

KWONGAN & WANDOO TRIP REPORT 2024

viranatura
tours 

Anigozanthos manglesii & *Conospermum incurvum*, Perth

Day 1 7 Sept – Arrival in Perth

Some of the group had arrived two or three days early and spent time exploring around Perth, such as visiting the quokkas on Rottnest Island, local parks and museums, etc. The US contingent arrived in the afternoon and we all met up for a first group dinner that evening.

Day 2 8 Sept – Kings Park & Wireless Hill

The rough weather of the last few days was past and our first field day was in perfect weather. The morning was spent in the expansive environs of Kings Park, an enclave of native bushland within the city. We arrived early, parked and set off walking, but only made a short distance before the first of many sulphurous *Caladenia flava* drew our attention. They grew with the pretty lilac drumsticks of *Sowerbaea laxiflora*, tall white *Burchardia congesta*, and *Anigozanthos manglesii*, the latter a wonderfully architectural plant with deep red stems and curved green flowers that are pollinated by honeyeaters. Exploring the bush further we found *Pterostylis sanguinea*, tufts of yellow *Conostylis candicans* (four subspecies are present in the park) the unusual pagodas of *Drosera stolonifera*, the large yellow and red flowers of *Isotoma cuneifolia* with attractive striped reverse to their standards and in grassier places was pink *Caladenia latifolia*. Typical plants in the bush were various *Banksia*, *Corymbia*, *Hakea*, the cycad *Macrozamia fraseri* and the grass tree *Xanthorrhoea preisii*. Another plant that was abundant throughout was *Freesia alba x liechtlinii*, one of many invasive South African taxa. They seemed now firmly entrenched and very much part of the flora and their deliciously sweet fragrance filled the air, almost heady at times. Then, after watching several painted ladies feeding on a shrub of *Hakea crithmifolia*, we found a solitary and handsome *Caladenia arenicola*. Following quieter tracks we continued to many and better of the same plants as well as hairy-leaved *Conostylis setigera*, good clumps of violet-like *Hybanthus calycina*, tough-leaved *Hakea prostrata* (which actually grows more commonly as a shrub or small tree) and two more *Caladenia arenicola*, whilst three western ringneck (parrots) were feeding on an acacia very close and unconcerned as we crossed the main drive.

Lunch was on a shady bench with Australian magpies and Australian white



Diuris corymbosa

ibis on the prowl around us. Afterwards, we drove the short distance across to another (smaller) area of bushland, that was somewhat different in character. Large specimens of grass trees with thick 'skirts' of dead leaves were studded among an open matrix of sandy heath and among the small shrubs we found a number of *Caladenia longicauda* subsp. *calcigena*, some fiery *Anigozanthos humilis*, rich blue *Chamaescilla corymbosa* followed by ruby-lipped *Caladenia arenicola*. More orchids were found here and there and then we found a chunky western blue-tongued lizard loitering in the short grass. Moving onto a different path there were stands of *Lyperanthus serratus* and then we had excellent close views of red-tailed black cockatoo feeding, flying and calling from an exposed perch. There was another orchid I was looking for and luckily someone pointed one out to Hugh, which we managed to re-find; *Caladenia discoidea*, the dancing spider orchid. A few more were subsequently found as we walked back to the car park, also seeing a fine clump of *Caladenia arenicola* on the way.

Dinner was in a good restaurant in the botanic garden and driving back out we had a fine view of Perth at night.

