch etc, Cutlery, good pots pans, Filing cabinet contents, Food grinder electric, Food processor, small Fridge 240v, Iron, Laminator, pie maker, Storage boxes, toaster, Waffle maker, Cooker 2 burner & grill, computer printer/scanner, Computer speakers, Ice cream maker, Jig saw, Sander, Vacuum cleaner, Stamp collection, photographs, Belle's makeup, perfumes and jewellery.

I noticed in Dorothy's last email she said 'I'm glad that Belle is stronger than I am when it comes to this. I fail terribly when I am alone.' but Belle isn't doing all that well either.

Dorothy, if you thought she was emotional and cried a lot when we were over there then that was nothing compared to what she is like since she has been home. She now cries at almost any little thing and I know every time she thinks of you so far away over there she is being torn apart inside, actually so am I. We are doing our best to look forward to January 25th but it is still such a long way away and we miss you so much..... Not having you near to us is probably one of the worst things we have ever experienced in our lives, we both love you so very much, it hurts to be without you.

We just have to find a way to be together, I don't know how we will be able to bear it otherwise. I wish we could be stronger but we are just too soft inside.....

December 5th 2008 (Friday)

4am and I can't sleep, fairly normal when we are about to move on after being in one place for a long time. I am trying to remember all the things that need to be checked each time we move but there are other things on my mind this time as well.

Check list:

- Fill diesel tank
- Fill jerry cans
- Fill 10 ltr petrol for generator
- Check tyre pressures car and van
- Check oil, water, power steering, clutch in car
- Clean car windows
- Check all ratchet straps
- Bring down TV antenna
- Lock all windows
- Close top vents
- Pack up sat dish
- Fill water tanks
- Check porta potty
- Put fridge door lock on
- Put TV away
- Put computer away
- Put freezer in travelling position
- Put picture on bed
- Pack camp kitchen
- Pack chairs
- Pack black tank and bin
- Put cover on air conditioner
- Check annexe is in travelling position
- Pack up any loose objects inside
- Roll up power cords
- Roll up water hose

I think I will be glad to finally get moving, at least it will feel like we are moving closer to where Dorothy will be soon.

This awful cough I have continues unabated and it has even been worse over the past couple of days. I have taken all sorts of things to try and rid myself of it but nothing works.

We were away by 8:30am (really 7:30 cos of daylight saving) and drove until 6:30pm. A loooooong tiring day but we managed to get further south than we had planned and stopped for the night at Cliff Head North a bit to the south of Dongara. So far we have it to ourselves and we are parked right next to the ocean. I am looking forward to the day when we can all travel round like this as there are so many places for us to show Dorothy.



You can't get much closer to the sea than this and not be in it!

We will probably get to Wandering tomorrow as we are only around 450 kms away now. The wind today was terrible. Very strong and blowing directly at us from the south. Going across the Greenough flats we were barely making 60 kilometres an hour.

www.wanowandthen.com

We do have phone reception here even though we are a fair way from Dongara. I sent a couple of SMSs to Dorothy so I hope she doesn't get fed up with all the messages ☺

Belle was getting the inside of the van set up while I was sorting out the generator and when I came inside I knew something was wrong. She had just put Dorothy's pictures up again on the back shelf and burst into tears. So much for 'I'm glad that Belle is stronger than I am.'

12:33am – I have terrible coughing fits, almost non-stop. Can't sleep, can't lie down, head in awful pain and throat very sore. Tried everything but can't get any relief. Just don't know what to do for relief! It has never been this bad before. Finally had to go out and sit in the car so Belle could get some sleep. So cold I had to come back after a few hours.

December 6th 2008 (Saturday)

There really isn't any point in heading further south until Monday so we are going to sit at Cliff Head for the weekend. I am not really in a fit state to drive anyway.

The cough is a little better this morning but head and throat are still bad.

Worked out how to send emails via the phone but haven't get the Hotmail smtp data & stuff yet to enable me to download. Also not sure how to send text from laptop to phone yet so have to test and see. (Test worked ok so I can now send journal entries without being actually on the net, just need to be in mobile phone range.)

Dorothy: Thanks for cough remedies, don't have many ingredients with us but will try what we have. Am trying to send this file as an attachment to see if I can send journal entries over the phone. I won't be able to receive anything from Hotmail until I get all the relevant mail server info next time I get on line.

Rang Dorothy this morning but Belle had to do most of the talking as my voice is almost gone from all the coughing. We have the Bluetooth speaker set up now so I could hear her clearly and I really do love to hear that voice! Have been messaging back and forward all morning, oh for the day when there is no need for sending messages and she is here with us for good...

It was nice and calm this morning but the wind is back up now. Not much to do but sit and look at the sea – happens to be a favourite past-time of mine anyway, so not so bad.

Wish I had more of Dorothy's journal to read, I have read the first bit several times now and I am looking forward to more <hint hint>.

We sat and listened to some music this afternoon and everything was fine until the Carpenters song 'when I fall in love' came on. Our thoughts immediately went back to last week and the girls singing this song together and we just broke down and cried and cried and cried.....

While we are really looking forward to seeing Dorothy in January, in the back of our minds is the question; what on Earth is going to happen when she goes away in February? Each separation is going to be harder than the last and I just don't know how we will cope.

The ABC has given me the go ahead to contact other media outlets about the story and the fact that we want Dorothy in Australia so I have already started doing that. If there isn't any positive news from Immigration in the post when we get back down south then I will write to the Minister again and send a copy of the interview showing just how important it is that the girls are together. Surely there just has to be some compassion left in the world.

Belle mixed up one of the cough remedies that Dorothy sent this morning (thank you sweetheart) it was the almonds, butter and sugar and this seems to be quite effective. It is such a relief to be able to stop coughing for a while even though I can't lie down yet without going into spasms of coughs. I hope I do manage to get some sleep in the next couple of nights as we still have a fair drive ahead of us on Monday.

Well 1 week down and 7 to go. Perhaps once we pass the half-way point things will start to cheer up a bit. Hard to believe that this time last week we were still over there. I guess I should be happy that we live in a world of aeroplanes and not sailing ships! Hardly a waking hour goes by without us thinking or talking about Dorothy – pretty much the same as when we were still over there.

Hi Dorothy, Belle has finally managed to get around to using her laptop and has written the following to you:

My dearest sister Dorothy,

How I have missed you so! Today Marc played Karen Carpenter's "When I fall in love" and Cliff Richard's and Sarah Brightman's "All I ask of you" and you weren't here to accompany me so I really couldn't sing the songs as they were playing. How I love you so even if it's only sisterly love.

I received a Pharmacy Direct brochure in our mail and whilst writing out my order, am thinking of you. I am going to buy you some hair lotion that promotes hair growth for people with hereditary hair loss. Also two containers of 1000mg fish oil containing 400 capsules each for you to take back with you as they are very cheap here compared to the stupid prices in your pharmacies over there. Here fish oil capsules are not allowed to be sold unless they have been tested for the absence of mercury and other impurities so even though the container may not specifically say so, you can rest assured that it has.

Is there anything else that you would like from our pharmacy here before I put through the order? The promotions in the brochure last till the beginning of Jan 2009 so as long as I have time to phone through my order before then, it should not be a problem. Please SMS a list with Ringgit prices and I'll see if a) my pharmacy stocks the product and b) if it is cheaper to buy over here. Since I deal directly by mail order most of the items I order are even cheaper (up to 50%) than buying the product from any other pharmacy here at the shopping centres. Because of the Christmas/New Year period the sooner you can send me a list of the things that you want, the better as it takes a week from order to delivery as the items come from the other side of Australia to us.

By the way, my pharmacy did not have any hair colour by Revlon listed so it must be something "new" or unavailable here. Thank you so much for thinking of me when you saw the advertised special.

You know...even if we lose all our property on the farm, I don't really care anymore. The most important thing was finding you and now that we've found you, you my darling sister, gives me the strength to carry on. Marc and you mean everything to me...something that money or all the materialistic things in this world cannot replace. Even if I lose my mother's necklace or the eternity ring Marc bought, it is nothing compared to the love I have found in you.

Marc found some very interesting material on the Net when he was looking for information on Australian citizenship. He intends on becoming an Australian citizen at last. After reading the material I would go to any lengths to have you here with us and if you can read my mind you may guess what that is.

Don't worry about the cost of our calls to you. We do it in our "free hour" and go via a Perth Tel. number which then connects us to you. As long as our call is less than 20 min. between 8am-9am (Malaysian time) our network charges nothing and the money cost only comes off my \$10 prepaid phone voucher. When we phoned you yesterday my phone voucher held 1,800 min on it. When I phone you next we'll see how much of that is left and whether a connection fee was also taken off the \$10.

Marc reckons SMS, EMS or emails should not cost much either. We won't know till we get our phone bill but I've covered ourselves by putting \$100 on our phone. As for the prepaid phone voucher, I bought that on the 30th Dec. at the airport's newsagent and it lasts for 3 months or for 6 months from last recharge. I think this is far better than Digi's conditions, don't you?

Anyway I must start cooking dinner, a simple meal of pasta with a garlic, onion, fresh tomato and bacon sauce. Quite yummy.

Love you heaps and heaps. Wish I could hug you from way over here. Rosabelle..xxx..

Marc here again....

Belle asked me to include the information I found on the Australian Citizenship site below. Makes for interesting reading I think....if all else fails we can get you here this way.....

"Prospective Marriage Visa (Subclass 300)

About this Visa

This visa allows you to enter Australia and marry your intended spouse (fiancé(e)) within the visa's nine (9) month validity period. Your fiancé(e) must be one of the following:

- an Australian citizen
- an Australian permanent resident
- an eligible New Zealand citizen.

Who is this visa for?

This visa is for you if you want to enter Australia on the basis of your relationship with your partner. Your partner must be one of the following:

- an Australian citizen
- an Australian permanent resident
- an eligible New Zealand citizen.

How much will this visa cost?

There is an application charge for this visa. This will usually not be refunded if your application is unsuccessful, or if you decide to withdraw your application after you have lodged it. The application charge covers you and all family members included in your application.

See: Partner Visa Charges

What does the visa let me do?

With this visa, you:

- must enter Australia before you marry your fiancé(é)
- may leave and re-enter Australia a many times as you wish before your visa ceases (nine (9) months after visa grant)
- can work in Australia
- can apply for a Spouse visa in Australia after you marry your fiancé(é)
- can study, but you will not have access to government funding
- may use Australia's medical expenses and hospital care assistance scheme, Medicare, but only if you are in Australia and have already applied for a Spouse visa.

Partner Visa Options

Partners of Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents or eligible New Zealand citizens may apply to enter and/or remain permanently in Australia. Partners include:

- people intending to get married
 - married (de jure) partners
 - de facto partners
 - interdependent partners (including those in a same-sex relationship).
- If you are in Australia

Spouse temporary visa (subclass 820) and permanent visa (subclass 801)

For people to stay in Australia with their partner, who must be an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen. If two years after you apply the spousal relationship is ongoing, a permanent visa may be granted.

Interdependency temporary visa (subclass 826) and permanent visa (subclass 814)

For people to stay in Australia with their partner, who must be an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen. If two years after you apply the interdependent relationship is ongoing, a permanent visa may be granted. This visa is generally for people in a same sex relationship.

If you are outside Australia

Partners of Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents or eligible New Zealand citizens may apply to enter and/or remain permanently in Australia. Partners include:

people intending to get married

married (de jure) partners

de facto partners

interdependent partners (including those in a same sex relationship).

Spouse Temporary Visa (Subclass 309) and Permanent Visa (Subclass 100)

For people from overseas to enter and stay in Australia with their partner, who must be an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen. If two years after you apply the spousal relationship is ongoing, a permanent visa may be granted.

Prospective Marriage Visa (Subclass 300)

For people from overseas to enter Australia, then marry their fiance(e). Their fiance(e) must be an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen. Once married, holders of this visa can then apply to remain permanently in Australia.

Interdependency Temporary Visa (Subclass 310) and Permanent Visa (Subclass 110)

For people from overseas to enter and stay in Australia with their partner, who must be an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen. If two years after you apply, the interdependent relationship is ongoing, a permanent visa may be granted. This visa is generally for people in a same sex relationship."

Food for thought anyway.....

Well I guess I now have to call myself an ex-atheist, why? Because every day I pray to God to keep my Dorothy safe. Perhaps not the biggest prayer anyone has ever said but certainly the most heart felt. What a change! Six months ago I would never have believed any of this and now my life is completely different and better than I ever imagined.

Last bit for today, we have decided that the Romance fragrance that Dorothy gave to Belle to remember her by isn't as evocative as the Brut she used to put on in the SB apartment. Sadly we haven't seen the same sort of Brut over here, maybe just as well or we might just sit down and cry some more when we smelled it ☺

December 7th 2008 (Sunday)

I finally got some sleep last night and am feeling much better today. The cough doesn't seem as bad as it was so maybe the almond mixture has made a difference. Not much to do today but sit and look at the sea and think about Dorothy. It was about this time last week that we parted. I knew that once I put my arms around her that I would never want to let her go and in my heart I am still holding her tight.

The image of her standing there on the street with tears in her eyes as the cab pulled away and looking through the back window of the taxi as she vanished from sight still haunts me.

Neither of us are coping with this separation all that well. No, that isn't right, we simply are not coping at all. Everything seems so difficult and takes too long to get sorted out. We feel alone, isolated and helpless. We have written to all sorts of people but either no one can help or no one bothers to get back to us. I don't think anybody understands how distressing this situation is becoming.

It has only been a week now since we left Malaysia but we are disconsolate and despairing. Despite the fact that we have each other, we are so lonely and sad. The world has lost all its colour for us and we don't know who to turn to for help.

It just isn't possible for us to mentally cope with the idea of it taking months if not years to get Dorothy permission to come and live in Australia. Chris Evans could change all our lives with the simple stroke of a pen so why does it need to take so long to even start the process? What we need is a miracle!

Doesn't anybody understand just what it means for these girls to be separated once again after only being together for two months? They desperately need each other and being apart like this is simply soul destroying. Surely there has to be somebody out there who has a heart and can help?

Unfortunately the empty feeling I first wrote about on December 3rd is becoming a gaping chasm.

The trouble is that we all just seem to fit perfectly together. Never before in my life has anything ever felt as good as being with the two girls. Even though life with Belle has always been wonderful, being with both Dorothy and Belle is just that much more special. Now being without one half of the pair just seems wrong and I know Belle feels pretty much the same way. It is hard to say which one of us is suffering more.

I always knew leaving Dorothy in Malaysia was going to be tough but I had no idea just how much pain would be involved until the time came to say goodbye. Normally sitting in the van by the sea is a time of great enjoyment for us but until we have Dorothy back in our

lives I don't think anything is going to make us happy again.

We are utterly miserable at the moment. When Belle reads the journal she bursts into tears and re-reading it myself I just about do the same thing. This is all like some sort of horrible torture. We have something we desperately want and need within our sight but held just out of our reach.

December 8th 2008 (Monday)

We are still very depressed and fed up but at least today was taken up mostly by driving. We have driven over 1050 kilometres since we left Carnarvon and we are finally at Wandering where we expect to be until after the New Year.

We have to think very seriously about how things are going to progress in future with regard to going to Malaysia. I had no idea just how emotionally traumatic this was going to be for both of us and if Dorothy leaving in February is as bad as I think it is going to be, then we are going to have to question whether these visits are a good idea or not. Deciding not to visit would be an incredibly difficult thing to even consider but we also have to think about what this will eventually do to our lives and our mental health.

I don't think Belle could handle the idea of having to go through the rest of her life without her sister by her side but I know how much it cost her to leave Dorothy this time and each time it happens the pain will just grow and grow until it consumes her. She is in a terrible state now, she cries at almost any little thing and come February I am going to have a complete 'basket case' on my hands, even if I am not one myself by then. Belle was just so happy over there and to see her in pain like she is now is almost unbearable. (Not to mention the fact that I am completely disconsolate myself.)

At the moment we both feel lost because Dorothy is flip-flopping again about the idea of coming out to live in Australia and I don't know if we are strong enough to continually go through these devastating separations. If Dorothy could make up her own mind then at least we would have some certainty in our own lives. All the effort we are going to in contacting the government agencies, papers, TV, magazines etc. etc. could all just turn out to be worthless if Dorothy decides to stay where she is. It is tough enough to keep going with just the immigration issue to worry about but now with Dorothy appearing to have yet another change of heart, well I just can't describe how that makes us feel.

Dorothy just can't seem to accept that her marriage went down the toilet years ago and although living here might not be the answer to all her prayers, surely 80% of something is better than 100% of nothing which is all she has over there. Perhaps when she gets here in January she will finally understand how much better life could be over here.

As for her children, Kxxxx, unfortunately, is just a waste of space but we both saw some real promise in Kaaaaaa. The girl has brains and ambition and if she is left to stifle in the dump she lives in now who knows what her future is going to be. She, like her mother, deserves a better life than that. We only hope that her mother has the sense to see that coming over here will be of benefit to more than just herself.

I am now starting to ask myself the question, 'Is finally finding Dorothy the blessing it first appeared to be?' The one thing I feared from the first time we knew we had found her was that if the girls did not bond that any hope left in our lives would be extinguished. I never imagined that hope may be destroyed because they bonded too strongly and couldn't let go. The fact is that we have bonded more strongly than I ever thought would be possible and now without her in our lives we are simply incomplete. I'm not sure that living life like that is even worth while.

The words of the saying; 'Be careful what you wish for, it might come true' now ring in my ears. I don't want the best thing that ever happened in our lives to end up being the worst.....there is only so much pain you can take in life.

At the moment I just feel emotionally exhausted. I have to get on to other topics.....

There is good phone reception here and a Telecentre that opens on Monday, Wednesday and Friday so I can at least get on the net from time to time.

Time to go and have a shower now as we haven't had a proper wash since Friday...yucky!

Just too tired and fed up to write anything more for a while, it is all becoming very difficult to deal with, I need a break from all this.

December 9th 2008 (Tuesday)

Too depressed to write today.

December 10th 2008 (Wednesday)

Last night we got a message on the phone from the caravan park saying 'we know where you are' and this morning when we drove out of the park we are in our car caught fire. I managed to get the fire extinguisher out and put the fire out before too much damage was done but looking at it once the fire was out it was obvious that someone had deliberately damaged the wiring.