Day 3 9 Sept – To Phoebe Reserve & Dongara

It was all change and time to head for the species-rich kwongan heaths of the north, enjoying one more gigantic and delicious breakfast and then leaving the big city for the country, travelling through a mosaic of farms, eucalypt patches and heaths. We were never going to make it directly to Badgingara and our first stop was an impromptu one at a petrol station where some very flowery bushes of *Chamaelaucium uncinatum* grew in a patch of kwongan. Closer examination also found a fine scrambling *Drosera pallida* with several open white flowers, a *Conostylis* sp. and then a few lovely shining purple enamel orchids; *Elythranthera brunonis*. Moving on some superb bushy clumps of electric blue *Lechenaultia biloba* brought us to a stop, also finding *Solanum lasiophyllum*, the highly toxic *Gastrolobium polystachyum* (source of a lethal mammalian toxin used widely in poison bait) and the long golden spikes of *Grevillea eriostachya*. Another showy shrub was next; *Eucalyptus macrocarpa*, a wonderfully architectural sprawling shrub with attractive light grey foliage and very large pink flowers. Spread in large numbers beneath these were hundreds if not thousands of pretty *Drosera glanduligera* beset with small orange flowers. they looked especially attractive growing with the non-native South African *Romulea*.

Lechenaultia biloba



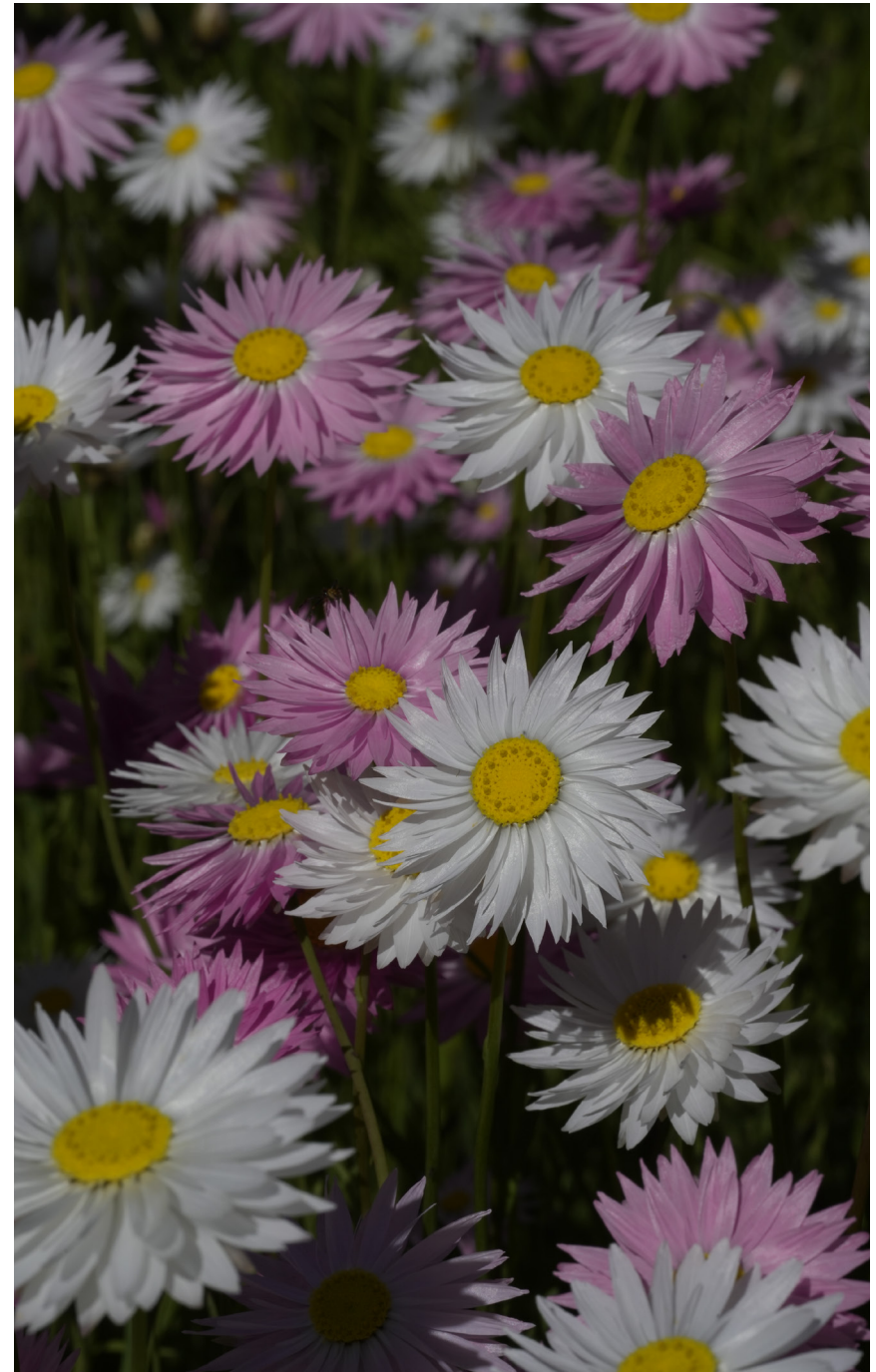
As we continued the roadsides were lined with abundant smoke bushes; *Conospermum incurvum* and we eventually made it to the delightful Phoebe Reserve, a little slice of heath and woodland that abounded with flowers and other things. After lunch in the shade with galas flying overhead we set off, beginning with an orchid bonanza and finding many new species in close proximity with; *Thelymitra antennifera*, *Diuris laxiflora*, the lovely *Cyanicula gemmata* (blue chine orchid), various forms of handsome *Caladenia lorea* and a *Diuris* sp. (donkey orchid). the scrambling stems of *Drosera pallida* (white) and upright pink-flowered *D. menziesii* were common as were the countless rosettes of *D. erythrorhiza*. *Burchardia rosea* was everywhere too. Reaching an area of York gums (*Eucalyptus loxophleba*) we saw splendid drifts of pink and white *Rhodanthe chlorocephala* growing by the countless thousands and carpeting the ground in broad patches. Further on its cousin *R. manglesii* also grew in large numbers, extending into the slightly drier edges of the heaths that clothed the stony slopes. A superb clump of *Caladenia hirta* was seen along with several more *Elythranthera brunonis*, many more *Drosera pallida* and then as we gained some height there was a superb clump of *Anigozanthus humilis* and increasing numbers of *Banksia carlinoides*. Indeed, flowering woody plants became more numerous as we continued with some fine flowering shrubs of pale pink *Diplopeltis huegelii*, red *Astroloma microdonta*, *Diplolaena ferruginea*, *Hemiandra glabra* and a mauve *Calytrix* sp. growing with *Banksia* af. *armata*.. A scrambling *Drosera* with large white flowers was seen, along with a few more superb *Caladenia lorea* and a hefty western blue-tongued lizard just before we arrived back at the vehicle.

It was still and hour and a half to Dongara, but we had time for a couple of stops, the first for a good flowering shrub of *Banksia prionotes* with large orangey cones of styles growing beneath tall *Xylomelon angustifolium* with ovoid grey fruits. The second stop was for a fine population of *Lechenaultia linaroides* with floriferous mounds lining the roadside bearing an abundance of raspberry and cream flowers.

Day 4

10 Sept – Mount Lesueur

The trouble with kwongan heath is you could stop just about anywhere and find good plants, meaning it could take days to travel along a road! That was certainly the case first thing when we stopped at a recent burn and serendipity favoured us with the immediate discovery of a *Caladenia cebra* (Arrowsmith spider orchid).



Rhodanthe chlorocephalum

Elswhere, among the charcoaled stems was an abundance of *Burchardia congesta* as well as many *Drosera drummondii* climbing up sticks with large pale pink flowers. Some flowers were deeper pink or white and it's possible more than one species was present. A few *Pyrorchis nigricans* (fire orchids) were found and there the attractive yellow *Podotricha chrysantha* and its' cousin *P. gnaphthioides*. Along the roadside a large orange jewel beetle alighted on a piece of bright plastic close to where we found the first *Caladenia longicauda*. Moving on, we turned off the main road and made our way towards the coast, turning off again onto a dirt road where we stopped for a plant of *Verticordia grandis*. There had been a large burn inside the park, making the ranks of *Xanthorrhoea preisii* stand out more than ever with their tufts of new leaves above blackened trunks. Beneath grew many *Anigozanthos humilis* and an abundance of *Chamaescilla corymbosa*, which in places formed wonderful blue drifts. Moving slowly along the road we stopped for flowering shrubs of *Isopogon dubium*, a towering grass tree flower spike, flowering *Eucalyptus*, dainty *Stylidium* sp. and scrambling over many of the shrubs was lovely *Thysanotus patersoniae* (a fringe lily) At another stop we found *Blancoa canescens* and *Conostephium pendulum* with purple-tipped white flowers.