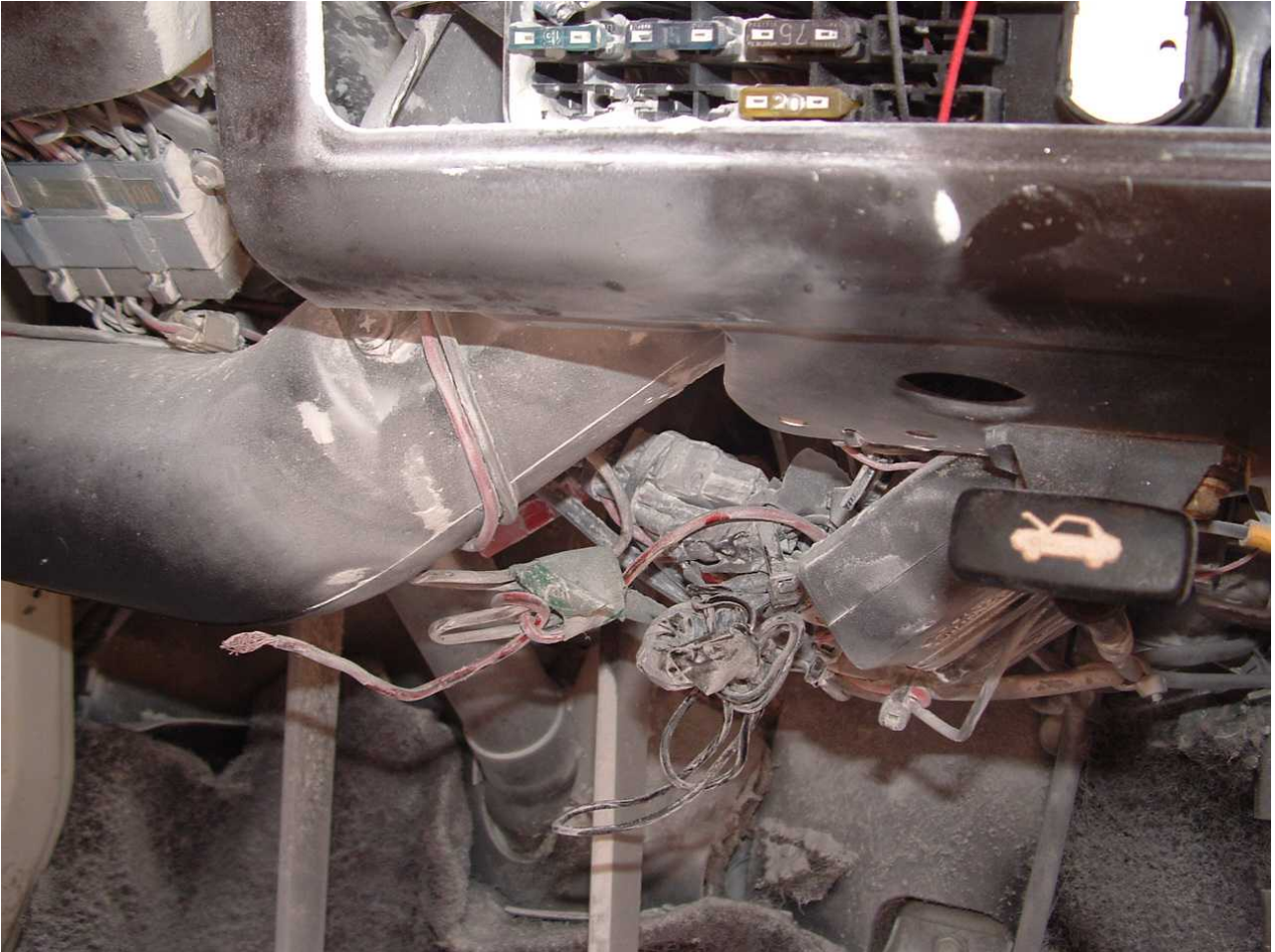


Photo of the wires that had been tampered with

We have called the police and are waiting for them to turn up but I doubt they will do anything. We have to get the car fixed which is going to be a hassle as we are a long way from the nearest workshop but everything will get sorted out before you are due to arrive so don't worry about that.

Meanwhile we are stranded until the car can be sorted out and of course Belle is very worried. In view of what has just happened I think we are simply going to abandon the bus and get out of here as soon as possible.

The police finally turned up at about 3pm and took pictures of the car. I doubt anything will ever get done about it but at least with the police report number we can claim the damage on insurance.

December 11th 2008 (Thursday)

The car has been towed away now to be repaired but we will be without it for at least a week – if we are lucky. We can't find anyone with the right equipment to move the bus so we don't know what to do at present. It really might be simpler to just get our personal belongings and abandon the rest. It is getting just too difficult to sort out.

There are no shops in Wandering but we do have enough supplies to last us a week or two. Lets hope the car doesn't take any longer.

December 12th 2008 (Friday)

Not a lot going on at the moment except for sending paperwork to lawyers. Idiots at the farm sent a fax to the Telecentre saying we have until 22nd to remove the bus or they will sell it.

December 13th 2008 (Saturday)

While I might like the peace and quiet out here at Wandering it doesn't have much else going for it. No shops and nothing to do in town. Without the car it is going to be a pretty boring weekend.

Nearly two weeks gone now since we were with Dorothy. At least on the up-side that means two weeks closer to seeing her again.

We phoned Dorothy again this morning and managed to have a bit of a serious chit chat about the next step we want to take with regard to the bus, getting a house etc. We also then got on to 'other' things and that girl made me blush again. I think both Dorothy and Belle rather enjoy saying things that they know will start me blushing. Funny after all this time being with Belle and being rather broad minded about most things that these girls can still get me feeling like I am a teenager again. I do so love to hear Dorothy's voice on the phone

but each time the call has to end a feeling of loss accompanies having to hang up.

I know Belle misses her sister terribly but I think it is even more difficult for me. Really weird when you think about it because I have Belle here but it is something I can't really put into words.

I do long for the day when we are all together and nothing can separate us again.

We are expecting the first hot day of the season tomorrow which just goes to show how quickly it can go from fairly cold to hot. Even though there isn't much to do here it is rather nice to sit outside in the afternoon and look across the paddock to the hills and just have a sip or two of wine as the sun goes down.. Of course as pleasant as it might be there is still one thing missing.



From the phone call today it seems plain that Dorothy wishes pretty much the same as I do that somehow she could come here and just stay on. If only dreams could come true that easily. Funny that the car (fully loaded) carries 3 people and the van sleeps 3, if you were tempted to believe in fate you might start to have rather strange thoughts about that. As I said before, no harm in dreaming I suppose. Running away together would be completely irresponsible and I suppose not feasible in the real world but as an idea it is incredibly romantic.

December 14th 2008 (Sunday)

6:30am and the sun is already up. Another rather long boring day ahead. Well we do have satellite TV, I have work to do on the computer and we inside of the van needs a clean so I can't say we are completely without things to occupy us. Just seems like time drags on days like this.

Funny, around 7am I started to feel rather sad and melancholy. As nice bright sunny morning with the birds singing outside and all of a sudden I just got this unpleasant feeling. My mind must be going back a couple of weeks to the time we left. I hope the feeling passes soon.

Later...

Not the best day, we are both very despondent at the moment. We both miss Dorothy so much and getting things to start moving in the right direction just seems so difficult sometimes. I have to channel some of Dorothy's positive energy and spirit to help keep me going. We both know that nothing worth while ever comes easily so somehow we just have to keep pushing forward and ignore all the negative things that keep happening.

Only 3 weeks now until we are due to move to Cowaramup and once we are there we will be past the half way point. At least this week we will find out if we get to salvage anything from the bus or not. Frankly I just don't care anymore whether we do or not, it is only 'things' and things aren't important and most can be replaced.

I know it is too early to be letting it become a major concern but this is going to start to become a bigger and bigger issue and that is how do we cope come February 15? This relatively short separation has bordered on being unbearable, if this is so bad how do we then face months apart? I simply have no answer for that at the moment.

One thing I think seems pretty unfair is the way time seems to change its nature depending on what you are doing. When we were with Dorothy the weekends used to just fly by, even though we all tried our best to stay up late. Now we are without her time is just dragging along.

15 December 2008 (Monday)

8:40am – the caravan park are now sending their friends over here to harass us. (Ray). We notified the police but nothing will happen as usual. Belle wants to move away from here so we have booked the tow truck to move the van tomorrow \$200.

16th December 2008 (Tuesday)

It would have to start raining the day we are going to move the van wouldn't it? We ended up going the wrong way to start with and the tow truck driver had to reverse the caravan up the road for about half a kilometre until he found a spot to turn round. Even then it wasn't easy. Finally arrived in Williams sometime after 10am. Thankfully Williams is much bigger than Wandering and at least has a general store. There is a medical clinic tomorrow so Belle has booked me in to see about this awful cough. It just will not go away!

Just 9 days to Christmas and then a month until we see Dorothy again. I think Christmas is going to be pretty sad and lonely this year.

17th December 2008 (Wednesday)

Sometimes it just feels like we are going backwards! The stupid insurance company has been mucking about and hasn't even sent an assessor out to look at the car yet and now it looks like work won't even get started until Friday. The way things are going we won't even get the car back until after Christmas.

We are completely helpless without the car as we can't get to the farm and rescue anything from the bus. We have been told that next Monday is the deadline before we lose the lot so what do we do? It really seems as though we are meant to just walk away from the bus and everything in it.

The Telecentre closes for two weeks over Christmas so the one decent life line we have for getting emails from Dorothy dries up over the period we most need to hear from her.

I took some pictures around Williams today and Belle's face in the one by the bridge just about sums up how we are feeling. This is going to be the most horrible Christmas of our lives. I am just so sick of everything at the moment, if only we could get some good news from somewhere, it just all seems to be bad right now.

Even the satellite TV isn't working properly as there are a bunch of trees that wave about and break the signal up. No TV and nothing meaningful to do <sigh>.

Life may not be meant to be easy but I didn't think it was meant to be bloody impossible!

20th December 2008 (Saturday)

4:23am – yes not sleeping again. At least this is the first time since we have been back that I have had this problem but Dorothy's last email has me all worked up.

I really wish I understood how the female mind works, then I don't think I'm an orphan with that wish.

Ok, let's take a few phrases and words from recent emails:

'Perhaps Marc should go back to Woolsworth and tell the security guard that his 'prophecy' did come true....Buy one, get one free...hehehe.'

'Marc, I really do love you in case you do not know and I am holding the urge to hug and kiss you coz firstly, I don't know what your reactions will be and secondly, I do sense that Belle might have a tinge of jealousy if I did express my feelings outright.'

'I am so so sorry my love to have put you in such a destitute state'

'A woman loves a man for a reason and it is usually because the man is caring and thoughtful. And that is what I have found in you.'

'Gee, this is really weird....2 women loving one man and vice versa and we're all happy about it..'

'Don't worry...with all the decency that we have, we sure won't end up like that Australian guy with the twin sisters, right?....Or will we???''

'all that I can say is that as a man, you are more than a friend.'

'Do hope the pics cheer you up a little Darling.'

'Marc, it is really wonderful that you are able to open up to me. This is what I have wanted to hear all along. '

'You were totally shattered, my love.'

Ok, maybe I'm not too bright when it comes to understanding women but I think that anyone reading the words above would be led to think that there is a lot more going on here than plain and simple friendship. For starters, being just friends you don't call someone 'my love' that is a term of great endearment – in fact there is hardly a term of greater endearment than that!

Then of course I get told that I am loved, but only as a brother-in-law, well from reading the quotes above I find that fairly hard to work out. It really is no wonder that I find all this so confusing. Actually, let's be really honest, I don't get it AT ALL, there are so many mixed messages, how am I supposed to understand what is going on?

Women drive me nuts sometimes! Why do they have to be so complicated?

I know also that being in love with two women at the same time is hardly normal. In fact it is very odd but how do you deny what you feel? I have always worn 'my heart on my sleeve' and I can't help showing my emotions.

Dorothy doesn't seem to understand all that much about being in love and just how powerful and overwhelming the feelings are. I guess I make things worse by being as emotional as I am and by saying exactly how I feel.

I know when I told her that as we 3 bonded more and more that each parting would get worse, that she got fairly disturbed, but it is still a fact and it applies to her as much as it does to Belle or to me. Each parting will be more and more painful, it is a fact, just because it is an unpleasant fact doesn't make it go away and it can't be ignored. There may well come a time when we simply cannot bear to be separated anymore and then something will have to give.

As for me not coping with things, well I'm not, but somehow I have to try and find a way to do so. I wonder just how well anyone in my situation would cope with the following:

1. I am in love with two women, one of whom I cannot be with and I know that it could take a long time for this to change. Life is now much more complicated than it was.
2. The one I am separated from could be severely ill without knowing it and is not taking proper care of herself and refuses to get the correct treatment if she requires it. She is pig headed and won't listen to reason but I don't love her any less for that, I just worry and worry about her state of health.
3. We are about to lose the majority of our possessions for the second time in our lives and despite going through all the correct channels, no one will help us.
4. Our car is still out of action and we have now been 11 days without it. My feeling is that the repairs are deliberately being held up.
5. We are now entering the Christmas period where it is impossible to do anything about anything. We are totally alone and we feel helpless.
6. We are trapped with nothing to do but worry about everything that is going on, we have little else to do.
7. I am preparing for the emotional stress that is going to happen when Dorothy goes back to Malaysia in February. There is no easy way to be separated from someone you are in love with, it hurts!

Does any of this mean that I wish I could turn back the clock and never find Dorothy? Of course NOT! How could I possibly wish such a thing?! Finding her has been somewhat traumatic in some ways, actually it has been both a dream and a nightmare. Do I wish she had been happily married? Of course I do, but she isn't. Do I wish I hadn't fallen in love with her, well my logical side does but I did anyway. Do I wish that all the other crap going on in our lives would just go away? Well I don't even need to answer that one.... Sometimes life is just a total bastard and no I don't know how to deal with it, but somehow, day by day, it gets dealt with.

I feel things very deeply, love, injustice, loneliness, desperation, and I express those feelings openly, that is just the way I am made. I find life very difficult at times, mostly because of the unfairness of it. If I was a total bastard and deserved to be miserable then perhaps I could accept it more easily but I try hard to be a nice person but it doesn't help, I still get crap rained down on me in a continual shit storm for no apparent reason.

Right at this point in time I just cannot see a light at the end of the tunnel, everything is black and I am just groping my way along trying not to fall into a nasty pit of some sort. This is my life at the moment and I can't sugar coat it and pretend that it isn't so.

There are times when I get so tired of life that I wish I had an 'off' switch so I could just get away from it all but then I remember the good things I have in my life, especially Belle, and I struggle through another day just for her sake.

Being without a job sucks! I find the endless monotony of one day just merging into another is soul destroying and meaningless. It did allow us the chance to go to Malaysia and be with Dorothy for 2 months and it gives us the chance to do so again but even so, I need something meaningful to do in my life and even working on the book doesn't give me the satisfaction I need.

I don't understand what is going on in my life at the moment and I don't know if it will lead to a better time or if things are just going to go on getting worse and worse. The last few years have had plenty of good times and plenty of bad ones. Finding Dorothy has been the high point of our lives but it has come with lots of complications. The Chinese curse; 'may you live in interesting times' could not be more apt when applied to my life.

Dorothy says she wants me to be open and honest about things but then when I am too open and too honest she takes fright and starts back pedalling at a hundred miles an hour. I am either all, or nothing. I either love 100% or I don't love at all, I open up 100% or I don't open up at all, I don't know how to be any other way.

At present I am in love with two wonderful women. Being separated from one of them is causing me all sorts of pain. If it wasn't love it wouldn't hurt so much and it BLOODY WELL HURTS! What can I do? I can't just say, well that is how things are so I won't worry about it and I won't feel pain. I don't tend to suffer in silence and if I am in pain I howl about it a lot! It is the only way I know of dealing with it. Bottling things up inside stifles your emotions and doesn't do any good.

As for sending this to Dorothy, well I don't think I can do so anymore as she just gets all freaked out when I say how I am really feeling. For the moment I think I need to break all contact with her and leave that to Belle, things are just getting too far out of control and I need time to settle down – although how that is supposed to occur I am not sure.

Losing the bus is frustrating and damned annoying because it is all so unfair but that pales into insignificance when it comes to worrying about Dorothy's state of health.

From what I can gather so far she contracted syphilis from a boyfriend about the age of 22 but it went undiagnosed until she was 30. This means there must have been some damage to her internal organs. There is no way to know yet if she still carries the bacteria but if she does she could easily fall ill and die within a very short space of time. If she falls ill in Malaysia, the Australian authorities WILL NOT let her in here. She will simply die over there with no one to love and support her. The stupid block-headed girl thinks that just because she doesn't feel ill that everything is ok, and that may not be the case at all. Somehow we have to make her understand that if the doctors here say she needs treatment then she has to drop EVERYTHING else and get the treatment she needs. We will pay for whatever needs to be done. I did not spend all that time looking for her just to watch her die now because she is too thick to get treated properly. If you do not have good health then you do not have anything. The blasted woman has to be made to understand this. She is

right at the age now where this disease could start to manifest itself and if it does we could have as little as two or three years together.

All this nonsense about being obligated to her employer drives me nuts. Just how obligated does she think they would be to her if 'push came to shove'. She would be booted out without a moment's hesitation.

All I want in life now is for Belle, Dorothy and I to be together. I pray that Dorothy's health is ok but until I know it is I will continue to worry.

For a change a note from Belle:

I really don't know what to do now and because Marc is so depressed about everything I don't even feel that he is giving me any support through this. I know he wanted to go and get our papers etc. but I fear that harm may come to us if we step on that farm or on our return, our caravan will be burning. What will we have left then? It's just not worth it.

I've been writing to a lawyer but being Christmas I suppose nothing can be done now anyway until after Christmas. Also as they are looking for us I suppose it would be better not to incite them further with a letter from a lawyer at this time. Anyhow by now, if what they say is true, they should be selling off our goods. I don't have a newspaper. I wonder if we should get one, even though the date is past (17th Dec) to see if they really gave us notice in it. At least then we'll have more proof if it boils down to a Court case later down the track.

It's really difficult when you don't know what your rights are and there's no one around to help or give you advice. I thought things such as this should all be done through a Court Order but then we don't know what's in our P.O. Box. If everything has been done properly then why I we still being harassed? Is it all bluff on their side just to make us mentally suffer (the last fax they sent)? I'll ring the repairer today and see what is happening. Maybe he wants me to pay him some money first before getting our car out to us as I'm sure that the Hemsells have told everybody we can't be trusted where money is to be paid.

Another thought- if the car is still at the repairers maybe it is safer there than by being here. If anything should happen to it whilst in the repairers care then the RAC or the repairer would be responsible and then someone will know that we're really being targeted. However if we had the car now and we were got at again we won't be able to prove a thing, just like the last time and then our future plans will certainly be up the creek. Maybe they want to find us so as to do even more damage than before which is why I would like to stay with the caravan and not leave it. If we get our car before we are due to leave here, we can't keep our eyes on it at night! Who knows what will happen when we take off again in it?

It really would be better to get our car the day we are leaving this place. I doubt that it will get towed here so it would have to be driven from Narrogin. At least someone else would be driving the car and if in that distance nothing goes wrong, then hopefully it is OK.

When we do get the car back it would be better to leave and go far away beyond reach. As I said to Marc this morning, now I wish I wasn't Chinese. I sure stick out like a sore thumb especially in a small Australian country town.

Maybe after Monday I should start paying daily here. We'll still get our CMCA discount and at the moment it's not cheaper paying by the week. Maybe Marc can give me his thoughts on this.

It would be good if Beck could have us earlier. After all last year we got there on the 22nd Dec I think. I wonder if I should try phoning and see what they say. I won't give the reason why of course and if they say we can, I'll see when the repairer can get our car to us.

.....

Sometime this afternoon I just went numb emotionally. I don't feel anything anymore. Perhaps this is the brain's way of trying to cope when everything becomes too much. I feel like I no longer want to be here, there just isn't any point in continuing to struggle against fate. Everything has gone wrong and it just keeps on getting worse and worse.

No one cares and no one is interested in what has been done to us, I don't have the strength to keep going like this. If there is no other way out then I guess I just have to shut all my feelings down and not care about anything that happens.

I promised Belle I would do nothing to harm myself but although I may not be physically dead, I am dead inside, I am simply an empty shell.

We lay in bed listening to love songs that would normally bring my emotions out and even though I know Belle is hurting, I feel nothing and I cannot do a thing about it.

She wants me to tell her that I love her and I know that somewhere I do but right now I just don't feel it, I feel nothing, blank, empty and hollow. I have nothing to give at all. Poor Belle is doing everything she can to bring me back but I don't even know where I am now.

22nd December 2008 (Monday)

I am finally coming back from the rather unpleasant place I have been for the past two days.

25th December 2008 (Thursday)

The journal is getting quite neglected at the moment in favour of just sending direct emails to Dorothy. The only event worthy of recording here anyway is the fact that the dispute over the bus now goes to court so we just wait and see what happens now.

January 1st 2009 (Thursday)

The lack of diary entries just indicates how boring it is being stuck in Williams.

January 3rd 2009 (Saturday)

Almost there, only one day before we finally get away from Williams. If I never see this place again it will be too soon.

List of things to do once we are at Cowaramup:

1. Get car sorted out ASAP. (Oil & volt meter, dash board and front spring).
2. Get trailer cross bar fixed. (PRIORITY) (done)
3. Get Belle's tooth fixed. (done)
4. See doctor about my cough. (done)
5. Get a webcam. (done)
6. Look up info on the net regarding:
 - a. Human rights
 - b. Lawyers
 - c. Citizenship
 - d. My passport renewal
 - e. Homeswest

Sort out caravan and unpack car as much as possible as soon as we can.

January 8th 2009 (Thursday)

I have been so busy in the past few days that I have neglected to keep the journal up-to-date. We finally got to Steve and Bec's place on Monday. No dramas on the way down but it took a couple of days to get sorted out. Bought a webcam and for the past two nights have been able to see Dorothy via the net.

Although it is really wonderful to see her I have to admit that once the connection is broken and she is gone I really don't feel very good at all. I have to try and stay as positive as possible but I don't know how long I can keep up a brave face.

January 24th 2009 (Saturday)

The great lack of journal entries over the past few weeks is accounted for by the fact that we have been spending at least 2-3 hours a night on the webcam with Dorothy. Nothing else much has captured our attention. Tomorrow she flies in and we should see her at around 3pm. Things have become complicated with Immigration who have stupidly said that as they were adopted, the girls are no longer legally related. This resulted in us going to the press and last week the story hit the Sunday Times. Tomorrow the Channel 7 show Today Tonight is going to be filming the girls, celebrities again for 50 seconds, and will be conducting an interview. We are staying up in Perth overnight at an apartment.

We pray that this will all have the desired effect of getting Minister Evans to do the right thing and give Dorothy the chance to spend the rest of her life with Belle.

January 25th 2009 (Sunday)

We met Natalie from Channel 7 at the airport and for the second time in a few months Dorothy and Belle were the subject of a TV camera as they reunited.

Today Tonight booked us in to Mounts Bay Village for the night (a very nice hotel) and did an interview with the girls at the hotel that seemed to go very well. Natalie was very sympathetic to our cause so now we just have to cross our fingers and hope that someone at Immigration or Minister Chris Evans will see sense and sort things out for us.

January 26th 2009 (Monday)

We had intended to take Dorothy around King's Park before heading back south but the park had been blocked off prior to the Australia Day celebrations so we gave up and took the freeway down to Rockingham. After a quick look at the coast we stopped off to say 'hi' to Mick and Jean and to let them meet Dorothy. Belle hid in the car and Dorothy and I walked up the drive, Jean fell for the trick and had no hesitation in hugging Dorothy as if she was Belle.

We didn't have too much time to spare and had to head off to Cowaramup after a short visit.

January 27th 2009 (Tuesday)

Belle had a dental appointment in Busselton at 8:30am so no sleeping in for Dorothy on her first day here. While Belle had to endure having needles and getting her teeth drilled, Dorothy and I went for a walk along the beach at Geographe Bay.

We have been getting gradually closer and closer during our chats over the internet and our walk was terrific as we held hands and chatted.

After a bit of shopping in town and a break for lunch we returned to the house and Dorothy spent the rest of the day settling in and getting to know her new surroundings.

We are all sharing a futon in the back room of the house and I was in the enviable position of lying between Belle and Dorothy. My heart skipped several beats when Dorothy took my hand and held on to it as we eventually drifted off to sleep. This is really the first time she has felt comfortable enough to reach out to me and it is an important milestone.



Dorothy picking plums

January 28th 2009 (Wednesday)

Before we rose for the day, Dorothy and I spent some time just cuddling in bed and although I have told her many times in writing that I love her, this morning I told her in person for the first time. I know this complicates her life but what else can I do, I love her and I want her to feel loved so I have no choice. She could only sigh and I understood why she was unable to do anything more.

A relatively quiet day spent mostly around the house was punctuated by a quick trip down to Gracetown and a short walk along the top of the cliffs.

An amazing moment and something I will remember for the rest of my life was when Dorothy kissed me for the first time tonight. This is all so strange but wonderful. She touched my face first the way Belle does and slowly we got closer until finally our lips touched for the first time. I can't put into words what this means to me, to be in love with both girls and now to have this relationship with Dorothy strengthening is quite unbelievable. One day over 4 months since we first met, even though this is happening to me I still can't quite accept that it is real.

Everything else in the world seems to have faded into the background, there is now only Belle and Dorothy, they are my world. I only hope I can manage to find some way of making Dorothy's life a happy one now that we seem to be destined to have her with us.

There are hard days ahead for everyone but now at last I really know where I stand and that gives me the strength I need to go on when we are apart.



January 29th 2009 (Thursday)

Time is passing blindingly fast, much, much too fast. This morning we lay in bed for a long time after we woke up, I just lay next to Dorothy holding her as close as I could. She needs love so much and I intend to give all I have to give to her. What a miserable empty

existence she has had so far, if only I can make up for that in some small way. The poor girl is still going through so much pain, even though she has us now, there are still stressful times ahead and I will be there for her in every way that I can.

Belle needs her sister and I need Dorothy with us every bit as much.

After breakfast we went in to Margaret River and then down to Prevally to have another look at the coast.

So where do we go from here? Dorothy has finally given in (even if not completely yet) to her feelings. I know how hard it is for her to let go of the logical stance she has tried to hold on to but in the end love will win through. I am just so happy that now she no longer seems to be worried about being close to me. I don't know quite where we go from here in our relationship as I am just as timid as she is about taking the next step. We both know what it means to do so. If it does happen then we will be 100% committed to each other, well I guess that will be easier for me as I already feel that way, but I know how much more difficult it could make it for her when she has to go back to Malaysia. I have to leave everything in her hands and I cannot make any move to take things to the next level. That has to be her choice.

Dorothy is currently sleeping on the bed near me as I type this, I look at her, fast asleep and happy and I know that making her happy and keeping her happy is now the major goal in my relationship with her.

January 30th 2009 (Friday)

Belle had an appointment in Margaret River and while she was there Dorothy and I just sat in the park and chatted.

January 31st 2009 (Saturday)

A rather hot day so we decided to head down to Canebrake Pool and have a swim. Dorothy got to experience first hand how bad corrugations on gravel roads can be here. A section of road was probably the worst for corrugations we have ever been down and it really shook the car up. The water at Canebrake was pretty cool but we all enjoyed a nice relaxing swim before stopping for lunch and then another short swim before heading back to the house.

Dorothy ended up feeling a bit ill once we got home but thankfully recovered quite quickly after a lie down.



A chilly swim

February 1st 2009 (Sunday)

Rest day spent just relaxing around the house and enjoying each other's company. Events have now moved to the ultimate level and although I still have to completely deal with that on a physical level, I am completely at ease emotionally.

I always thought that I would find it difficult if not impossible to be comfortable and at ease in a physical sense with anyone but Belle but I have found that I am just at ease with Dorothy, even though I am as yet not able to be 'completely' intimate. I think it is just a matter of time until that happens but being somewhat dysfunctional is disconcerting to say the least.

Being in a situation where you can be intimate with two women at the same time is just about every man's fantasy but the reality has turned out to be a little different. The emotional side is every bit as wonderful and fulfilling as I thought it would be but for the moment I have to admit that the physical side is the one giving me problems.

I don't know if it is because events have moved faster than I expected or if I am just not yet used to having an extra body there when making love. Whatever the cause I hope that I will find a way to deal with it as not being able to perform means that I worry about not being able to give what is expected of me and that in turn causes more worry.

I had actually thought that Dorothy might wait quite a while before making up her mind about becoming intimate but she seems to have made up her mind very quickly and now I worry a great deal about turning out to be a big disappointment.

February 2nd 2009 (Monday)

We took the boat down to Augusta to do a bit of fishing today and were lucky enough to land on a couple of patches where the fish were biting. Dorothy caught three fish and we came home with enough for a meal.

The Today Tonight story aired on TV today and we hope that it may just have some impact. Dorothy needs to be with us so we just have to keep plugging away no matter what happens. I can't see any future in the three of us living separate lives so somehow we have to find a way to be together.



The result of our first fishing trip

February 3rd 2009 (Tuesday)

Took Dorothy to Margaret River to see the doctor and organise to get her blood tests done. We will be a lot happier once we know that she is ok but real peace of mind won't come until she is with us in Australia.

February 4th 2009 (Wednesday)

Already half the time together gone, far too fast! Why can't we slow time up just a little?

We are off on a two night trip to Albany to show Dorothy a different part of the country. We have booked in at the Amity Motor Inn on Wellington St. Albany and it is quite reasonable at \$80 a night for 3 people.

The trip down was quite long and took us through Pemberton where we stopped off for lunch at the Gloucester Tree (a climbable fire lookout tree). Here we were surrounded by native birds all looking for a feed of our pies.



Poly want a pie

February 5th 2009 (Thursday)

A day spent seeing the sights of Albany including Frenchman Bay, Salmon Holes, The Gap, Natural Bridge, Emu Point, King George Sound, Mt. Melville lookout and more including a tour of the local shops. The time we have is far too short to show Dorothy much of the area but at least we did get the chance to show her something more than just the Margaret River area.



The girls on Albany town jetty

February 6th 2009 (Friday)

Back to Cowaramup via Walpole and Northcliffe. We stopped off at the Tree Top Walk to let Dorothy see some of the valley of the Giants and then gradually made our way back. Dorothy got her first opportunity to drive the cruiser and seemed to handle the big car very well.



Our wander through the trees

February 7th 2009 (Saturday)

Another rest day after the hectic driving of the past three days. We probably covered over 1000km since Wednesday morning so a break is needed by all of us. We all seem equally happy to just sit around the house and be together.

I finally got round to making the cake I promised Dorothy but it didn't exactly turn out to be that great, a little on the dry side but edible at least.

February 8th 2009 (Sunday)

The morning was fairly relaxed, we seem to spend rather a long time each day just lounging in bed together. Dorothy has been without love for so long that now she has found it she seems to be soaking it up like a dry sponge soaks up water. She seems so happy and I am overjoyed to be at least partially responsible for bringing some light into her previously dull existence.

We went to have a look at Jewel Cave & Hamelin Bay. Thankfully the stingrays were visiting the bay while we were there and Dorothy and I even went in for a swim. Once the rays started to appear where we were swimming we decided to call it a day and head home.



Dorothy with a stingray in the background

February 9th 2009 (Monday)

Rest day

February 10th 2009 (Tuesday)

Went down to Margaret River so that Dorothy and Belle could visit the hospital and have their blood taken for testing. Belle managed to forget the request form and we had to come back to Cowaramup to pick it up and then go back to Margaret River again. Dave called in, in the afternoon and got to meet Dorothy.

February 11th 2009 (Wednesday)

A very late sleep in this morning saw us get up only around mid-day, this was mainly due to a very late night which saw us finally go to sleep around first light.

The girls had an appointment to see the doctor in the afternoon so it was back to Margaret River yet again. Not all the results were in but we have found that Dorothy really needs to monitor her thyroid problem, her levels of thyroxin are far too low.

February 12th 2009 (Thursday)

Finally the girls got to spend the first birthday of their lives together. We wanted the day to be memorable so we went up to Busselton and had a rather fancy meal at a restaurant in Queen St. Prawns, scallops, mushrooms all featured prominently on the menu and afterwards we went down to spend a bit of time on the beach near Busselton Jetty.

It is hard to believe that the girls are 50 years old, no one who meets them believes it.



50th birthday – they don't look 50 to me!

February 13th 2009 (Friday)

We were hoping for some more test results for Dorothy today but now we have found that they won't be available until next week.

A lot happened this morning with regards to decision making. I have been trying not to put Dorothy under any pressure about leaving on Sunday and I did ask Belle to do the same but Belle just could not face her sister leaving again and continued to ask her to stay. I'm not sure what the final straw was, but Dorothy made a life changing decision this morning and has resigned from her job, changed her ticket home to April 7th and we have booked flights to go back with her.

The speed at which these things happen takes my breath away at times and now all three of us are on the same journey together. Everything is both quite amazing but also frightening as we don't have total control over the outcome. All we can do is hope and work toward an outcome that we all feel is the right way to go.

Personally I couldn't be happier about Dorothy deciding to stay longer. I am a little worried about how things are going to go once we get to Malaysia and she tells her family she is coming back to Australia again but all we can do is take one step and one day at a time.

February 14th 2009 (Saturday)

We had originally planned to go fishing on the Blackwood River today but the weather turned a bit strange so we have opted for another rest day instead and will go out tomorrow.

February 15th 2009 (Sunday)

Took the boat down to Alexandra Bridge and tried to find a fish or two that were willing to commit suicide. Only one fish was in the mood and it was well undersized so it got thrown back in. Once we decided to head home I somehow got my directions mixed up and instead of Alexandra Bridge we ended up at Molloy Island. Thankfully I had spare fuel and we turned around and went back up river to the boat ramp. I could see Dorothy having visions of being stranded in the bush and being eaten alive by rabid koalas or something but we made it back with plenty of fuel to spare.



At Alexandra Bridge

February 16th 2009 (Monday)

I think if I had been the one who made the decision Dorothy made on Friday then I would not be as calm and collected as she seems to be. She continues to surprise me with how she makes her decisions and then how she deals with things once she has done so.

If she hadn't made the decision to stay then she would have been back in Malaysia by now, how dreadful that would have been for all of us.

It is hard to ignore the fact that the situation the three of us find ourselves in is still very strange. I doubt many people would understand either how or why this has happened but I do know that Dorothy is happy. As long as both the girls are happy with how things are then that is all I care about.

A lot of people, men especially, probably have fantasies about loving two women but it is not at all what you think it might be like. A three way relationship involves 3 different egos all vying for space and affection and the responsibility for keeping everything in balance really is mine.

The biggest juggling act is finding time to be alone with each of the girls and not letting one feel neglected or abandoned. It is a very big responsibility and one I don't take lightly.

Dorothy and I are effectively on our 'honeymoon' as she puts it, at the moment. This morning for example we only managed to drag ourselves from bed around noon.

The girls are so similar in many ways but there are things in each others make up that are quite different. Belle is not as playful and mischievous as her sister. I wonder how Dorothy managed to hang on to such a playful side to her nature considering the years of emotional neglect she has suffered.

Just seeing the way she reacts to being loved makes me so sad that she did not find the right man to spend her life with in the beginning. All those years wasted on someone who could not or would not appreciate just how incredible she is. She is funny and has a good sense of humour, she is intelligent and although she says she doesn't know that much, she is inquisitive and has a good brain the same as Belle does. She also has self confidence and she is very sexy. All these things just wasted for so long, well not any more.

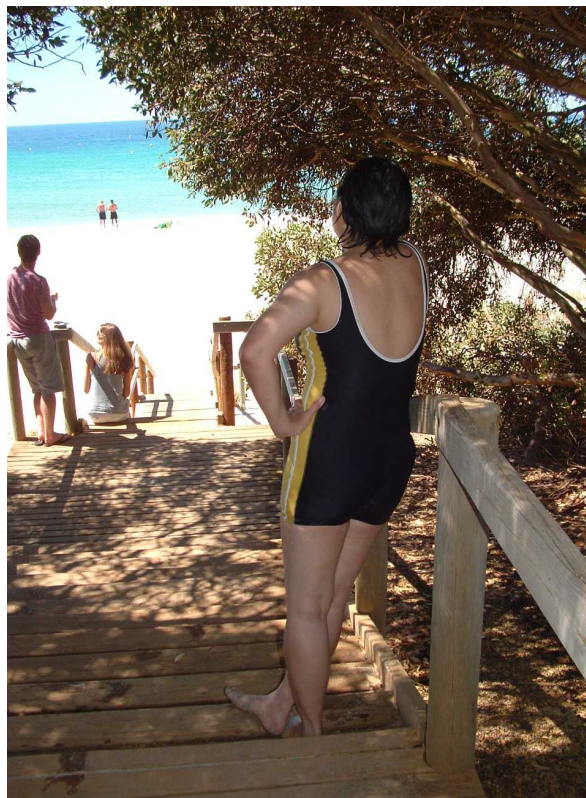
February 17th 2009 (Tuesday)

Belle had an appointment in Margaret River so Dorothy and I just spent the afternoon lounging in bed and chatting. Otherwise just another day around the house.

February 18th 2009 (Wednesday)

Belle had an appointment in Busselton so we all went up for the day and after doing some shopping we went along the coast to Eagle Bay. We found a nice spot for lunch where I didn't spot a large log under some dappled shade and proceeded to try (most unsuccessfully) to drive the cruiser over it. Thankfully there wasn't any damage – except to male pride.

Dorothy and I were again the ones to go swimming while Belle sat and watched from the shore but this didn't turn out to be the best idea as Dorothy ended up feeling ill.



Dorothy after the swim and starting to feel ill

February 19th 2009 (Thursday)

A quiet day at the house. Kxxxx and Lesley dropped in for a visit in the afternoon.

February 20th 2009 (Friday)

Since we are sitting in the middle of Western Australia's premier wine producing area we decided to take Dorothy around to some of the older wineries. As the girls both like very sweet wines (ports etc.) we limited our choices to those vineyards that produce that style.

These included Sandalford, Gralyns, Cullens, Juniper and woody Nook. We didn't go out with the intention of buying any wine but in the end we bought a bottle of Gralyns white port and a bottle of Juniper cane cut reisling. The second bottle ended up being somewhat more expensive than we thought as Belle mistook it for a full sized bottle when it was only a half size. It is now officially the most expensive bottle of wine we have ever bought.

The last place we called in to was Woody Nook and as they had a restaurant we stopped for lunch. The choice was a 'taste plate' plus house bread. A very good choice as all the food was interesting and tasty. Quite different from anything else we have tried in other places.



Outside Cullens Winery

February 24th 2009 (Tuesday)

The weekend was fairly quiet. Steve & Bec picked up the dogs on Sunday but apart from that the last few days have been spent either cleaning up the house, looking after the garden or visiting the bay at Gracetown. Today we went into Margaret River to pick up some supplies but nothing much else happened. We did get the car looked at yesterday and the overheating rear hub seemed to have been caused by a badly adjusted brake this cost just \$20 to get fixed so that was a bit of a relief.

Still waiting for the rest of the repairs to be done on the car but at least we got the news today that the parts are available pending RAC approval – which has actually been given but somehow has failed to make its way to the repairer – fairly typical – no wonder we switched insurers!

Belle is booked in to see Dr. Pennington tomorrow 10am but nothing else planned for the day yet.

List of places still to see:

Cape Leeuwin
Boranup Forest
Bunbury
Canal Rocks
Collie area if possible
at least one more fishing trip to Augusta

February 25th 2009 (Wednesday)

Nothing much to do today so time for some reflection of proceedings to date.

Our two biggest worries at the moment are what happens when we go to Malaysia with Dorothy and what happens long term with regard to Australian Immigration. The second issue is probably less worrying as we will find a solution to that one way or another but the first issue involved Dorothy's family and that concerns me quite a lot.

Although she has been very unhappy there for a very long time, I can't see any easy way for her to separate. There is going to be a lot of pressure put on her by family and friends once it becomes apparent that she intends to come back to Australia.

She has completely surprised me with the intensity of her feelings for me. In just a few short months we have gone from strangers to what really is a de-facto husband and wife relationship. I don't quite know how she will deal with the situation in Malaysia once we are over there and although we will be there to give her our love and support, there will be very little we can do with regard to her relationship with Rxxxxx and the kids. As she intends to stay with us in SB and not be at SA (I just couldn't see her ever going back there now) it is going to be fairly obvious to everyone what her intentions are and that she will have effectively have separated from Rxxxxx.

I know Dorothy is worried about what will happen when we go back to Malaysia and I think she will become more stressed as the time to leave approaches.

Even though this three way relationship we now have is complicated, I think we are all starting to work out how to cope with things. One thing I am still not dealing with too well is the physical side of things, mostly because the level of activity has been far higher than anything I have experienced since Belle and I were first married. Really I am very exhausted and in that state things just don't work as they should. Because Dorothy feels that she has been rejected in the past I am desperate for her not to feel the same way with me.