Lunch was in the car park (near the start of our afternoon walk), surrounded by bushlands with interesting plants from prostrate *Darwinia virescens*, red *Astroloma glaucescens* and tufts of bristly-leaved *Conostylis setifera*. Our walk wound its way through species rich heath, finding sky blue *Conospermum nervosum*, a lovely dwarf pea shrub; then little bushes of *Thomasia grandiflora*, *Diplolaena ferruginea*, a *Gompholobium* sp. with fine foliage, *Caladenia lorea* and walking up onto higher ground was a bright yellow *Hypoxis* sp. Rounding the bend the aspect changed and the flora shifted with many new plants including pretty *Verticordia huegelii*, a *Polysema* sp, a pretty little *Stylidium*, bushes of a myrtle with flowers popular with many beetles all with a sweeping landscape of low table topped hills and stands of gangly white-trunked gums. Scattered stands of *Kingia australis* replaced the grass trees and offered a similar architectural component to the landscape.

Driving slowly out of the park we found a fine shrub of *Verticordia chrysanthella* smothered in flowers and then just outside the park an older burn had plentiful *Hibbertia* spp, pretty *Lasiopetalum drummondii*, nodding *Pimelea sulphurea* and

Anigozanthos humilis



a small tubular pink *Astroloma*(?). The showy *Pimelea floribunda* was a little further on growing with more, graceful *Caladenia longicauda* and the final plant note of the day were flowering cones of *Banksia menziesii*. The days are short at this time and we arrived as the sun was setting, passing a large western grey kangaroo in the road on the way.

Day 5 11 Sept – Coalseam & Pindar

This years' good rains promised good displays of 'everlastings' and so it turned out. We drove the hour or so to Coalseam and even before we arrived the verges were carpeted in daisies of various kinds. Our first walk found abundant drifts of *Cephalipterum drummondii* among which grew the crisp golden *Waitzia nitida*, bushes of *Senna glutinosa* and twining stems of large flowered *Thysanotus manglesianus*. Various other invasive plants joined the display none more so than *Arctotis*. We moved on planning to traverse through the park and stopping on the way. Unfortunately, all the rain meant more water in the creeks and the first crossing definitely looked a no go. We tried to find a way over to look at the drifts of daisies we could see, but the terrain once again proved difficult, though we did see fine drifts of *Brachycome iberidifolia*. Instead we opted to look at an easier area and in the end this produced many good things with fine drifts of *Rhodanthe chlorocephala*, pink or white *Schoenia cassiniana* and the small yellow flowered *Rhodanthe charleyae*. We now needed to drive a longer route and set off, retracing our steps and then driving across country to where we found a delightful lunch spot with a rich mix of flowers, finding colourful mixtures of *Schoenia cassiniana* and burnished gold *Waitzia acuminata*, alongside the white form of *Cephalipterum drummondii* and the rather handsome golden *Podolepis canescens*. Wonderful tumbles of *Thysanotus manglesianus* topped some shrubs and there was a bank of mauve *Seringia hermanniifolia* and an attractive large *Acacia* with strap-like leaves and spikes of yellow flowers. A diminutive orange *Drosera* was also around.