Although I have seen first hand just how intense Dorothy's feelings for me have become I am still somewhat insecure about the future. At the moment she is overwhelmed with what she is experiencing but as the intensity of those emotions level out – and they eventually do for everyone – then I wonder how her feelings about leaving her family might come into play?

Rxxxxx had been completely insensitive to her needs for most of their marriage but now he is on the brink of losing her for good, I wonder just how hard he might work to try and keep her around? Will she, in the end, be strong enough to just walk out or will she end up regarding her time with me as an interesting interlude and go back to her family? I have no answers for these things and only time will tell what the outcome will be. Whatever happens I will never regret the feelings I have for her or the time we have spent together. She knows now what it is to love and be loved and she knows what it means to have someone appreciate her for who she is. Whatever the future might bring, these are the things I will always be most happy about.

There is too much to think about in the near future to take it all in at once. The only thing any of us can do right now is to just take one day at a time and slowly work through everything.

I feel very humbled by the love I am receiving from both the girls, I hardly regard myself as being worthy of such a thing but I am so glad to be the recipient of their emotions.

February 26th 2009 (Thursday)

A quiet morning at home and then a drive up the coast to canal Rocks and Yallingup.

February 27th 2009 (Friday)

A trip up to Busselton was a bit expensive as apart from the usual shopping and fuel we bought a 1TB Maxtor external hard drive (\$178) an Epson printer (\$38 and cheap!) and some diesel oil and an oil filter for the car. I have been very idle and have been putting off some jobs for a while but the time is rapidly approaching where I have to pull my finger out and get on with things:

- 1) Service the car (done)
- 2) Clean the car inside and out (half done)
- 3) Check caravan batteries and add distilled water (done)
- 4) Check caravan tyre pressures (done)
- 5) Clean Caravan
- 6) Fix caravan window catches (done)
- 7) Fix external light on caravan (done)
- 8) Copy moveis to HDD (done)

Other stuff that needs doing:

- 1) Car needs work done at Busselton repairer (done)
- 2) Transducer on boat needs replacing. (done)

February 28th 2009 (Saturday)

Quick trip into Margaret River to visit the library and to pick up some prawns both for bait and for eating.

On other matters: Last night Dorothy said to me that she was willing to give up everything for me. Although I guess I already knew that that was the case, hearing the words brought home to me just how much responsibility now rests on my shoulders. It is my job for the rest of our lives together to make both the girls as happy as I can. Dorothy is making a big change in her life and is trusting me with her future to a very large extent. This is something I will take all the care I can to get right. She also said that if I had not found her then she would have probably withered and died. What an awful time she has had, to be able to say such a thing. I have little else but love to offer and she knows that. I will do all in my power to make the rest of her life as happy as I can.

March 6th 2009 (Friday)

Time is slipping away and we are getting closer to heading back to Malaysia. It has been a bugger of a week as the British passport application came back saying that the photo wasn't right so today we had to go to MR and get new photos taken. All in all at least \$50 wasted and all after we were told by the Consulate in Perth that the photos were ok.

Then Telstra tries to bill us a whole bunch of things we didn't owe so Belle had to threaten them with the Ombudsman again before they credited us over \$70 in fees we should not have been charged.

Next, the Immigration Minister just keeps passing the buck back to the Department and they are as useful as a sick headache as they just quote rules.

We thought we had fixed the car but now the back wheel is squeaking after driving 10 kilometres or more.

March 15th 2009 (Sunday)

Managed to go down to Augusta for a second fishing trip in the boat today. To start off with nothing was happening but after lunch the fish came on the bite and we ended up with 8 skippy, 3 herring and one KG whiting.

Stuff going on or that still needs doing:

1. British passport due to come back.
2. Belle has to see doctor and will need a small amount of surgery to correct a 'roid.
3. Car going in to have new dashboard, oil meter and volt meter installed.(done)
4. Car going in (Cowaramup) to have other assorted items checked out. (done)
5. Start to pack the boat up.
6. Other stuff still not done from the list made on Feb 27th.

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March 18th 2009 (Wednesday)

On Monday we took the car up to Busselton to get the long awaited repairs done. We had to rent a car to get home (\$55 a day from South West Car Hire) and since Belle isn't too well at the moment (roids) Dorothy and I went up to collect the cruiser expecting to be in Busselton just an hour or two.

We ended up being in town almost all day as the oil and volt meters still had not been repaired – despite this being the main reason the car went in in the first place. When we finally got the car back and headed off home I found the air conditioner was now not working properly. We have to go back up on Friday as Belle needs to see a specialist and so the car will have to go back again to be sorted out.

March 21st 2009 (Saturday)

The car had to go in to a local repairer on Thursday to get the bearings, diffs and gear box checked. Turned out the bearings all needed replacing so it was an expensive exercise at a bit under \$800.

We went back to Busselton on Friday so Belle could see the specialist and the bad news was that banding wasn't possible and she needs an op. The good news, if you can call it that, is that they can fit her in on Monday. We hope that she will recover quickly enough to fly to Malaysia on April 7th.

The car got checked for the air-conditioning problem and it came back working again so I guess they found out what they did wrong in the first place.

The car still needs a bit of work. The first part is changing all diff and gear oil and that I can take care of myself. The other is getting new shocks but at least that can wait for a while.

Things to do before we leave.

Belle has op on Monday and Dorothy needs another blood test done. (23rd) (done)

Dorothy to see Doctor to get results on Wednesday. (25th) (done)

British passport due to come back. (done)

Change diff & gearbox oil (Front diff done)

Transducer on boat needs replacing

Clean caravan & car (outside)

Buy distilled water (done)

Check caravan batteries and add distilled water (done)

Check caravan tyre pressures (done)

Buy big spanner to get diff plugs out (done)

March 26th 2009 (Thursday)

Belle's op went well and we picked her up on Tuesday. She has to go back and see her doctor next Tuesday and that will probably be our last ime in Busselton this trip. We will try to get the Homeswest application sorted out at the same time.

As Belle isn't supposed to do much she had to stay at home today while Dorothy and I went to have a look at Ellendale Homestead and then to see Giant's Cave. The cave was shut so we went to have a look at the coast near Contos and then went on to investigate Calgardup Cave. This was a self guided cave and turned out to be ver interesting.



Dorothy checking out the cave formations

April 1st 2009 (Wednesday)

Time at Cowaramup is almost over, quite sad even though we are due to fly back to Malaysia with Dorothy on Tuesday next week. I can't say I'm looking forward to going over there as there are some stressful times ahead I suspect.

The weather has turned quite cold now, last night was the coldest so far this year. The car is almost packed, just the boat to go on and a sat dish to pack up.

The last three months have just flown by.

April 5th 2009 (Sunday)

We are sitting at Heron Point just passing time until we take the van and car into storage tomorrow. We arrived here on Friday after an uneventful trip up from Cowaramup. Dave visited yesterday and the last couple of nights here have been nice and quiet.

Although Dorothy got to spend a bit of time in the caravan while we were at Cowaramup, this is the first real taste she has had of campsite life with a pop-up shower and porta-potty. She has cooked a couple of meals in the van and seems to be coping ok with the small space and rather cramped conditions.

When we get back from Malaysia we will change our location for the Homeswest application so that we can get into a house faster. Rockingham would take 4-5 years and that is far too long for all three of us to spend in the caravan.



Campsite at Heron Point

6th April 2009 (Monday)

Got away from Heron Point around 9am and dropped the caravan and car off at storage just after 11am. Have paid for 6 weeks and will settle up any further amount when we get back. The taxi ride over to the hotel was expensive (just under \$70) but only to be expected. Booked a taxi for 4:45am tomorrow (sigh, too early to get up!)

By this time tomorrow (3:20pm) we should be back at SB.

The past couple of months have been more unusual and more amazing than I could ever have imagined. The three of us have a few more hurdles to get over before we can start to relax and get on with our lives but at least now we know that we all want to spend our lives together.

7th April 2009 (Tuesday)

Up at 4:00am and off to the International Airport. The Air Asia flight was long and boring as there was no movie. The food supplied (at an extra cost) was disgusting and passengers would be much better off taking a packed lunch. Still flights are far cheaper than any other airline so overall I would not be too harsh in my criticism of the airline.

We arrived in Malaysia on time and got a cab up to SA where Dorothy picked up some clothes before driving up to SB. Unfortunately she picked up the wrong set of keys so we left Belle guarding the cases while we went back down to SA once more. Poor Dorothy was feeling ill and is also very stressed about being back here – something I completely understand considering what she intends doing.

After a bit of a rest at SB Belle and I went down to Central to pick up some essential supplies before getting some take away for dinner.

Being back at SB seems a bit odd now as things have changed so much between us since we were last here. Also as there are some difficult times to get through – especially for Dorothy – I think all of us are really just looking forward to getting everything sorted out and then going home. I wish there was more I could do to help Dorothy through all this but really all I can do is just be there when she needs me.

8th April 2009 (Wednesday)

A bit of shopping over the past two days including around 250RM for groceries, 430RM for a twin tub washing machine 60RM for a two burner cooker and 80RM for the gas cylinder means we are now pretty well set up for staying here a month or three months – whatever the case turns out to be.

9th April 2009 (Thursday)

Today we went back down to SA to pick up some of Dorothy's things. I am still being surprised by how she manages to handle things as even though the flat is not exactly a pleasant place to live she has still spent the last 22 years living there and I did wonder how much removing her possessions (or at least starting to do so) would affect her emotionally. I guess the time she has spent there has been just too difficult and traumatic for her to really care much about leaving.

Afterward we went to her workplace to pick up a few more things and got to meet her colleagues once more. They are obviously concerned about what Dorothy has decided to do and I was not exactly in a position to put their minds at ease but Dorothy is so positive

about her decision to be with us they could at least see that she is now much much happier. The thing that still concerns me more than anything else is how Rxxxxxx is going to handle things once Dorothy 'drops the bomb' and finally tells him that she wants to be free of the marriage.

April 13th 2009 (Monday)

Dorothy met Rxxxxxx face to face for the first time yesterday and he hardly bothered to ask her anything. The relationship is completely dead and gone and we have to be grateful that it seems to have fizzled out without any serious conflict. I do feel sorry for Dorothy because no-one in her family has even made a token effort to keep her here. I can imagine her feelings after all those years of work, trying to keep things together and doing so much for her family only to have them dismiss her as being completely without value now. She seems to have meant nothing more to them than a servant would have, now she has finally decided to leave they have hardly batted an eyelid.

Perhaps it is better this way in the long run as even though it may be painful for her to have the final realisation that they hold her in such low esteem, she should finally be able to make a clean break with Rxxxxxx and start on a new life where she can finally be happy.

The past week has been very hectic. We have now got internet access via Maxis at a cost of around \$75AUD a month (overall cost including early account closure over 3 months). I bought a 3 in 1 printer mostly for the scanner function so we can get as many of Dorothy's photos saved as we can.

As I go through the pictures I see a young girl growing up. I see a bright smiling face full of hope and dreams for the future. I see a young couple starting out in life together, I can see the optimism and the joy as children begin to arrive. But in time I see a change come over her and then finally I see the light in her eyes start to fade as the dream becomes a nightmare. Finally I see the total abandonment of hope in her eyes and it breaks my heart that such a sweet soul has had to endure so much pain. I can only be glad that I have been responsible for bringing the light back to those lovely eyes and I hope it is there to stay.

Evan after all that has happened I still harbour some doubts about when it comes time to go back to Australia. Dorothy's kids are really not at all interested in her but she still has deep feelings for them and she always will have. When it finally comes down to it, will she be able to walk away? Going back to Rxxxxxx would be a huge mistake as he would be likely to treat her even worse than before. All I can do is hope that the bond between us is strong enough and that she comes back with us. If she decided to stay then I could not stop her, real love is more about giving your partner what they want than having what you want. I would not let her go without making every effort to hold on to her but in the end if that was what she decided then I would have to let her go. I know it would be a mistake for her to stay here and it would almost certainly mean the end of our relationship. I don't know how I would cope with that.

April 17th 2009 (Friday)

Time is passing quickly, in a few days time the three of us will have spent three months together on a 24/7 basis as man and wives. Considering the potential for conflict in what is really our 'teething time' things have been remarkably smooth and comfortable. There has been the odd hiccup between the girls but considering the strange situation we all find ourselves in that is hardly a surprise. We still revel in each others company and the hours we spend together are all precious.

Things are far from all sorted out yet but for the most part I think we now know that we can get through just about anything as long as we are all together. I felt it was necessary to give Dorothy more than just a verbal commitment. Obviously Belle and I have a marriage certificate and a long history together and I wanted Dorothy to have something written down about my commitment to her so I wrote my vows to her and signed and dated it making it a legal document.

Dorothy doesn't feel able to make any vows of her own at this point but I hope in time that she will be sure enough of her feelings to be able to do so.

Apart from the obvious emotional scars from the separation she also has had to deal with the problem of playing 'second string' to Belle. Dorothy feels very much in second place and although I have tried to tell her that my emotions are equally shared, she still feels that Belle, as my lawful wife, has the ultimate say in things and that she (Dorothy) has no real rights. I wish she did not have to feel that way and I try to compensate in some ways by being there more for her. This of course causes me no little problem with Belle who can feel neglected and so I have to perform a very difficult juggling act in order to keep each of them happy.

Dorothy is in a very difficult position. Even though she was miserable here, Malaysia was her life. Here she is a wife and a mother, she has a home, she had a job and an identity. With us she has our love but she loses her identity in some ways and at least initially she is completely dependant on us for everything. We have to do everything we can to make her feel at ease with this situation. She has told me that she would follow me to the ends of the Earth but she has also admitted to being both sad and happy at the same time because she feels very powerless and says that she can only sit passively and take what I can give and say nothing for fear of upsetting Belle.

I wish there was an easy way to resolve this so that neither girl felt awkward in any way. Belle for her part says she feels a bit intimidated because Dorothy and I share some things that Belle and I don't. Dorothy's interest in computers, her sense of humour and mischievous nature and all different to Belle's. Each feels that the other has either more rights or more to offer, these are things that given time will become less of an issue but it is still something we have to deal with now.

Given all the possible problems and difficulties that face us I am still committed to be with both of them. As far as I am concerned now, only death will separate us.

April 19th 2009 (Sunday)

I feel so sorry for Dorothy and there is little I can do to help her besides just being there when she needs me. She cries almost every day and I know she is torn by the decision she has had to make. Despite the fact that she no longer loves Rxxxxxx, she still does not want to hurt him, after all she has spent 25 years with him and only the last ten have been unhappy. As for my part in this, well I know there has really been no choice in what I have done. Dorothy was perhaps the most sad and miserable person I had ever met and she desperately needed rescuing. There was just no way I could stand by and leave her in such a state. Even though I know I had to

intervene in all this, I still bear a large portion of blame and guilt for what Rxxxxx is about to face. Basically his wife is leaving him because of the opportunity I provided for Dorothy and although I know in the long run I made the right decision, I cannot help but feel sorry for him even though the marriage break up is really a thing of his own making.

As for Kxxxx and Kaaaaaaa; Kxxxx is old enough not to be too badly affected by this. His is well aware of how unhappy Dorothy has been and I think he may understand her need to get out of the awful situation she has been in. Kaaaaaaa is a bit too young to fully understand why this is happening. All she knows is that she loves her father and he is being hurt by what is happening so she has pulled even further away from Dorothy – it has to be said that the mother-daughter relationship was hardly close even before all this happened.

The flat at SA is symptomatic of the failed relationship. In 1995 photographs show it as a clean, tidy livable place but now it is filthy, uncared for, cluttered and little more than a hovel. It shows all too clearly how badly the marriage has deteriorated and that everyone involved has given up and no longer cares.

I love both girls dearly and I know this can all work out for us in the end, all we have to do is have faith that things will get better and stay together no matter what happens.

May 5th 2009 (Tuesday)

Time has passed quickly since the last entry. We have mostly been sorting out Dorothy's finances. We came up to the Cameron Highlands yesterday for a weeks break. It is supposed to be some time away from the stresses in SA but last night clearly showed just how jittery Dorothy still is about all this.

Apart from the pressures associated with Dorothy leaving and coming to Australia there is the internal pressure of having personal time with each other. As yet we have not found a satisfactory way of handling this but the difficulty seems to arise more from our inability to be in a place that gives the opportunities rather than the actual time we each need to spend alone.

On top of this are the issues of the monthly hormonal changes that cause mood changes and there is a potential for some difficulties between the girls. So far they have both been sensible enough to try and avoid any outbursts but two very similar personalities living under the same roof all the time does pose its own share of problems.



Belle on the balcony at the hotel

May 6th 2009 (Wednesday)

A fairly quiet day with the only outing being for lunch. The weather up here is much cooler than down near KL. And that has been a wonderful change. The hotel we are staying in (The Heritage) is older but in reasonably good condition – at least our room seems fine – some of the reviews of this place on the internet are pretty awful.

There seem to be limited things to do up here and most of the touristy stuff is about looking around farms rather than seeing much of what nature has to offer. I expect that a week up here may turn out to be a bit excessive and since Dorothy isn't managing to de-stress at all, the trip isn't really having its intended effect.

May 8th 2009 (Friday)

Thoughts on the Cameron Highlands so far:

It hardly comes as a surprise that this is a very hilly region with steep winding roads. It is a pity that there aren't more developed natural attractions for people to visit as most of the tourist venues seem to be commercial ventures like the Rose Gardens. These are very structured and lack the feel of real natural surroundings. Places like the Rose Gardens require a degree of fitness to get around as they are all placed on the sides of hills and winding pathways lead the visitor up and down slopes that are quite steep.

The area is dotted with dozens of different hotels of all different types and sizes. There are a reasonable number of restaurants but food

prices up here are slightly more due to the need to transport most things up from Ipoh and KL. Food quality and prices as well as serving sizes vary drastically. Chicken seems to be the worst thing to buy as most dishes seem to supply mostly bone and little meat. Pork is better value and fried rice can be purchased quite cheaply in some places.

There seems to be a tendency in Malaysia for businesses to latch on to an idea and then 'do it to death' and that applies here in a couple of respects. The first is the almost pathological desire of businesses to copy each other in respect to a so called 'tudor design'. In effect this means painting black lines on the outside of buildings without any regard to building form or suitability for such a design. The only building we have seen so far that is even close to getting the authentic Tudor feel about it is the Smokehouse.

Another thing that is 'done to death' up here is steamboat restaurants. Just about every other restaurant seems to offer steamboat as the main dish and it becomes quite tiresome to see this dish advertised all over the place.

The area grows strawberries and so with the local penchant for the drastically over done, there are strawberries in everything, even coffee! Tea is grown here too and this pretty much falls into the same category as strawberries but isn't nearly as interesting.

The Highlands are also home to the largest collection of old mottly Land Rovers that we have ever seen. They can be seen everywhere clunking and chugging their way up the hills.



Smokehouse Hotel

One attraction that we didn't think much of was the bee farm. The nearby butterfly farm was interesting but the entry fee is a bit expensive.

Stress levels have dropped a bit in the past two days but now the unfortunate thing is we only have two days left. Strange that this is the way of most holidays, it takes two days to de-stress, you get 2-3 days of pure enjoyment before starting to worry about going back to whatever it is you normally do – or in our case what we have to get done.

10th May 2009 (Sunday)

It appears that I spoke too soon with regard to stress levels as they shot up again last night for the second time in a week. Each time this happens I question just how long this will all last and how committed to it the girls are. Dorothy seems to be trying to keep her options open with regard to coming back to Malaysia because of the hiccups we are still having with regard to 'alone time'. Realistically I suppose I can't blame her for wanting to do so but it does put a lot of extra stress on me as I seem to be the only one who is really committed to making all this work.

Belle is less than diplomatic when discussing things and I wish she had a bit more empathy when it comes to Dorothy. Dorothy in her turn is having difficulty responding to Belle when she is affectionate and I suspect this is a direct result of Belle's tendency to over react to things and turn mole hills into mountains.

I have to act as mediator and translator between the girls but this morning I just got fed up with both of them not listening and I pulled back. I was hoping that this would force them to discuss things themselves and start to work some of the problems out without my input but as usual there was some mis-communication and I had to step in before things went horribly wrong.

They are both so pig headed at times and they seem not to be able to understand what each is saying. I have no idea how all this is going to end up – past experience has shown that every time I have tried to do something with the best of intentions everything has gone to 'hell in a handbag'. I hope this is not just another instance of this kind of experience.

Today is our last day at Cameron Highlands and I will be glad to get back to SB, if only because it means we are a day closer to getting out of Malaysia. I wonder why life always has to be so bloody difficult?

www.wanowandthen.com

Our outing today was to the Rose Centre. This is past the Kea Farm stalls down a side road and at first glance seems to be run down and neglected. 'Never judge a book by its cover' certainly applies to this attraction as there are a number of well designed and attractive terraces loaded with flowering plants. There are also excellent views over the valley below.

Like Rose Valley you need to be fit enough to go up and down a lot of steps but Rose Centre is by far the better attraction.



May 18th 2009 (Monday)

We decided to get going sooner than originally planned and have booked ourselves on a flight leaving this Thursday. This presented a few headaches as we couldn't find a way to switch flights so we simply booked new flights at a cost of 720RM – sounds awful until that converts back to Australian currency and becomes \$271.

Money is about exhausted and there really isn't much more to do but tie up some loose ends tomorrow then we go to the airport on Wednesday – the flight out is 5 minutes past midnight!

Dorothy went down to SA yesterday and as usual R was his usual indifferent self, Dorothy even asked several times if he had anything else to say but there was nothing. It could well have been the last time he sees her but the dolt still had nothing to say... what a fool he is. I know the next couple of days will be pretty bad for Dorothy as she realises that she is really going. Not only is she leaving the country she has lived in all her life, the worst thing for her will be being away from her kids.

May 19th 2009 (Tuesday)

Time to go is rapidly approaching and as it does Dorothy's heart gets heavier. It is easy to understand why when her whole life has been based in Malaysia and everything she knows exists here. Things are now getting very real for her, the thought of leaving to live somewhere else is no longer just an idea, it is literally just hours away from being a reality.

I think sometimes about how things may be perceived by others, not that what other people think bothers me much, but I know that many will not be able to understand the kind of relationship the three of us now have. I guess that the main concern people we actually know may have is that somehow my being in love with both of the girls means that I love Belle less or are somehow being dis-loyal. From my point of view the opposite is really true.

I can't quite seem to completely separate the girls in my head, even though I know they are both separate individuals who have a number of differences. The over riding thoughts in my mind are that fate determined that one girl would lead a reasonably easy life, one filled with security and love and the other had a much more difficult time. It could just as easily have been Belle that was picked for the hard life and so how do you deal with those thoughts on an emotional level. In some respects it was Belle that was selected for the hard life for if Dorothy had been picked to live Belle's life then each would have simply swapped places – perhaps this isn't a certainty but I suspect things may have turned out more or less the same way, only the girls would have swapped places. With those thoughts in my mind I can't help but consider loving both girls as being completely loyal, how could I possibly do otherwise as it was simply fate that decided who got which name and who lived which life.

What I am trying to say here is that there are so many similarities between the girls that even though they inhabit two bodies and have some different ideas, they are still basically the same person inside. It is simply the circumstances of their lives that have accounted for any differences. If things had been otherwise then the twin who is now called Dorothy would instead be called Belle – how could I leave that person to suffer a horrible life when I know what would have almost certainly have happened but for a chance of fate. To me it seems not only natural, but completely inevitable that I would be in love with both, I can't see that things could be any other way.

We stil have a number of hurdles to face both internal and external but for me there is no other way I want life to be now.

May 20th 2009 (Wednesday)

After final packing up and clearing up at SB we dropped Dorothy's car at SA just before 9pm and got a taxi to the airport. The flight home was delayed about 45 minutes and the lack of comfort on the economy flight meant that we got hardly any sleep.

May 21st 2009 (Thursday)

Home again after 6 weeks away and we got here only to find storms and high winds coming in from the south west. We got a taxi out to the caravan storage place and drove north as fast as we could. The bad weather kept up with us and we only got as far as Western Flora caravan park 22km north of Eneabba.



Meeting the locals

May 22nd 2009 (Friday)

We stopped a second night at Western Flora because it is a good spot to rest up and the weather continued to be unpleasant.

May 23rd 2009 (Saturday)

We had planned to stop in Geraldton to re-supply but in the end we went to Northampton because it just seemed more simple. As we were trying to keep the weight down a bit we didn't buy much food and plan to get most of our groceries at Karratha.

A few kilometres south of Binu we were coming down a hill when the van started to get a bit wobbly. It gradually got worse and worse until we had to move to the centre of the road to try and correct the swing. It did come back under control after a while but it was very scary and not long afterwards the inner rear tyre on the van blew out. We had no choice but to stop by the roadside and change it.

The van was so badly out of control it is a wonder that it didn't go over, I think our guardian angel must have been working overtime today.

The nights stop was at Nerren Nerren. The weather is clearing as we drive north but we are not quite out of it yet.

May 24th 2009 (Sunday)

On through Carnarvon where we stopped for lunch and to Minilya where we stopped for the night. I had hoped to get a little further north but everyone was tired and the rest area was nice so we decided to stop a bit early and set up the shower tent.

May 25th 2009 (Monday)

A long tiring drive against the wind and we finally got to Cleaverville in the late afternoon.

May 26th 2009 (Tuesday)

The usual unpacking and setting up got done today and to my surprise most of it is all done now. We have almost no food and need to pick up water so we must go into town tomorrow. Dorothy seems much more at ease now we are finally back.

May 27th 2009 (Wednesday)

Into town to pick up supplies and then back to get the fishing gear ready. The forecast isn't too great fishing wise but we have to be ready just in case. We have to get down to a few things now especially Dorothy's application for residence, this will have to get done this week so we can send it off next time we go to town. There is a Dept. of Housing office in Karratha so we need to go there as well and change our housing application for an area we can get a house in within the next 6-12 months – 6 months would be better than 12.

May 31st 2009 (Sunday)

The campsite is pretty well set up now so we took the opportunity to go down to the creek and see if we could catch some mud crabs. Although we didn't hold out much hope of success we did manage to come back with three crabs, one was quite large. We also brought back a 32cm mangrove jack and a catfish – the catfish was kept so that Dorothy could cook it and see what it was like; we usually throw them back.

Dorothy caught an eel and we caught a few other fish, none of which were worth keeping, but all in all we had a good day out on the water.



Dorothy with the mud crabs

June 3rd 2009 (Wednesday)

First chance to get out to the island and do some real fishing today. It was an early tide and we were out before sunrise. We tried the mangroves near Dixon Island as I wasn't sure what the wind was going to do. Dorothy did well and outfished both of us coming back with a big cod (480mm) three bream and two long toms. My catch was just one bream and one mangrove jack, Belle caught one bream but threw it back as it was only just size.



Dorothy with her cod

June 9th 2009 (Tuesday)

We went into Roebourne yesterday and then out to Cossack for lunch. Today we went to Karratha and the car started playing up a bit. It looks like the rear universal joint is on the way out so it is booked in for next Tuesday to get repairs done. We are hoping it will behave

itself for the next few days as there is some fishing weather turning up – or at least we hope there is.

Last time we went out Dororhy got bitten by sandflies and she has been itching for a week now. Next time we tell her to put some Rid on she might listen a bit more :)

June 11th 2009 (Thursday)

Tried to go fishing yesterday but as soon as we got out the wind started to come up and Dorothy started feeling ill so we gave up and came back in. Today the wind was down but it poured with rain so again we didn't get out. At least we got to collect some extra water.

June 12th 2009 (Friday)

Finally got to go out to the front reefs today. To start with we didn't do too well, Dorothy was the only one catching anything worth while but then we moved closer in and after a hook up on a big fish that got away I landed a 770mm cod and soon afterwards a huge sweetlip that put up a tremendous fight. The sweetlip was put back to fight again another day, the big cod we kept along with a 530mm cod, an emperor and two flag. The weather does not look good for the next few days so it won't be until the next set of tides that we get another chance.

Dorothy hooked on to her first big fish today but sadly it got off when I took over the rod, Belle also lost a big fish when her rig was bitten off. Although the day started slowly it turned out well in the end.



June 13th 2009 (Saturday)

A frustrating day wind wise as we didn't know from one minute to the next what the wind was up to. Eventually we decided to take the boat out and chance it but we missed the best part of the tide and the fish were not biting. Belle caught one 400mm cod but we put that back and got nothing else.

June 17th 2009 (Wednesday)

Yesterday we went in to Karratha to get the car's uni joint fixed, I also got the gear box and transfer case oil changed and we were pleasantly surprised that the cost stayed down to \$341. Today we went out to Wickham and Point Samson again as the tides are off and the winds are bad. Friday looks like the first time the weather and tides might be good enough to get out but I am not going to hold my breath.

June 20th 2009 (Saturday)

We went out crabbing yesterday and only got 4 before the wind blew up and we had to come back in. Today we got 6 and were given another 5 by Kerry & Les.

June 23rd 2009 (Tuesday)

The forecast said 8-13kts today but as usual they got it completely wrong. We wanted to fish the reefs but ended up going to the mangroves at the back of Dixon Island. Belle did most of the catching today but Dorothy caught a trevally and one big bream and I managed one as well (but not as big). We ended up catching 6 bream, 2 trevally and Don (who was netting nearby) gave us three big threadfin. We caught two catfish one I let go but the other became a meal for the local sea eagle.

We usually don't eat threadfin but Dorothy was confident that her special way of cooking fish would overcome the flavour we don't like and much to my amazement she was right. Every time I have eaten threadfin in the past I have had to spit it out but Dorothy's deep fried fish with garlic and ginger made the fish very palatable.

We are hoping that tomorrow may be an even better fishing day.

June 25th 2009 (Thursday)

Yesterday was no good for fishing but the forecast said today should be ok. We got out quite early but the wind came up anyway and after trying on the inner reef and getting nothing we went round to the eastern creek and managed to get 7 bream (three were 32-34cm) one 440+ cod a flathead and one catfish. We had the catfish and flatty for lunch (Dorothy style) and the catfish was good, something, like the threadfin, that we usually throw away but now if we are short of other fish we will be able to keep.



June 26th 2009 (Friday)

Got out fishing again, this time I was looking for mackerel on the front reefs and in the end we caught 3 macks and nothing else worth keeping. Before coming back we went over to Dixon Island and managed to pick up a few gardies, just as well as we are all out now.

June 27th 2009 (Saturday)

Out fishing again but Dorothy stayed home as she wasn't feeling too well. Belle did all the catching including a small shovel nose ray that we released. The only bites I got were from sandflies – very grumpy!

Gave up on the eastern creek and went back to the island hoping to catch more gardies and at least we now have plenty in the freezer as we caught 60.



June 28th 2009 (Sunday)

Despite the forecast the wind stayed down again today and we decided to go out crabbing. We managed to catch 12 crabs which was enough and for a change the wind stayed down all the time we were out.

July 5th 2009 (Sunday)

Managed to get out fishing this morning for a couple of hours. The fish were a bit disinterested and the GPS batteries failed so we were limited to the inshore reefs. In the end we caught a couple of decent fish, Dorothy caught a whiskery shark and a small tuskfish and I caught a rankin cod a 500mm orange spotted cod and a small Spanish flag. All the fish were let go as we have plenty in the freezer at the moment.

July 8th 2009 (Wednesday)

The weather has been good for fishing over the past 4 days but it has coincided with the period of the full moon so although we have been watching stacks of fish on the echo sounder it has been almost impossible to get any of them to bite. Most of the hungry fish have been too small with the exception of a Queensland school mack that I caught yesterday and 3 cat sharks that Dorothy caught (although we don't ever kill these creatures and we let them go.) We are all fed up with fishing at the moment and my back went out badly yesterday so we have decided to go into town tomorrow.



Dorothy with one of the three cat sharks she caught.

July 9th 2009 (Thursday)

The local bailiff turned up today and we explained about what has been going on with Lazeaway. He went away with the bus keys and we hope this will finally sort the matter out.

July 10th 2009 (Friday)

Went out fishing again today, what a waste of time. Only caught one snapper that we threw back in disgust. The last week has been very dismal fishing wise and I am almost tempted to leave early and head down to Carnarvon. A big sea mist drifted in over the campsite this morning and lasted until about 10am.

July 11th 2009 (Saturday)

Went crabbing and fishing in the eastern creek today and brought home two good sized muddies. Fishing was rather poor again and we only brought back one big bream.



Dorothy and Belle with the big muddies

July 20th 2009 (Monday)

My back and neck are playing up at the moment so the girls have had to go off into town without me.

As the girls are out today and I have some time to sit and think I can make a few more observations about what has happened in the past few months and see if I can make any more sense out of it.

This coming Saturday will make it 6 months since Dorothy flew out on Jan 25th and the three of us have been together all that time.

Things haven't been easy or simple but considering the odd situation we all face that is hardly surprising.

I still wonder why all this has happened. I have never been much of a believer in God but there are just so many weird coincidences and happenings associated with all this that it is difficult not to see some sort of plan unfolding.

When we found Dorothy she was almost at the lowest ebb in her life. She had given up all hope and was resigned to living in a lonely loveless marriage with no hope of escape. It became quickly apparent to me when we met that we had to help her somehow but at the time I had no idea what to do.

After just 3 weeks I knew I was having feelings for her that were not appropriate and I tried to ignore them. As time went on and it became clear that Dorothy's marriage was essentially over I knew I had no choice. What would have happened if Belle had not made the choice she did I have no idea but I am still very happy that she was able to deal with the feelings I was having.

There was, and I guess there still is, some potential for all this to go horribly wrong but after almost 6 months together we are slowly sorting things out.

Because my feelings for Belle are so strong and have been there for so long it is hard to believe that I could feel just as strongly for someone who I have only known for such a short time. I know a lot of it has to do with the fact that their characters are so similar but that alone doesn't explain it all.

My conclusion has been that they do in fact have the same soul and that the soul split into two parts. There are differences but underneath that they are the same and if I am the soul mate of one then I have to be the soul mate of the other.

If I am really honest with myself I guess I would have to admit that I started falling for Dorothy from the very first time we met. I guess at that time it was something I couldn't even admit to myself. Looking back now through my journal entries I can see that there was a definite attraction there right from the first day she flew into Perth. I think (and she has more or less admitted this) that it didn't take her too long to start being attracted to me as well. Not as quickly perhaps but it was there and it was something I could sense even though she did everything she could to deny it.

I knew when we left Malaysia the first time that she felt something more for me than she was admitting but there was just nothing I could do about it.

Life is certainly more challenging now with two very like minded girls living together but it is also more wonderful that I could have ever imagined. Leaving aside the issue of sex, just the emotional side, loving two such emotional and loving women is more rewarding and fulfilling than anything I have ever done before in my life.

We still have a long way to go. Dorothy needs to get PR status here and we need to get a house to live in but as long as we stick together all these things will eventually fall into place.

July 24th 2009 (Friday)

We went to the eastern creek yesterday and only caught one bream and a flathead to bring home. Thankfully we also picked up a couple of muddies so the girls were happy.

Today we went down to the ramp and almost came back without going out but Belle said wait a while and in the end we made up our minds to go out. As there was a westerly blowing we went over to the back of Dixon Island and to start with nothing much was going on. Finally we got a few good bites and after a while some big cod started taking the baits. We caught 7 cod, 3 over 400mm and 1 x 500mm, 2 x 550mm and one 650mm. We brought 4 of the biggest ones back plus 2 bream and one mangrove jack. Dorothy hooked a huge fish of some sort but it went round the anchor line and got off before we had a chance to see what it was. We also lost a big mangrove jack at the side of the boat. All in all it was a good fishing day, actually the best so far this year. Dorothy finally found out what a big fish on the end of the line feels like, just a pity we didn't get to see what it was.



July 28th 2009 (Tuesday)

Over the past couple of days the wind has been up so we have been fishing at the beach ramp for bait. There have been plenty of gardies and hardy heads around so we are now stocked up and ready for the next chance to get out in the boat.

Time is now winding down on our stay at Cleaverville and we expect to be on the way to Bush Bay within the next three weeks. It only seems like a short time ago that we were setting up here and now we are thinking about moving on – how time flies. In 4 days time it will be one year since we first found Dorothy, what an amazing change that has made to all our lives. Already the three of us have been together for 6 months!

August 1st 2009 (Saturday)

This date will continue to resonate in our lives for as long as we live. It was one year ago today that we first set eyes on a photo of Dorothy on the internet. As I type this she is sitting next to me in the caravan working away on her own laptop.

The last year is certainly the most memorable and life changing year that we have ever been through. There are many hurdles to get over before everything is finally settled but if I had to live the last year over again I wouldn't change a thing.

August 7th 2009 (Friday)

Went fishing Wednesday but only caught a spotted mack and a snapper. Went again yesterday but caught nothing worth bringing back. We tried again today and went out about 6km. This time we did catch quite a few fish and brought back 6 snapper and 1 flag. Dorothy hooked something big but it got away before we could get it anywhere near the boat.

Looks like we may have 2 more fishing days then we have to go into town (Have to re-send the MRT forms for Dorothy as the original application wasn't correct.) We will then start packing up ready for the move to Carnarvon.

August 9th 2009 (Sunday)

Today was the last day fishing at Cleaverville. It could be the last day here for a very long time for us as it is unlikely we will be back in the near future.

We tried for some mud crabs and got zip, we dropped the pots off on the way to the back of Dixon Island and only caught 2 size cod. Dorothy got the biggest cod of the day at 470mm. I got a 440mm fish but let it go. We did get 2 blue swimmers in the crab pots on the way back but over all it was a poor final day out.

When we got back Belle got a big scare when she trod on the tail of a snake that was sitting under the tent flap. Luckily the snake was more scared than she was and took off without biting. We did a bit of grass bashing with the oars behind the tent to let the snake know that it was not welcome and we will have to keep an eye out for it as we pack up over the next few days.

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It hasn't been the best year for fishing up here but it hasn't been a disaster either. We did get a few muddies and a couple of good feeds of blue swimmers and the past couple of months have flown by very quickly.

We will probably take about a week to get packed up before moving south to Bush Bay.

August 13th 2009 (Thursday)

We are almost packed up and are just waiting for the winds to change from westerly to easterly. It looks like that is due to happen on Sunday so we might as well hang on until then.



Car and boat all packed up

August 16th 2009 (Sunday)

We had planned to get going tomorrow but things were just a bit too boring so we hit the road today. We got as far as Lyndon River (east) and should be at Bush Bay tomorrow. We will have to stop briefly in Carnarvon to pick up water and fuel then the next couple of days are all about setting up camp all over again.

The winds never did turn easterly so we just waited for them to die down a bit and the trip down so far hasn't been too bad.

August 18th 2009 (Tuesday)

We arrived yesterday after stopping in town when I had to change a tyre when Dorothy noticed it was soft while we were filling water.

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Most of the campsite was set up yesterday and I finished setting up today and then set the boat and trailer up. The girls ran off to go fishing and caught a few whiting for lunch. Later we went to have a look for crabs but didn't see any large enough to bother with. One unusual crab which we have never seen before was found and the girls spent some time picking up shellfish. We are off into town tomorrow to stock up and get water.



The weird little round crab

August 25th 2009 (Tuesday)

Just over a week at Bush Bay and we have already had a few very windy days. We have set up the full annex now and are better prepared for both wind and rain.

We have taken the boat out once but caught nothing worth while and the girls have been fishing for whiting almost every day catching a few feeds. They have also been out collecting shellfish in the bay and have found the best type to collect are a type of oyster. We have gone looking for crabs on at least three days but have only caught 3 so far.

The weather has been mostly windy and quite cold so we are waiting for things to warm up just a bit.