We pushed on, stopping for a windy collection of big clumps of *Stylidium elongatum*, fine-leaved white *Hakea obliquistigma* and *Eremophila forrestii*. Time was advancing but we couldn't resist one more stop for the vast displays of daisies with carpets of *Cephalipterum drummondii* filling every available open space between shrubs and along roadsides, invariably with *Schoenia*



cassiniana, *Brachycome* or *Podolepis canescens*. These carpets appeared like snow between the woody plants as we neared our destination, arriving at a large colony of wreath flowers; *Lechenaultia macrantha*. This remarkable plant forms roughly circular low mats fringed by showy cream to raspberry-pink flowers. They were all in perfect condition and in the adjacent shrubberies we found an interesting selection with the delicate climbing blue-flowered *Cheiranthra filifolia*, low growing orange flowered *Balaustion microphyllum*, *Ricinocarpus velutinus*, a *Caladenia roei* (clown orchid), pink *Eremaea* sp and pretty low-growing *Velleia rosea*.

The various detours had come home to roost and we were out of time. From here we drove directly back to Dongara arriving in good time for (a much warmer) dinner outside.

Day 6 12 Sept – Pinnacles and to York

A long day that covered quite a distance, but necessary to move from north to south. We spent some time exploring an area of kwongan heath that included a large tract burnt a year or two before. Over the course of an hour we found a good number of lovely *Thelymitra campanulata* with pretty stripey blue flowers. There were also both a type of hammer orchid known as *Drakaea glyptodon* (king-in-his-carriage) and *Paracaleana nigrata* (flying duck orchid) close to one another, two bizarre little plants each evolved for specific wasp pollinators. Other interesting plants included the pretty highly localised endemic; *Calytrix eneabensis* along with abundant frothy pale grey plumes of *Conospermum incurvum*, a *Pimelea* sp, *Conostylis* sp, purple flowered *Scaveola phlebopetala* and *Gompholobium capitatum* with large yellow pea flowers. We had hoped to find Queen of Sheba here too, but alas no. Moving on we tried another area for black kangaroo paw, but only found clumps of leaves.

Lunch was in a breezy spot overlooking a large area of heath, which kept the flies at bay. Along the roadsides was plenty of *Daviesia divaricata* laden with lots of orange flowers and near where we ate were a few purple enamel orchids too. The road descended towards the blue waters of the Indian Ocean, paralleling the coast and passing sprawling masses of *Clematis pubescens*. Slightly inland were the Pinnacles, a collection of hundreds of limestone spires and lumps that projected from the bare sand. Bizarre if not exactly awe-inspiring, we took a drive around them and then continued along the coast, turning inland again and stopping by a large population