September 3rd 2009 (Thursday)

We have already been here over two weeks and the wind has been its usual blowy self for most of that time. We went out to Rocky Pool for a day trip on Sunday and went back into town again yesterday but apart from that there isn't much to write about at the moment.

September 7th 2009 (Monday)

We managed to take the boat out once more but again caught only trumpet and wrasse. Fishing from the beach has been pretty poor except for today when Belle caught 5 nice big whiting. The wind has been blowing as usual most of the time but the temperatures have slowly been getting a bit warmer. We have put through an application with Homeswest for priority housing and are waiting on their review but even if we get on the priority list it might still take quite some time to get a house as the demand is so high.



Septemer 9th 2009 (Wednesday)

Went into town again. This trip we had to get a new battery for the caravan as one of the Trojans died. We bought another Allrounder but this one cost \$285! Way more than the 130ah Trojans we bought.

September 12th 2009 (Saturday)

We put the net out last night and caught 3 mullet. While I was checking the net I saw a big squid attacking a fish that was caught in the net so I scooped it up with the landing net. The girls went out wandering the sand flats at low tide and came back with 4 crabs and some more oysters. Lunch will be boiled crab, crumbed squid and parmesan crumbed mullet.



September 22nd 2009 (Tuesday)

Yesterday we went into town again. This time we had to take the generator in as the pull cord broke on Saturday and we were worried about the power situation as the cloud rolled in on Sunday. Thankfully the cord was covered under warranty or it would have cost \$160+. Last time we put the net out we caught a decent sized tailor but nothing else. I will have to put it out again and see what turns up.

September 24th 2009 (Thursday)

We went out looking for crabs this morning but the wind was strong and cold and Belle and I quickly gave up. Dorothy braved the wind and stayed out collecting oysters for quite some time. When the tide came up we all tried whiting fishing, I caught 2 which I let go and the girls caught 8 between them. One was a bit small so I went down to let it go and checked the net only to find that it had a good catch of mullet. We took 10 big ones out of the net and while we were filleting them another 2 got caught so we wound up with a dozen good sized mullet ranging from about 30-40cm in length.



10 of the 12 mullet we caught.

September 26th 2009 (Saturday)

Dorothy and I had to go into town today as we were starting to run out of gas. As the washing machine seems to be on it last legs we called in to Retra Vision to have a look at new ones and found a new model Lemair for \$349. Dorothy seems to be having trouble keeping her temperature under control and is alternating between feeling cold and hot. She doesn't seem to be sick at all but her temperature is elevated a bit. I always worry when either of the girls isn't too well but in Dorothy's case it is even worse at the moment as healthcare without Medicare support can be very expensive. I hope she comes good overnight.

September 27th 2009 (Sunday)

One year ago today our lives changed forever. What a strange but amazing year it has been. Not one of us would have thought this time last year that one year on we would still be together and sitting next to the sea at Bush Bay no less! Life certainly has a way of making things interesting.

Our hope now is to have Dorothy get PR and for the three of us to be in a house by Christmas! Wouldn't that be something!! (We aren't going to hold our breath though.)

I can still recall this day last year as if it was yesterday, I think it will be burned into my memory for the rest of my days. The best thing to come out of this is for Dorothy to finally find some happiness and for the girls to really be able to get to know each other.

I brought the net in today as we have enough fish now and don't need anymore for a while. Since we have been here the net has caught 17 mullet, 1 tailor, 2 tarwine, 2 yellowfin bream and two crabs. We also caught a big squid that was hanging round the net.

October 15th 2009 (Thursday)

Time is passing quickly. The weather has started to warm up a bit and the wind hasn't been quite as bad in the last couple of days. It is finally starting to feel more like summer and less like winter.

We have no plans to move on anywhere yet as we are still waiting for various authorities to pull their collective fingers out and get on with making some decisions.

We haven't been doing much fishing from the boat but have had some reasonable catches of whiting from the beach. We haven't been looking for crabs so can't comment on that either.

October 17th 2009 (Saturday)

The wind has managed to stay down for the past couple of days (although as I type this it looks like it is on the way back again tonight) and today we took the boat out to try fishing again. To start with it was business as usual with just small wrasse about but after we moved to a couple of different spots we started to catch some northern pike. Dorothy caught an eel (that she wanted to keep and eat) but I managed to convince her to let it go. In the end we kept 7 pike.

A couple of undersized NW snapper were caught and released and it turned out to be a nice morning out on the water.



Dorothy catching a pike

October 23th 2009 (Friday)

Belle went out looking for crabs today and came back with 6. Water is getting warmer and it looks like crab numbers are increasing.

October 24th 2009 (Saturday)

I was going to go out looking for crabs with Belle today but my thumb and left arm are playing up badly so I had to stay inside. Belle came back with another 6.

October 25th 2009 (Sunday)

This time I did go out for an hour or so but saw nothing. Belle caught 2 crabs and another 2 once I gave up and came in. In the evening a thunder storm rolled in across the bay and there was a lot of lightning about, enough to convince me to shut the wind generator down and disconnect it from the van.

October 26th 2009 (Monday)

Rainy and dull most of the day but as evening approached the clouds began to dissipate.



Enjoying the evening after the storm had passed

October 27th 2009 (Tuesday)

Belle went looking for crabs again today but this time only came back with 2.

November 5th 2009 (Thursday)

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The weather has been a bit strange lately with thunder storms rolling in across the bay for the past couple of days. The winds have not been blowing as much as usual. More rain is forecast for the next couple of days so we will just sit still until it all goes away.

We have had some hot weather and two days ago it reached 37C. It is cooling off now but I have made a start at packing up and the trailer is now on the back of the van.

The tides have been high, up to 1.7m and the levies have been holding ok so no flooding yet. The plan at the moment is to be out of here before December 3rd (which is the date Dorothy's review hearing is set for) and be in Carnarvon for a week or two before making any decision on what to do next.

We did go crabbing again since the time noted above and got 6 more crabs.



Lightning over the bay

November 7th 2009 (Saturday)

Went out looking for crabs again this morning and manage to catch 8 which is a record for us at Bush Bay. Belle also managed to catch a sole in the net.

We have caught 45 crabs so far this season at Bush Bay, this compares with only 34 caught at Cleaverville but catching them here is harder work as we have to walk for ages on the sand flats.

November 15th 2009 (Sunday)

Time passes but not much of note has happened recently. The wind seems fairly high most nights and drops a bit during the day. If the wind is absent for a while then the temperatures get uncomfortable but most days the temp is quite pleasant. We are planning to move before the next major high tides (Dec 3rd) but whether we go to Carnarvon for a while or south to Demham and then Kalbarri we aren't really sure yet.

November 25th 2009 (Wednesday)

After having problems with the annexe we have had to move into Carnarvon. We are staying at the Coral Coast caravan park which at \$195 a week isn't really a long term proposition. We intend to be here until the end of the school holidays and then we will have to think about what to do next.

November 29th 2009 (Sunday)

The MRT has remitted Dorothy's PR case back to Immigration so we are still waiting for that to get sorted out. This time last year we were spending our last night in Malaysia and were very miserable. At least now we are all together even though getting everything finally sorted out still seems a long way off.

We are missing being out at Bush Bay but as we have no useable annexe there isn't any choice.

November 30th 2009 (Monday)

Ultra sound at Carnarvon hospital.

December 3rd 2009 (Thursday)

Went down to Bush Bay today to do some fishing - at least the girls did the fishing. I sat under the mangroves and drank a couple of beers and processed each fish as they brought it in. By the time we were ready to head back to town we had 22 whiting of reasonable size in the esky. It turned out to be a really nice day out. It was a bit sad to see our old campsite where we spent three months sitting empty and deserted.

Decemeber 12th 2009 (Saturday)

We are experiencing a spell of hot weather at the moment with temperatures in the high 30s. This means we are more or less stuck in the caravan and starting to go a bit stir crazy. Will have to think up something a bit more interesting to do over Christmas.

December 15th 2009 (Tuesday)

Went back down to Bush Bay again just for the day so the girls can do some more fishing. Another nice day out and 39 whiting brought home (many more caught but plenty let go again). It really would be nice if we could still be out at Bush Bay but the weather is simply too hot this time of year to be comfortable.



December 20th 2009 (Sunday)

The girls have gone off fishing today while I give the caravan a bit of a clean up on the inside. We did go fishing on Friday as well but only brought back 4 whiting. Christmas is fast approaching and this one will be so much better than the miserable one we had last year when we were apart from each other.

December 24th 2009 (Thursday)

Three busy days have just passed as I had to take Dorothy down to Geraldton to get her tooth extracted. She started having pain last weekend and it gradually got worse so I booked her in at a Geraldton clinic as there won't be a dentist in Carnarvon until Jan 4th next year.

We drove down on Tuesday and stayed at Drummond Cove in a unit (\$75 a night). We managed to do some Xmas shopping then she had her tooth out on Wednesday (\$220). Originally we were going to head back the same day but in the end decided it would be too much so we stayed another night and drove back up today. The trip wasn't too bad taking about 5 hours each way but it was quite tiring.

I haven't worked out just how much the whole thing cost in the end but I don't expect any change from about \$800.

December 25th 2009 (Friday)

Christmas day, we woke early and I prepared the prawn cocktails for breakfast. Then came present opening time closely followed by (in my case) present drinking (Drambuie) and present eating (chocolate) time. Dorothy doesn't seem to have ever had a Christmas like this before and I think we will all remember this very first Christmas together for the rest of our lives.

One of the presents I gave Dorothy was a small (but reasonably pricey) set of three soaps that she showed great interest in when we were out at the shops before Christmas. To my amazement when she opened the wrapping she came over to me, put her arms around me and cried. The poor girl has never in all her married life been given a present that she really liked or wanted. All she got from her ex last year was a coffee cup! There are things about her life that are so terribly sad, so I am pleased beyond measure that she has finally found some happiness in her life.

Around mid-morning I started preparing the roast lunch (cooking and cleaning up are always my jobs on Christmas day) and because Dorothy's missing tooth may have made roast pork a bit too difficult to eat we have put that meal on hold and had marinated roast chicken with roast vegies instead. We finished up with grapes, cherries, cheeses and nuts.

As usual we have bought far more food than we really needed and we will be eating things that aren't all that good for us until New Year's day.

Depending on the temperature we hope to go to the Blowholes for a day out tomorrow.



December 26th 2009 (Saturday)

Well even though the weather would have been ok to go up to Quobba today the decision was made to go fishing instead. The fishing was mildly successful with 6 or 7 fish of reasonable size being caught and then being given away to a couple who we made friends with yesterday.

January 1st 2010 (Friday)

We went down to Bush Bay again today to do some more fishing and after a very enjoyable day we brought back 47 whiting. We caught a lot more but let plenty go.

With the dawn of the new year we are hoping that things will finally start to get sorted out. The Immigration Department and Dorothy's PR is our first priority but close second is sorting out somewhere more permanent to live.

Although we are all used to living in the caravan now, it is too small to be really comfortable and it is time for us to get something better. The problem is that if we take up a private rental and then Homeswest comes up with a house for us we will be responsible for any remaining time on the private rental lease. Things always seem to be over complicated.

January 10th 2010 (Sunday)

We went up to have a look around Quobba and the blowholes today. We took the rods with us and did a bit of fishign as there was a big pile of seaweed on the beach and we found a few worms. Initially there was nothing around but grunters but once the girls started fishing they sartrted catching some nice big whiting. In the end they got about 2 dozen with Dorothy doing best. She caught the biggest yellowfin whiting we have ever caught (34.5cm) and everyone went home very happy.



January 16th 2010 (Saturday)

Half way through the month already. Today was the first time in quite a while that we have seen rain. This time it came with a lot of heat so outside it was like a sauna. Earlier this month Homeswest offered us a flat but as it had nowhere to park the caravan we couldn't accept it. I am tired of being mucked around over these things so I have written to the Minister asking him to please try and get the Dept. of Housing to do something that actually makes sense. I won't hold my breath as the incumbent is a Liberal and they can be heartless mongrels when it comes to these things.

January 24th 2010 (Sunday)

We went back out to Quobba today hoping that it might be another good fishing day. We did catch 6 whiting but nothing near as good as on the 10th. Even so it was a nice day out and it is probably the last time we will get to go out there as I have to start packing up this week.

Our plan is to be heading south in the first week of February. We would like to see Denham and Kalbarri before stopping for a while at Geraldton. Carnarvon has become a bit too boring and it is now time to see something new.

February 4th 2010 (Thursday)

Today we got news from the Department of Immigration that Minister Evans wants to grant Dorothy PR status but that there are still police clearances and a medical check to do. Finally this is the news we wanted to hear. Now we just have to wait for the forms to get to us and we can head south to arrange the medical assessment.

February 5th 2010 (Friday)

Sunday Times rang as they want to do a follow up on the story about immigration.

February 11th 2010 (Thursday)

We have been working on filling out the final forms for Dorothy's PR. I swear those forms could make a rock sweat blood and make saint swear. The mongrels who are responsible for designing those forms should be hung up by their BALLS and left to slowly bake in the sun.

IDIOTS! Do they actually think anyone is going to tick YES to questions like 'are you a terrorist?', 'have you been responsible for making weapons of mass destruction?' and 'have you committed war crimes?!!!!!!'

They ask the same STUPID questions over and over when they ALREADY have the BLOODY answers. I have lost count of the times we have had to write down passport details that they have been given 20 times before.

Well most of it is done now and we aren't planning to fill out any more forms any time soon.

Take 5 are doing a story on the girls and are paying us \$800 but once the medical expenses and police checks are paid for there will hardly be any of that left.

February 12th 2010 (Friday)

Today is Belle & Dorthy's 51st birthday. I bought them a joint present, a 61 key electronic keyboard so they can learn to play music together. Both of them like to sing and this is something they can add to that hobby.

Unfortunately the first keyboard I got had a dud key so we had to take it back and exchange it.

We have been trying to finalise all the form filling nonsense for DIAC but have now hit a snag as no bank will provide us with a bank draft in Malaysian ringgit. We will have to email DIAC and see what they can suggest.

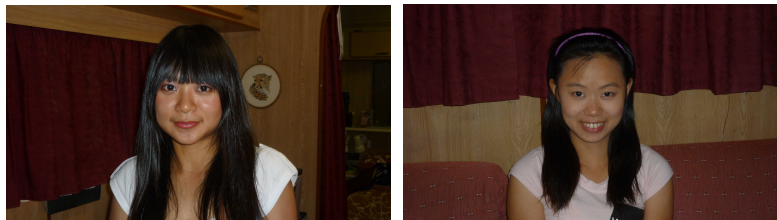
We are stuck in Carnarvon until at least the end of the month as Dorothy's medical exam (costing about \$600!!!) isn't scheduled until Feb. 25th.



The girls with their new toy

February 14th 2010 (Sunday)

We went down to Bush Bay again today, more for the fun of it rather than needing to catch any fish but we did end up getting some whiting which we will give to Vivi & Yihan who are from Taiwan. The girls made friends with them and we have been giving them fish on and off for a few weeks. In return we have been getting some tropical fruit etc.



March 3rd 2010 (Wednesday)

Dorothy and I managed to get a bit stirred up with each other last night mostly because I have been brooding a bit about some things that are disturbing me. Some of the things that have happened since we first met have led me to wonder whether she really trusts me as much as she says she does and the main instance of this has been about the affair she had in 2006.

The reason this has been disturbing me so much is that I basically guessed what had happened and when I asked her about it in Malaysia the first time we were there, she didn't admit to it. Fair enough at the time I guess as we didn't have a developed relationship and she didn't want to say anything.

Even though I had very strong suspicions that I was right I wanted to believe what she told me but I was still unconvinced. Just recently I did find proof that the affair took place and we discussed it. Unfortunately one of the medical tests Dorothy had to take to get PR here was an AIDS test and this started me worrying about what had happened in 2006.

Even though I had my doubts about what she had told me in Malaysia, I wanted so much to trust her, so when we started to become more intimate I put my doubts aside and just let things take their course. Recently when I found out the truth I was disappointed that Dorothy had not been completely honest with me before we became intimate. She would have had no way to know if the guy she had been with had AIDS and she did not use protection. Sure what she did before she met me is none of my business in most cases but where there is a risk of this nature I would have been much happier if she had been able to tell me about it.

By not telling me the truth before we became intimate she not only put me at risk, she put Belle at risk. The risk may have been slight but it still existed. Because I didn't know the full story and only had a suspicion to go on I inadvertently put Belle at risk and this has really been upsetting me. If it had been just Dorothy and I involved then I wouldn't have minded but I had a responsibility to Belle and that was what I was most concerned about.

As I knew the AIDS test results were pending, all this started to play on my mind and it all came out last night but it didn't come out the way I intended and Dorothy got very badly upset. That was not my intention at all and I didn't handle things as well as I should have but my worries over-rode my usual caution.

Thankfully today the test has come back negative so I can now put all this aside and get on with things as normal.

March 5th 2010 (Friday)

Everything was fine until this morning when Dorothy asked me to tell her if there was anything else I was concerned about and wanted to let her know. As she asked me, I had to tell her that from my point of view I would prefer it if she could get rid of any items that were a reminder of her affair but it was entirely up to her. I honestly thought that if the affair really meant nothing and it was in the past then she would have no problem with this. She said I was just being childish but my feelings are as valid to me as hers are to her and after all she has told me over and over again she wants me to be honest with her. To me the issue of keeping things that hark back to the affair isn't that big a deal but my preference would be for everything relating to it including passwords, documents and photos to be got rid of. The main reason I would like to see everything put firmly in the past is because of what I wrote about in the last journal entry. It has nothing to do with the affair itself but it has to do with how finding out about it impacted on my thoughts and I would rather not have any reminder of this period hanging around.

Dorothy got upset again and the final thing she did as she went out of the door to go shopping with Belle was to say, yet again, that if I ask her too much she will leave. This was a hundred times worse than anything to do with the affair, this was a deliberate very hurtful thing to say to me. If I have hurt Dorothy in any way it has been purely by accident and I would never deliberately go out of my way to say something that hurt her.

I really wonder if she knows how much pain she inflicts on me each time she says this? I have done what I have because I love her and want her to be happy but I don't like being deliberately hurt. She already knows that telling me she might leave me is hurtful yet she does it over and over again. No matter how upset I was I would NEVER threaten to leave her.

March 16th 2010 (Tuesday)

After the couple of days of tension everything settled back to normal again and it did at least get a few things sorted out between Dorothy and I. In one way it even was beneficial as it did let Belle get closer to Dorothy as they were able to talk to each other about me and what was going on.

The weather seems to be cooling off now and we have decided to go back to Bush Bay to avoid being ripped off in the caravan park. The Immigration Dept. are still dragging their heels and waiting for a certificate from Malaysia but there is nothing we can do about it.

As usual everything is in other people's hands and we are just stuck in limbo.

We are going to move to Bush Bay tomorrow and it is stressing me out - as moving usually does. I am having to monitor my blood pressure and it is hovering around 160/100 - not good. I can only hope it settles down once we have moved.



2010 campsite at Bush Bay

March 18th 2010 (Thursday)

We arrived at Bush Bay yesterday and more or less got the campsite sorted out in one day. I finished the last bits and pieces today and we are now ready to go into town tomorrow to collect water and do all the usual chores.

We even went fishing today but didn't catch many decent sized whiting.

The weather seems ok if a little humid. At least the wind picks up enough to make it comfortable during the day. No need for the air conditioner yet.

We now have to play a waiting game and see what happens with Immigration etc. It is looking more and more likely that we will head up to Cleaverville one more time but then again, that is only plan A.

March 20th 2010 (Saturday)

We are pretty well settled in at Bush Bay again now and the campsite is all sorted out. The main hassle is my back playing up again but then I am more or less used to it doing this every time I have to start moving heavy things about. I will be very glad to get a house again and stop having to go through all this.