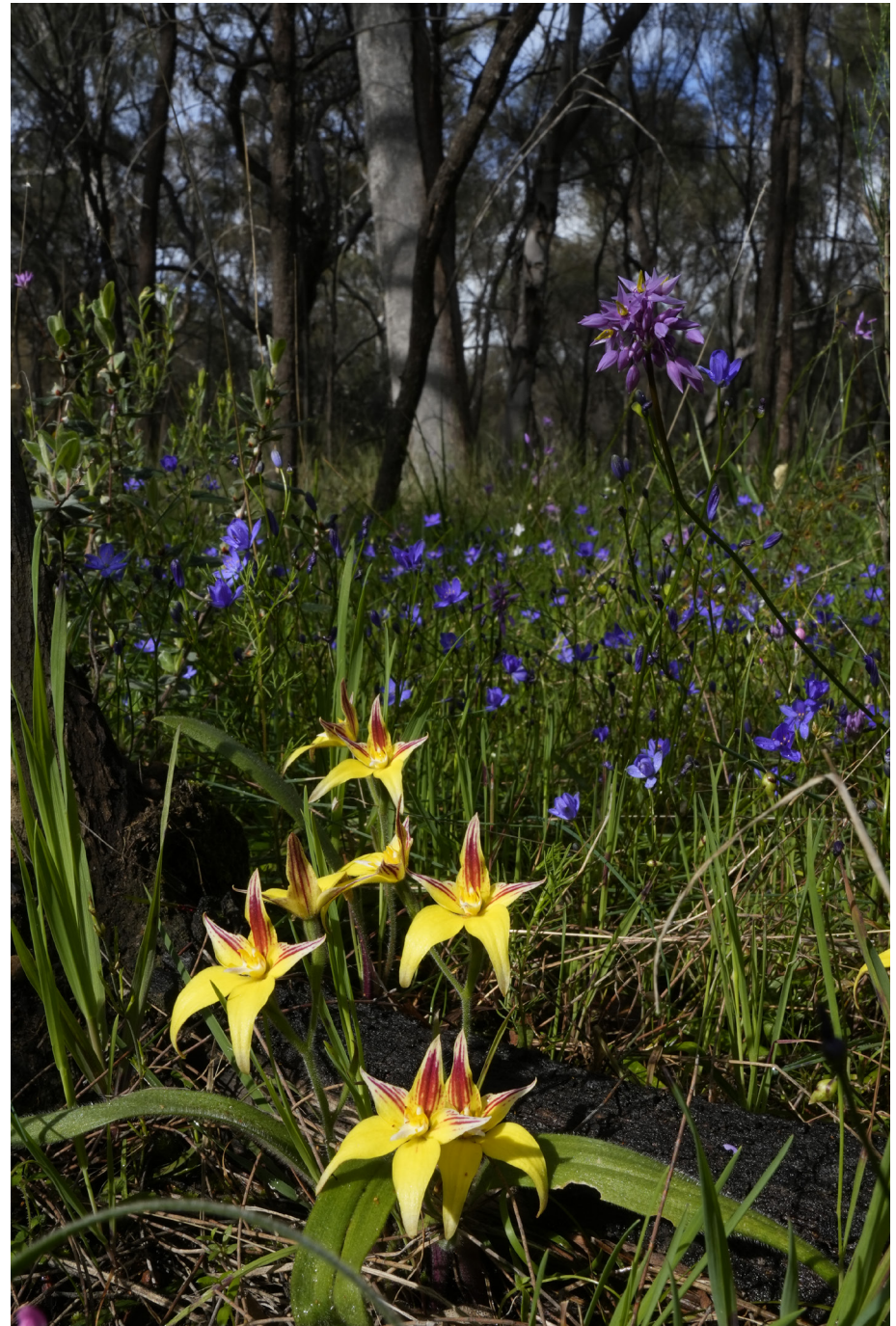
of grass trees, some of which were perhaps four metres tall (and very old). There was little other flora of interest though, but some good spiders and a caterpillar with a case made of sticks.

Time was marching on, but we still stopped one more time for the *Diplolaena velutina*, a rather fine shrub, which grew with *Anthoceros ilicifolia*, *Mirbellea spinosa* and two different donkey orchids; *Diuris* af. *corymbosa* and smaller *D. porrifolia*. There was now no option left but to pin our ears back and drive the remaining distance, transitioning from heath to extensive areas of eucalypt woodland.

Day 7 13 Sept – Central Orchids I

The dominant habitat in the surrounding area is open eucalypt woodland, especially with the attractive white-trunked *Eucalyptus wandoo*, and we spent the day exploring various sites. One of the main components at this time of year is orchids and we saw over twenty species today. Our first stop was brimming with plants, beginning with *Caladenia discoidea* and diminutive *Eriksonella saccharata* (sugar orchid) and as we moved across the area increasing numbers of *Caladenia falcata* (fringed mantis orchid) and *C. flava* appeared, together with plentiful *Chamaescilla corymbosa*, *Sowerbaea laxiflora*, *Stackhousia monogyna* and a variety of mainly pea shrubs. Among of these we also found *Diuris porrifolius*, *Pterostylis recurva* and *P. vittata*, a shell orchid. Wonderful thin clambering stems of *Drosera macrantha* seemed to attach to every stem, most bearing several snow-white flowers and in one grassy glade we found much richer red-suffused forms of *Caladenia flava* (Brookton form). After a while we moved onto drier ground among the large trees where we found an attractive orange pea shrub and a fine specimen of *Isopogon dubium*, a low-growing *Tetragona* sp., a rather delicate green *Pterostylis* sp. and *Isopogon rigida* grew nearby too.

We moved on to a second orchid rich site where the grassy clearings held deep red *Caladenia filifera* (blood spider orchid), a multitude of *C. falcata* and many superb *C. longicauda*. One of the latter even had a spider that had caught a fly on the topmost flower. The very slender green spikes of *Prasophyllum gracile* were in damper ground and there was also a rather delicate *Conostylis* sp. and lots more *Stackhousia monogyna*. Lunch was on a convenient bench just down



Caladenia flava, *Sowerbaea laxiflora* & *Chamaescilla corymbosa*

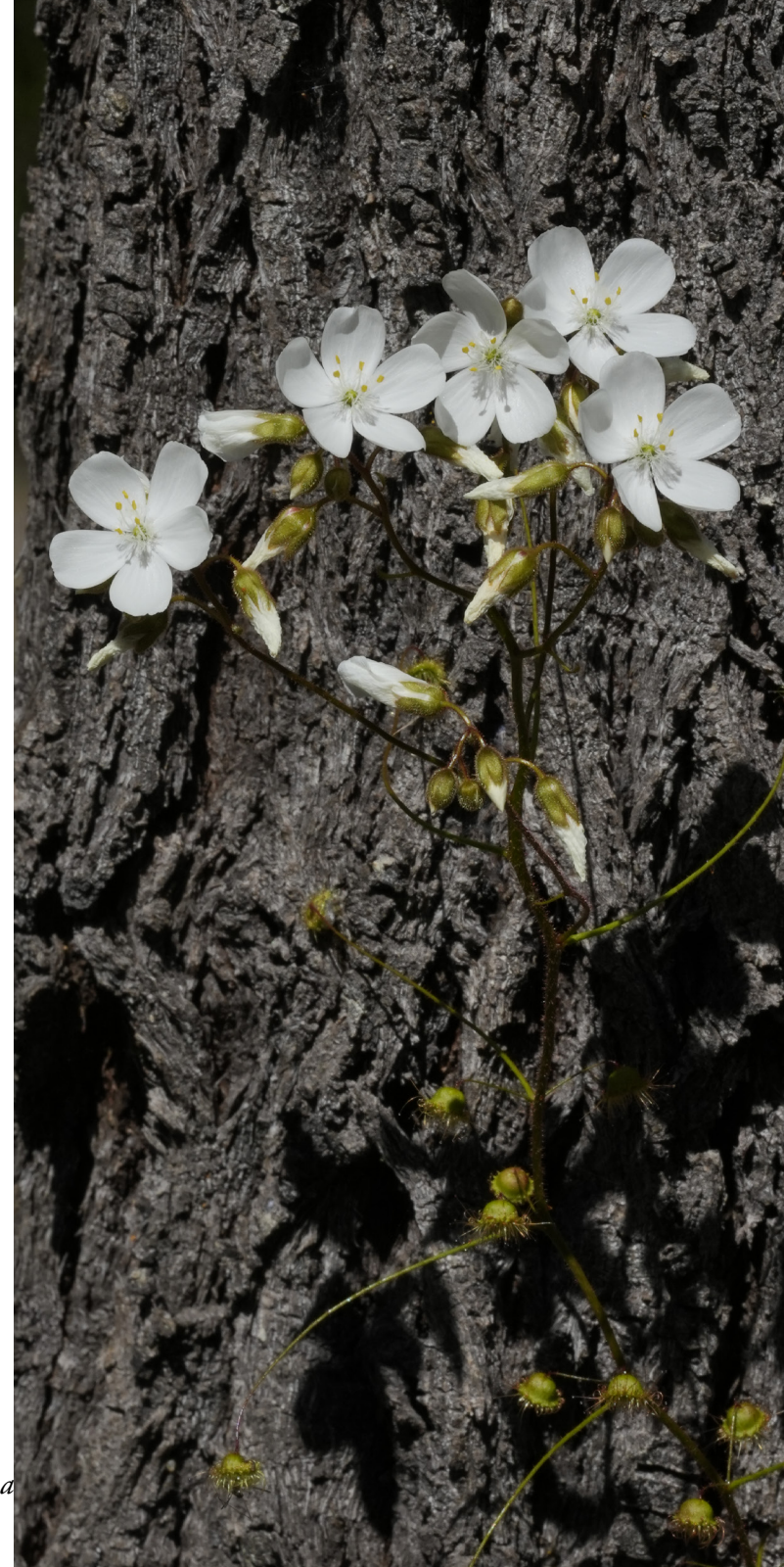
the road and afterwards we sped back to York and a little beyond to explore our next area. Here we quickly found the pretty large orange-flowered *Drosera leucoblasta*, the attractive low-growing orange pea and our first *Pterostylis barbata* (bird orchid). There were more of the latter further downslope, where we also found *Caladenia longiclavata*, *Cyanicula gertrudiae* (pale china orchid), purple enamel orchid and *Anigozanthos bicolor*. There were also some superb gnarled old wandoo gums. The orchids didn't let up at our final location either. Though some were by now familiar, among the spider and mantis orchids we also found many fine *Cyanicula gemmata* in various colours and then pretty pink *Caladenia reptans* and a lone *Pheladenia difformis*. The yellow baubles of *Craspidea paludicola* appeared in groups here and there too. The sun was dropping lower and casting pleasant soft light as we walked back after a productive day in the wandoo woods.