April 13th 2010 (Tuesday)

Not much to write about at present. The weather is gradually getting cooler and since there seems to be no movement from the Immigration Dept. we are beginning to plan moving north again to Cleaverville for the winter. Fishing here has been very much on and off with some big whiting being caught but mist days there seems to be little about. I have more or less given up until we get to Karratha.

Another couple of weeks and we will be starting to think about packing up and heading off again.

April 22nd 2010 (Thursday)

Into town today and one of the jobs was to get the front right tyre replaced. At \$351.00 plus balancing it wasn't going to be a cheap day in the first place but then we found that the old rims were too rusty and so we had to get a new set of rims and this blew the cost out to \$1009! Anyway at least that is one area we won't have to worry about for a while and the rims have caused us a bit of trouble in the past.



Cruiser with the new rims

April 28th 2010 (Wednesday)

Warmer weather again at present as the wind starts to drop off. Along with the change in wind strength has come a sharp increase in the numbers of bush flies, mosquitoes, March flies and sand flies.

We found a new fishing spot along the mangroves yesterday but once the tide is in the water gets about waist deep and there were quite a number of sharks over the three foot mark swimming through the mangrove roots. We had to back towards the shore several times and when the tide came right in the sharks could easily have got in behind us under the dead seaweed. I had to call a halt to fishing for the day as things were starting to feel quite uncomfortable. We did catch some nice big whiting but we won't go back again until the tides start to drop down.

April 30th 2010 (Friday)

The girls went fishing this morning but only caught one fish. The good thing was that it was a 38.5cm whiting, the biggest we have ever caught. Dorothy is outfishing the 'experts' again.



May 3rd 2010 (Monday)

The weather seems to be cooling down quite rapidly now. We went fishing this morning and after being in the water for a while my feet and hands were going numb with the cold. It won't be too long now before we pack up and head for Karratha.

May 4th 2010 (Tuesday)

Fishing again at the new spot. Better weather today and much better fishing as we came back with 27 whiting. 11 were very good size.

May 5th 2010 (Wednesday)

Fishing for whiting yet again. The only real item of note today was that my line broke after I hooked a fish and once I re-rigged and cast out again I managed to hook my old line with the fish still attached. That has to be a bit unusual especially as there was nothing to stop the fish from swimming away.

May 9th 2010 (Sunday)

The weather in Karratha seems to be starting to cool down a bit so we are thinking that this Thursday will be the last trip into Carnarvon before we pack up and head north again. No word yet from the Immigration Minister on the final bits and pieces so we have little option but to go north away from the cold weather.

May 13th 2010 (Thursday)

We found out today that Dorothy's permanent resident visa was granted on May 3rd. Finally we can start sorting our lives out and hopefully it won't be too long before we get a house and really start to settle down and live the life together we have been dreaming about.

May 16th 2010 (Sunday)

We seem to have been acquired by a cat. A week ago two small cats turned up outside. Both were in a pretty poor state and we started to give them food and water as they appeared to be on the brink of starvation.

The black cat has since disappeared but the tabby seems to have adopted us so we now have to find a way to take it with us when we leave.

It has only taken a week for the cat to become so comfortable with us that it is now sitting in the caravan near my feet and it allows us to pat and stroke it.

When it first came into the caravan it began exploring and once it hopped up on to the bed it saw itself in the mirror. Never having seen a mirror before it obviously thought there was another cat in the room and it stood frozen for a couple of minutes wondering what to do. Eventually it went back to exploring but then it popped its head up onto the shelf behind the bed only to see 'another cat' in the mirror there just inches from its nose. Very slowly it sank down and then cautiously raised its head again to look at this new cat. We were in fits of laughter watching the cat as it tried to understand what it was looking at.

May 17th 2010 (Monday)

We have decided that having a pet while still on the road is not the best idea and since we were in town for the last time today we called in at the local Shire Ranger to see what the options were. We were told that they try to re-home animals and young ones have a good chance of finding someone to look after them. We think this is the best alternative as the cat is not yet bonded to us so we have borrowed a cat carrier and we will drop the cat off when we pass through town.

If we were closer to being in a home then the decision may have been different but this is just not the right time to get a pet. Hopefully a home will be found as none of us would like the cat to be destroyed even though it is not 100% tame yet.



We are now ready to start packing up and the only thing between us and better fishing is a few days getting ready and a 600km drive.

Temperatures here depend greatly on the wind right now. When the wind is blowing it is getting rather cool and when the wind stops it is still quite warm. It is the cold mornings more than anything else that are the impetus for us to get going.

May 18th 2010 (Tuesday)

www.wanowandthen.com

A low pressure system brought rain in today and combined with that was a big tide. This ended up flooding many campsites but we managed to stop our area from flooding by putting a sand barrier across the road.



The small sand barrier was all that stood between the campsite and sea water

May 19th 2010 (Wednesday)

Thankfully the tide was lower today and the rain seems to have gone so we are hoping that the track will dry out enough to let us get away by Saturday.

The evening entertainment was watching a herd of cattle file past the campsite - something that we haven't seen here before despite the fact that we are actually on a cattle station.



May 21st 2010 (Friday)

Plan 'A' had been to finish packing up today and be on the road first thing in the morning but we have been told that rain has been forecast for later today and increasing tomorrow. The track is still too wet from the high tide on Tuesday for us to get out today so it looks like we might be stuck here longer than anticipated.

We are more or less packed up now so it is just a waiting game to see if the rain actually does turn up.

The girls are bored and have decided to go fishing while we wait to see what the weather decides to do.

May 22nd 2010 (Saturday)

Everything was fine until about 3:30am when we heard the first sound of rain hitting the roof of the caravan. It stopped after a few minutes and I was silently hoping that it was just a shower. Not much later it really started to rain and it looked like we were going to be stuck at Bush Bay for another week. (I remember doing some swearing at this point.)

We got up and I un-hitched the car from the caravan and went with Belle to have a look at the state of the track. Everything was quite good except for one section near the T junction but we decided to give it a go and try and get out anyway.

In the end we got away without any hassles but the wind was against us for the first part of the drive and we only got as far as the northern Exmouth road before we had to stop for the night.

Karratha is still another 400km away so we have a long drive ahead tomorrow.

May 26th 2010 (Wednesday)

We arrived at Cleaverville on Sunday and we have been setting up the campsite and getting everything ready for a couple of days.

Yesterday we went into town to get water and stock up on some supplies. We also bought a new tent for storage as the old one has just about had it. We have finally decided to get an internet wireless connection (\$50 a month for 3gb download). We did a lot of other spending that came up to over \$1200!! Hopefully that will be the last big spend up for a while.

Today we managed to get time out in the boat and we did reasonably well. We (actually Belle) caught some garfish for bait and we all managed to get a few other fish including 6 fingermark bream, 1 cod, 1 mangrove jack and 1 Spanish flag.

The weather has been quite good and we are well settled in now.



Our first day's catch at Cleaverville for 2010

May 29th 2010 (Saturday)

The last couple of days have been a bit too windy to take the boat out so we have just been doing a bit of fishing from the beach. Not much to catch but bait fish but now we have a good supply of garfish and hardy heads for the times when the wind decides to slow down a bit.

June 1st 2010 (Tuesday)

We went out crabbing yesterday but after 4 runs we only came back with a miserable 4 crabs. All that work for so little reward. Even so The girls enjoyed eating what we caught.

Today the wind was still down so this time we went out to the front reefs again to see what fish we could catch. Things were very slow and we only caught a couple of size flag and two nice snapper. Belle caught a whiskery shark but we always let these go. We caught a few garfish for bait and then started to pack up to come in.

As I was hooking a rig of big gang hooks into the stock of the rod the hooks slipped and the bottom one went straight into the palm of my hand - not nice! Belle took over the boat and brought us in as I was feeling a bit groggy after trying to pull the hook back out - more ouch!! When we got top the ramp there was another boat loading up so we asked if they had any experience removing hooks from people and luckily the man had previously operated a trawler and so he set about getting the hook out.

The first step was to cut the bottom part of the hook off the gang and this was done with no pain to me. Next came the nasty bit, the hook has to be pushed further and the point has to come out followed by the cut off shank. This BLOODY HURT!!! The cut off section of the 3rd hook has to pass through the hand to get it out. After some impassioned groaning on my part the task was over and we were able to get the boat on to the trailer and come back to camp without any further mishaps.



June 16th 2010 (Wednesday)

The wind has dropped off and we got to go out fishing in the boat again today. Fishing from the beach is dismal at the moment so it is good to be able to get off shore again.

We didn't go out too far but still managed to catch 3 nice snapper 4 fingermark and 2 flag.

I have a bad dose of the flu at the moment so am not feeling too good but I wasn't going to let that stop me going fishing, I can always recover later.



June 17th 2010 (Thursday)

Went fishing again and had an interesting day. Dorothy had a huge fish get hold of her line and then take off. Her reel was whizzing round and we tried to get the fish to turn but all of a sudden the line went slack and we thought it was all over. We brought the line up but we could still feel something light on the end. I looked over the side and she had a small Spanish flag on the end and following it up was a massive cod. We didn't really want to hook the cod as it was well over the maximum size limit of 1 metre but we saw it several times as it followed up smaller fish that we hooked.

We also saw a big Spanish mackerel swim under the boat but it wasn't tempted by my float line. Another interesting fish was a large shark that swam under us.

We finally came home with 1 good snapper, 4 moose perch, 3 flag and 1 spotted mack. There were all sorts of other catches during the

day but nothing worth keeping so we let them go. We did pick up a few garfish as bait and for Belle and Dorothy to eat RAW! yucky.. they just put in a bit of sauce and garlic and munch away... not for me at all...

Dorothy is itchy from midgie bites again and is suffering a lot. The weather is unseasonally hot so we will be glad when the cooler nights get here.



June 18th 2010 (Friday)

Went into Wickham to do some shopping today. I'm still not very well and Dorothy is still all itchy.

June 21st 2010 (Monday)

We decided to go and have a look at Harding Dam today but somehow we managed to take the wrong road and ended up doing a big circuit right round the back of Roebourne and back to the new Karratha-Tom Price road. As this took us close to Karratha we turned the day into a shopping trip but it was a bit disappointing not to get out to the dam as planned.

June 27th 2010 (Sunday)

The wind stayed down enough to take the boat out again today but the fish weren't biting and eventually the wind did come up and we moved in closer to shore. The fish were still playing hard to get so in the end we sat just off the beach catching some garfish.

June 28th 2010 (Monday)

Well the forecast said the wind was going to be down today but it wasn't. Even so we took the boat out again and sat off the west end of Dixon Island out of the wind. I got a very good bite but sadly it got off before I got a look at what it was.

We moved into the bay but didn't start catching much until after the high tide. Dorothy caught the first good fish which was a 440mm cod. Soon afterward I got a mangrove jack about the same size and then later caught another smaller one. We did catch other fish but didn't keep anything else.

July 2nd 2010 (Friday)

The wind is still blowing too strongly to get out in the boat so we have just spent time around the camp mooching about. Apart from getting on the net and using our computers we take walks along the beach to look for coral and sea shells that have washed up.

Belle caught the flu last time we were in town and she has been suffering even worse than me. Dorothy seems to have the best immune system as far as the flu is concerned and she has managed to avoid catching it.

July 8th 2010 (Thursday)

What would have been a fairly ordinary day in town today was turned into a huge hassle thanks to the 'good people' at the licensing office in Karratha.

Last week Dorothy went in to licensing to do her theory test as she needs to get her driving license sorted out. She passed the theory test (29/30) and then we were told that in order to skip some of the process of getting her a WA license she needed to get an official translation of her Malaysian driver's license. We filled out the required forms and left copies of her passport etc.

During the week we got the translation done and today we went in to get everything finalised. First they had lost all the paper work from last week, forms, ID, test results, everything! So we had to fill it all out again. Thankfully, having dealt with government departments over here for years we expected them to screw everything up so we took the passport and ID stuff again just in case.

A lot of head scratching behind the desk ensued as the staff started working out what to do next. We waited about a hour for someone to tell us what was going on and eventually we got called back to the desk and were told that they had cancelled Dorothy's learner's permit as she could drive on her Malaysian licence. We then had to point out that her Malaysian licence (that they had just been given a translation of and made copies of) was EXPIRED!

So now they turn around and ask if we had a log book (a requirement for new drivers but not for experienced drivers who just need to do a practical test.) and we had to point out that they had already told us that once we got the translation done the log book requirement would be waived.

In the end, after a monumental amount of time wasting and stuffing around, we eventually got Dorothy's learner's permit.

I have to wonder why, after she has been able to drive here on her Malaysian licence for the past year and has been driving for 20 years, it is necessary for her to do a practical test at all. If she was from Singapore, and not Malaysia, she would simply have her licence transferred.

The whole thing is so stupid it defies any logical explanation but the government wouldn't be government without making our lives unnecessarily complicated.

The other issue that has been plaguing us is the Department of Housing who have continued to claim that Dorothy could not have her name added to our application until she was a permanent resident. Once she got her residency we submitted her name only to be told that she could not be added until she was on an income from Centrelink (she can't be eligible for any payments for 2 years).

We looked up the rules on the Housing web site and surprise, surprise, we found this was all a load of bollocks! She should have been on the list EVEN BEFORE she became a resident.

The people who work in these places simply don't know their own rules. If they were in private business they wouldn't last five minutes. They only get away with all this nonsense because government departments have a monopoly over what they do and they know they are untouchable.

July 11th 2010 (Sunday)

The wind was down when we woke up this morning so we took the boat out again. Sadly, almost as soon as we got out the wind came up and we had to take shelter in the mangroves on Dixon Island. We caught quite a few fish but most were undersized. We came in with 3 bream, 2 mangrove jack and 1 small trevally.

July 12th 2010 (Monday)

Fishing again today and this time we tried the front reefs again. Plenty of fish on the sounder but hardly any action. We eventually tried all over the reefs but only brought back 2 flag and 1 moses perch.

July 13th 2010 (Tuesday)

The forecast was for high winds today but when we woke up it looked pretty calm. We took the chance and went out anyway and we were lucky as the wind stayed down for most of the tide. Just incase the wind did come up we opted to fish in the mangroves by Dixon Island and we managed to catch 2 bream, 1 mangrove jack, 1 cod and 1 small trevally. We also stocked up on bait by catching 42 garfish.

July 16th 2010 (Friday)

We could have gone out fishing today but I thought the wind might be coming up a bit too much. In the end I was wrong and we could have had a good day out. Dorothy was not at all pleased with this and I expect I will be reminded of it quite a few times.

July 17th 2010 (Saturday)

Today we made sure not to miss getting out in the boat but to start with it looked like we weren't going to have much luck. We moved all over the place, from reef to reef and only caught 3 small fish. Eventually we came back closer to Dixon Island and Dorothy made up for Belle and I not doing well by catching three big (42cm+) snapper. I eventually got one the same size but poor Belle didn't end up bringing any of the fish she caught in as they were all a bit small.



Dorothy with the big snapper she caught.

July 18th 2010 (Sunday)

After a bit of pondering we took the boat over to Dixon Island again today but Dorothy was the only one who caught anything. She got a mangrove jack and a cod, both 40cm+. I did get a big fish on the line but as usually happens in these cases the big fish took the small line and after a brief fight it bit through the line. Dorothy is doing very well with her fishing and she has a lot of fun. I tend to grumble a bit as I have been fishing here for years and I am being out-fished by a new-comer.

July 22nd 2010 (Thursday)

Went into town today and found a surprise in the mail. Belle's pension had been cut off. Why? Because the morons at Centrelink couldn't be bothered to update our new address when we gave it to them so they kept on sending mail to Carnarvon. Even though we did eventually twig that they had done this and went in to the Karratha office to tell them AGAIN where our new address was, the thick witted, jackass pricks still went ahead and cut the money off. I have no idea how they manage to do anything at all with the slow witted fools who work there. They badger us endlessly about telling them every little change in our circumstances and when we do they still IGNORE IT. Stupid BASTARDS!

July 26th 2010 (Monday)

The wind is dropping off again so we got out in the boat. WHAT A WASTE OF TIME. We caught a few small fish but nothing worth keeping. A dismal day out on the water.

July 27th 2010 (Tuesday)

Today turned out to be much better than yesterday but only because we caught two 1m Spanish mackerel. Everything else we caught was again too small to bother with. We tried to get some more gardies for bait but only managed to catch 8 before giving up.

Dorothy cooked up some of the mackerel for lunch and Oooooo was it delicious. At least we have a freezer full of good eating fish now.

August 4th 2010 (Wednesday)

Had to take the cruiser in for a visit to the local mechanic today as the clutch has been playign up and there were a couple of other jobs that needed to be attended to. Had to pick up a rental car (paid for by our RAC Plus roadside assist).



August 6th 2010 (Friday)

Took the rental car back and picked up the cruiser again. Work cost \$324.15 so not too bad.

August 8th 2010 (Sunday)

It was an early tide but the forecast was for light winds so we went out fishing for what may turn out to be the last time at Cleaverville. At first the wind was a bit fresh but it settled down and we did catch a few fish but none up to our standard so we let them all go. We did catch quite a variety today including pike, 2 type of snapper, 2 types of cod, flag, spinefoot (venemous spines so has to be treated with great care), tuskfish and bream. At least 5 fish were over the legal limit but as we already had half the freezer full of fillets we let them go and just enjoyed catch and release for fun.

August 12th 2010 (Thursday)

Got out fishing again but didn't do that well. Dorothy caught more fish than Belle and I but nothing was really big enough to keep. We did take in a small spotted mack that took the float line but apart from some garfish we caught for bait (just in case we do get out again) that was it.

August 15th 2010 (Sunday)

We are waiting patiently (or perhaps that should be impatiently) for the wind to go away so we can get out fishing one last time. Tomorrow is about the last chance we will get as the tides get too late after that.

By this time next week we should be pretty well packed up - that is if we manage to get the rental property we have applied for. If not then we will be starting to pack up but with much less urgency.

The weather is staying surprisingly cool for this time of the year so it has given us a few extra days up here.

August 16th 2010 (Monday)

It wasn't a perfect fishing day wind-wise but as it was the last chance we went out anyway. I caught a nice snapper (that I let go) and Dorothy caught some undersized ones. Belle did best when she caught an orange spotted rock cod (strangely enough the same fish Dorothy caught as the last fish last year) that was 520mm.

Overall I would have to rate the fishing this year as rather poor. Perhaps it is just as well that it wasn't spectacular as we won't miss coming up here so much once we are settled in Perth.

August 18th 2010 (Wednesday)

Today was our last trip into Karratha for supplies. From tomorrow we start packing everything up and we plan to be heading south by Monday. We are signed up for a rental property for at least the next 6 months. By the end of that lease we hope that State Housing will have managed to get its act together and have found us a more long term solution. It will be a relief to be in one place for more than 2-3 months and to begin to start buying some essential items to start a more normal existence.

We have been lucky with the weather as it has stayed quite cool. We hope that continues for at least the next few days.

August 22nd 2010 (Sunday)

The campsite is just about packed up now and we will be on the long road south again tomorrow. It hardly seems any time at all since we got here and were setting everything up.

If we weren't going south to start living in a house then we would probably have stayed here a couple more weeks but I guess it is

finally time to settle down again.

August 23rd 2010 (Monday)

We didn't get away that early and only hit the highway by about 9:30am. The weather was overcast and drizzly but at least it was cool for this time of the year so the drive down to Barradale was pleasant enough. We stopped briefly at Robe River for lunch and the drive was uneventful (GOOD!)



August 24th 2010 (Tuesday)

Rain all last night and during most of the day until we got close to Carnarvon. Unpleasant night and not a good drive in these conditions. Stopped overnight at Nerren Nerren so we did over 500km today.

August 25th 2010 (Wednesday)

Nice sunny day at last. Another long drive to the rest area at Wannamal. Hoping to see some nice wildflowers there but not as good as last time we stopped. Dorothy did get to see some good roadside displays of wildflowers on the way down but no chance to stop and take photos.

August 26th 2010 (Thursday)

Finally arrived at the house and started unpacking. I can't believe that we have packed so much into the caravan. We had to drive down to the shops to order a couple of beds as we only have the caravan mattresses. We will have to buy a lot of things over the next few days.

The house is very old and a bit grotty but it is in a very nice area and everything is close so we will have plenty to keep us busy. The beds cost around \$1100 and that is just the start.

We were happy to find that the house did have a few bits of furniture so we have some storage space but we will have to gradually buy everything needed in a normal household.

August 27th 2010 (Friday)

Shopping at Rockingham City (\$3-400) and Bunnings. A busy day sorting the house out.

Got rether fed up when we found the lounge suite we want wont arrive until late September.

August 28th 2010 (Saturday)

More shopping. We have so much to buy, more than we originally planned as we forgot a lot of things.

August 29th 2010 (Sunday)

Working hard to clean the house up today.

August 30th 2010 (Monday)

More shopping. Things we have bought so far:

2 x queen sized beds, sheets, quilt covers, quilt (ordered), pillows, bolster, lounge suite, 4 burner BBQ with hood, BBQ cover, 2 swivel office chairs, computer desk, nest of 3 tables, 2 stand fans, bake ware, large frypan, assorted cooking implements, new kitchen bin, wall clock, clothes airer, ironing board, bath mat, non slip bathroom mat, padlock, soap tray, rubber mat, cobweb brush, window squeegee, 2 bedside lamps, toaster, digital set top box, computer speakers, Akai stereo, room heater, vacuum cleaner, step ladder, washing basket and I'm sure I must have forgotten a few things too.

The house is more or less cleaned up now but we still have a heap of things to sort out.

September 5th 2010 (Sunday)

I managed to catch the flu last week so I haven't been getting round to doing all the things I wanted to do. The girls have been busy cleaning the house but we still have quite a lot to do until we are properly settled.

We have managed to show Dorothy most of the beaches around Rockingham and Belle has been taking her round to the interesting shops so she is getting to know the area and what is down here pretty well by now. We still have a list of things a mile long to get done so I guess that will all start to happen this week as I am now getting over the bug I caught.

September 13th 2010 (Monday)

We needed to get a second car as keeping the Cruiser for running around town would be too expensive and we want to keep that for going away with the caravan so don't want to wear it out.

Originally we thought about buying a late model second hand car but in the end there was only about 2k difference between old and new so we decided to buy a new Hyundai Getz 5 door. We have ordered it and expect to be able to pick it up mid next week.

We have been gradually filling the house with all the bits and pieces needed for general living and our spending over the last couple of weeks is rapidly approaching 20K.

September 19th 2010 (Sunday)

Went for a trip up into the hills today. Was disgusted to find that DEC has closed Goorolong park and had to go on to Serpentine Dam to have lunch. Nice day out.



September 21st 2010 (Tuesday)

Picked up the new car today. The girls are happy and at least now Dorothy will be able to start practising to get the Australian driver's license.

September 24th 2010 (Friday)

Took the boat out and did a bit of fishing today. Best area was on the broken sand flats off Palm Beach where we caught some nice King George whiting.

September 25th 2010 (Saturday)

Mick & Jean called by last night and told us about some good furniture that came in to a local Op Shop. We went down today and bought one of the items for just \$40. It is a beautiful TV cabinet that is made from solid wood. It would cost hundreds of dollars new. It was very heavy and difficult to move but we managed and are very happy with it.

September 26th 2010 (Sunday)

Kevin & Lesley dropped in today. Good to catch up with them after so long.

Tomorrow brings us to 2 years since we first met Dorothy. What a change that brought to all our lives. We may not be finally settled yet but gradually things are getting better and we all have hopes that by this time next year all the hassles will be in the past.

We are going up to King's Park tomorrow to celebrate the anniversary in the place we first really got a chance to sit and talk.

October 7th 2010 (Thursday)

Time is flying by and there don't seem to be enough days in the week to get everything done. We have (hopefully) finished our spending spree for the time being with the last few items being a 7.5kg washing machine, 34 inch TV, two bicycles and sundry odds and ends all adding up to around \$1500.00.

Hopefully the bikes will help us get some exercise as Dorothy's knee plays up when she walks so riding might be a better option for her.

October 14th 2010 (Thursday)

Took Dorothy up to see Rotary House (where Belle & I met 31 years ago) and then went up in to the hills to have a walk at Whistlepipe Gully. Also had a look at the house we lived in for 6 years at St. James then at our old house in Maddington (which has now changed almost beyond recognition). After lunch we went to Gosnells markets and then the girls did some 'op' shopping. Quite a full day out.



October 27th 2010 (Wednesday)

Bought a new laptop today as Dorothy has been struggling with the old Compaq for a while and it finally gave up yesterday. Got a laptop very similar in spec to the one we bought for Belle in Carnarvon but this one was under \$500 - about \$200 cheaper. Spent most of yesterday afternoon re-loading everything. At least Dorothy now has a faster machine and can use the net more effectively.

We are managing to keep busy and have a few things planned for the coming weeks. We want to go to Fremantle as we didn't go last time we had planned to. Also a Malaysian food exhibition at Claremont from Nov 5-7, then we want to catch up with Gus & Bobby, have to make time to visit Dave & Carmel again and then Christmas is rapidly approaching so we won't have time to get bored.

The vegie garden we planted in the back garden is starting to show signs of growth but it will be a while yet before we get anything useful out of it.

The weather has been a bit odd, some rain and cold winds on and off with patches of warm sunny weather in between.

November 8th 2010 (Monday)

Went fishing in Mangles Bay. caught quite a few fish but in the end only brought back 4 herring that Dorothy wanted to cook.

November 10th 2010 (Wednesday)

Finally replaced my old Fuji camera with a new model (\$248). This is officially my Christmas present but couldn't wait until Christmas to start using it - far too impatient :)

The weather has gone all cold and rainy today, almost like winter again.

December 5th 2010 (Sunday)

Belle finally gave in and decided to get a bicycle as well (picked one up from Rockingham market for \$45) so now we are all getting out riding at last.

For a while the weather went back to being hot and summery but the past few days have reverted to cold and drizzly again.

We are just 3 weeks out from Christmas and I have no idea where the time goes these days.

January 26th 2011

The lack of entries for the last few weeks is an indication of a relatively quiet and peaceful period in our collective existence.

Christmas came and went. Enjoyable and great to still be together but with no real notable occurrences.

Yesterday marks 2 years since Dorothy came to Australia the second time and 2 years that the three of us have been living together 24/7.

Dorothy and I celebrate our anniversary on February 1st and this year we will be doing so by taking a trip together down south to Pemberton. Belle is staying in the house and to be quite honest I will never be really comfortable when the three of us are not together. Even so her turn will come in July when we celebrate our 30th anniversary and we will go and stay at a hotel in Perth while Dorothy stays at home.

I guess I can now say I have been married for 32 years. All still a bit confusing.

In the past few weeks we haven't done a great deal. A trip out to Dwellingup, a failed attempt at fishing from Palm Beach jetty, a slightly more successful trip out in the boat to catch some crabs pretty much sums it up.

The weather has been a bit odd, boiling hot one moment then quite cold and rainy the next. Carnarvon got flooded out - good job we came south this year, and the eastern states have all had very bad floods.

We got to go down to Mandurah before Xmas and caught up with Dave again. He was much improved over the time before and can talk well enough to be understood now. He must have had a really hard time before that, knowing what he wanted to tell people but not being able to do so. I think in time he will get back to being his old self. I hope so anyway.

January 31st 2011 (Monday)

Dorothy and I took off to Pemberton for our anniversary trip. On the way down we stopped off at Harvey to have a look at Stirling's Cottage and Harvey Weir. We took our time driving down and arrived around 3pm. We were quite impressed with the chalet. It was nice and roomy and quite attractive. The surrounds were nice and the view across the valley was wonderful.



February 1st 2011 (Tuesday)

A day driving round exploring the area as much as possible. A stop at Beedelup Falls, then on to Nannup, Barrabup Pool and then Heartbreak Trail on the Warren River.



February 2nd 2011 (Wednesday)

A day closer to Pemberton this time as yesterday tired us out a bit. First we went into Pemberton to look round and take some photos and then out to Big Brook. Although this is a great swimming spot the wind was up a bit so we 'chickened out' and didn't have a dip.

We had a nice walk and had lunch by the water. Later we went to have another look at the Gloucester Tree and then went to see the Cascades only to find that the area had been closed until the end of February.



February 8th 2011 (Tuesday)

Back home today. Not a bad drive and we took it easy stopping off in Bridgetown to take more photos. Got home around lunchtime. It was a very nice trip and we both enjoyed it very much. This was to celebrate our 2nd anniversary together and Belle's turn comes up later in the year when we celebrate our 30th anniversary.

Found out when we got home that Housing has decided to knock us off priority list <sigh> yet more stupidity from these morons. Another round of letters is about to ensue. 17 months on this so called priority list and bugger all and then they knock us off with no consultation.

(Later we appealed the stupid Housing decision and had to go up to Fremantle, thankfully we won the appeal and are back on the priority list.)

March 20th 2011 (Sunday) Trip to the South Coast - My last trip as a driver

Drove out through the hills past Jarrahdale. The drive through the hills was quite tiring and we didn't get to our campsite at Lake Nunijup until late afternoon. We had the place to ourselves and settled in for a quiet night. Rain threatened on and off but nothing eventuated.



March 21st 2011

Didn't rush off in the morning but just took our time before driving the last 100km to Albany. Settled in at Rose Garden caravan park. Very nice park situated by the beach on Emu Point.

Albany has started growing quite rapidly now and the road system hasn't kept up with the increase in traffic. Very busy around rush hour and places like the main round-a-bouts are a big pain to get through.

Did a bit of shopping.



March 22nd 2011

Sight seeing out to the west of Albany, past Denmark and on to William Bay. Dorothy loved this spot, nice clear water big smooth granite boulders plunging into the sea.

From there is was back to Cosy Corner, Shelly Beach, Torbay Inlet and finally Muttonbird Island to end off the day.



William Bay

March 23rd 2011

Another sight seeing day out to Norman's Inlet, Betty's Beach and East bay then back to Ledge Beach and Gull Rock.

We had originbally intended going out to Cheyne's Beach and Waychinicup but took the wrong road and went 90 km out of our way.

Plan 'A' called for us to head off towards Esperance with the caravan tomorrow but due to all the driving in the past three days we have decided to stay an extra night and have a rest day tomorrow.



Norman's Inlet

March 24th 2011

A bit of shopping to stock up and a relaxing day just catching up on a few chores. Tried fishing in the evening, Dorothy caught two striped trumpeter but nothing else.

March 25th 2011

A long drive out through Jerramungup and Ravensthorpe then south to the turn off near Hopetoun. Stopped at Masons Bay. Nice spot and mostly empty. We will stop here two nights.



Mason's Bay

March 26th 2011

Tried fishing from the beach but no fish biting. Walked along the beach and lazed around looking at the sea.

March 27th 2011

Moved to Starvation Bay but found it was already full of campers. In the process of trying to get round the small area a tree branch hit one of the caravan windows and broke it. We decided to go on to Quagi where we settled in. We will go into Esperance tomorrow and see what we can sort out about getting the caravan window replaced.



March 28th 2011

Belle stayed in the campsite to make sure the caravan was secure and Dorothy and I went into Esperance to see about getting the caravan window fixed. Also did some sight seeing along the coast and picked up some supplies.



March 29th 2011

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Went and had a look at another campsite further along the coast at Fanny Bay. A very nice spot but not suitable for caravans as the track in is a bit difficult.

March 30th 2011

Went back to Fanny Bay and went further down a track we bypassed the day before to yet another campsite at Shoal Cape. This track was 4x4 only and is only suitable for camper trailers. A nice remote place that few people would know about.

March 31st 2011

Moved in to Esperance to get the caravan window fixed (\$139) and we will stay here two nights to give us the chance to go out and have a look at Cape Le Grand.

Had a look at Wylie Bay and Bandy Creek Harbour.

April 1st 2011

Out to Cape Le Grand. Spectacular area, had to take Dorothy out there as we were so close.



Hellfire Bay

April 2nd 2011

Left Esperance and headed home. Chose to go inland via Lake Grace so turned north at Ravensthorpe. Drove all day and got to a re4st area 8km east of Arthur River. Quiet night.

April 3rd 2011

Back home again. All relieved to get back. Going back to staying in the caravan after living in a house wasn't very easy, especially as we were moving on so frequently.

April 13th 2011

A chance to take the boat out and do some fishing. Lovely day. Belle stayed at home so just Dorothy and I. Brought back 12 sand whiting that Dorothy cooked for lunch.

May 17th 2011

I have been hanging on to my driving license just in case there is an emergency and I need to use the car but the time has finally come to admit defeat and give it up as my eyesight is getting to the point where it worries me. I gave up trying to drive at night years ago. I suppose I had a pretty good run considering my eyesight was never up to standard in the first place. I got to drive for 28 years and never had an 'at fault' accident. Even though my eyesight was never technically good enough, I drove all round Australia, overseas and even drove a 30 foot bus with a tandem trailer on the back. How did I get a license when my eyes weren't good enough? For me to know and for others to wonder about. The fact that I did drive and not only drove but did so safely for so long, makes a mockery of the so called eyesight limits they impose.

Considering I am only 50 years old, I am very glad we decided to go round Australia when we did. If we had hung on until we retired we would never have made it. I will miss driving, especially out in the remote areas but I always knew I was 'living on borrowed time' in any case. For more than half my life I got to live a normal life, worked like everyone else and did things that would have otherwise been denied to me. I have no regrets.

May 20th 2011

Long time between entries as not a great deal happens once you are back living in suburbia. We had the first real storm of the season yesterday and the old dead tree in the back garden fell over damaging the fence and the roof of the house next door. Thankfully not our problem so the real estate agents had to sort it all out.

Missing being up at Cleaverville. Undecided yet about the fate of the caravan as I officially gave up driving on the 17th of this month.

After a long fight with Housing Dorothy has finally been put on the application and we are now waiting for a 3 bedroom house. As the lease on this place runs until next March we don't expect anything to happen until then.

Have been fishing a few times since the last entry but only once did we catch anything worth bringing home (6 herring). Tried fishing from the beach a few times and caught a few flounder etc. but let everything go.

Apart from a trip to the WA Museum in Perth and an invite out from new friends for dinner things have been a bit quiet. Shopping at Op Shops for various bits and pieces plus a few purchases from the internet to keep replacing some of the stuff those thieving BASTARDS at Lazeaway stole from us have been the main shopping 'sprees' in the past few weeks.

Still no progress on the bus issue but we just keep plugging away in the hope that persistence will eventually count for something. At least the Police Minister and DOCEP are finally aware that Lazeaway have been lying through their teeth and DOCEP have finally offered some useful advice. It is about time people started to see the truth.

June 11 2011

Winter has set in and it is COLD! The result of this is my back and joints starting to all play up again. I had avoided this for years by going north to get away from the cold weather but now I am back to square one, spending 4-5 months of the year in pain and wondering how long it will be before it gets so bad I can't stand up.

The veggie garden has all but stopped growing and the fish seem to have all moved to warmer seas so life gets rather gloomy during winter.

I had to buy a bigger computer screen on Thursday as trying to use the old 17 inch just gave me trouble with my eyes. The new one is 23 inch and helps quite a lot. I still can't stay on for too long at one go but at least if I keep usage down I am not currently getting such badly strained eyes and headaches.

One thing I really don't like is my typing ability showing real deterioration. I'm not sure if it is just the eyesight or if it might be signs of Alzhiemers. Father died from that and it is thought to be hereditary so it is a big concern. Typing 'the' continually comes up as 'teh' and other words are now showing similar characteristics. (Just checking that sentence 'thought' came out as 'though' that is happening all the time too! I also type within as 'withing' a lot, I never used to do these things - CRAP getting old sucks!)

August 2 2011

Winter has been very wet and windy. Not a lot to write about. Belle and I celebrated our 30th anniversary by going up to Perth for the night and staying at a hotel and pigging out but life has become a bit hum-drum for the three of us as we wait for the end of winter and the start of the wildflower season.

The good thing for me about the wet weather is that it isn't as cold as when the skies are clear so I don't suffer from joint pain quite as much.

August 26th 2011 (Friday)

Today marks our first anniversary of being in a house again. a whole year gone already and we barely seem to have blinked.

We are heading off for a weekend trip. The main reason we are going is to see the Medieval carnival at Balingup but it gives us a chance to see a few other areas along the way.

Stopped off to give Dorothy a look at Australind and Bunbury before doing A LOT of shopping in Busselton. Finally got to the resort sometime after 3pm. Nice place, the unit is spacious and at about \$105 a night for the three of us it is also quite good value.

August 27th 2011

Went to Balingup via Donnybrook where we stopped for a bit more 'retail therapy'. The Medieval Carnival to Balingup was a great event. Lots of people put a lot of effort into dressing up in period costume and there is plenty to do and see. We only stopped for a fw hours before heading back to Busselton for the night.

August 28th 2011

Back home again today. A good weekend away but a bit more expensive than planned due to all the shopping we ended up doing.

September 13th 2011 (Tuesday)

Took the boat out for the first time this season and managed to catch a few fish. 8 King George whiting, 2 sand whiting and two big garfish.



October 21st 2011 (Friday)

Lost some journal entries when my computer crashed. It took several days to put everything back together and now I have moved all data to an external drive just in case it happens again.

Dorothy had a 'sleep over' at a friend's house last week and enjoyed herself a lot. It is nice for her to start making friends of her own here as she has so far been limited to Bella and I and our friends.

This week we have been spending a bit of money getting a few things that have been on the list for a while.

These included two new portable air-conditioners to help us get through the heat of summer in a bit more comfort than last year. Also a home theatre that allows us access to the internet and more programs to watch and also connects to my computer so we can stream music and video directly to it.

Dorothy bought me a new cam-corder which I am having fun with. The old one still works ok but the battery needs replacing and it is a bit out of date. All up we spent about \$1700.

Last Sunday (16 Oct) we got free tickets and free lunch at the Zoo which was a good day out and would have been even better if the temperature hadn't soared to 34C.

The wildflower trip we had planned has now been abandoned as we have spent a bunch of money and the wildflowers will be starting to die off now anyway. It is a pity the season here is so short.

The veggie garden would be doing well is it wasn't for the insects that are hell bent on eating everything in sight. Some plants are suffering more than others and we still haven't got much out of it yet.

November 2nd 2011 (Wednesday)

The weather is heating up a bit early this year. We have already had 4 days of 30C+ temperatures so far and we still have a month of spring left to go before the real summer starts.

The veggie patch is being eaten to bits by various insects so all in all things could be better.

Dorothy and I took the boat out last week to try some fishing but didn't catch anything worth while. There seem to be lots of crabs about as we kept bringing them to the surface on fishing lines. We have bought a new set of crab pots in anticipation. All we need now are some low wind days.

November 10th 2011 (Thursday)

Went fishing in the boat again today. Technically we went crabbing but something was pulling all the crab baits out of the net so instead we went under the bridge and picked off some nice big mussels as the tide was finally low enough to get t them. After that we dropped the lines in and caught a few fish as well so the day turned out ok in the end.

Dorothy caught the best fish and nice flounder.



November 11th 2011 (Friday)

Dorothy and I took the boat out today as Belle wanted to go to the watercolour meeting. We caught a few whiting and herring and managed to pick up some more mussels as well.

In all over the last two days we collected 2.5kg of mussel meat so the trips were very productive.

November 13th 2011 (Sunday)

Went up to Perth as Government House has an open day and we have never looked inside. To start with we went to Queen's Gardens which I haven't seen for a VERY long time and then caught a bus to Gov't House. There was a food fair being run at the same time so we bought lunch and later went to have a look at the development around Claisebrooke Creek in East Perth. This area used to be just industrial wasteland but now there are appartments and a small marina.

November 18th 2011 (Friday)

The weather has gone back to being cloudy and rainy which is a bit of a relief after the brief hot spell at the start of the month.