Day 8 14 Sept – Central Orchids II

Some more good breakfast foods at our local café, a quick bit of BBQ shopping and we were away, leaving the quaint charms of York behind and heading across the now familiar landscape of woodlands interspersed with vast fields of glaring yellow oilseed rape (canola). Fortunately, some substantial tracts of natural woods remain and after an hour and a half we reach such an area. The understorey as filled with the climbed stems of *Drosera macrantha* and almost immediately we found the first *Caladenia longiclavata*, *Diuris porrifolius* and *Pterostylis vittata*. There was a particular orchid to be found in these woods and at first we couldn't locate it, searching a large area and finding yellow-flowered *Drosera subhirtella*, *Caladenia longicauda* and a white-flowered pea shrub. Finally we found the hotspot with not only many *Caladenia longiclavata* in superb condition together with *C. falcata*, but also the remarkable *C. barbarossa* (common dragon orchid) the plant we were most looking for. This small orchid had strongly striped sepals and an amazing lip designed to look like a black wasp. There were quite a few scattered in a small area and Lynn and Charlie sensibly marked them out with sticks so we didn't crush any. After some time with these we wandered back seeing yet more superb *Drosera macrantha* climbing trees as well as a couple of pretty pink *Caladenia reptans*.

Lunch was in a peaceful woodland setting and then we moved on to our next orchid location. In an area of tall grass and sundews we found the distinctive *Caladenia chapmanii* (Chapman's spider orchid), with elegant red-pink sepals and a white shell-like lip. Unfortunately the area was also home to many mosquitos and we had to deal with them while taking photos. Together with these were a great many *C. falcata* too. There was not so much more ground to cover so we made two brief stops; one for *Allogyne heugeli* with a striking view of the Stirling Range across a huge rape field and then for another view of the mountains in a place where the kwongan quickly showed

Drosera macrantha



its diversity with an array of shrubs including *Gastrolobium spinosum*. We reached our accommodation in good time and I prepared the evening barbeque as the sun set.

Day 9 15 Sept – Stirling Range I

It was a cool breezy morning as we made our way across to the local café for breakfast. New Holland honeyeaters were also taking their morning meal on the large pendant pink flowers of *Eucalyptus caesia*. Today's plants were all in close proximity to our accommodation and we began with the drive up to the starting point for the Bluff Knoll hike, for once gaining some real height and getting a big expansive view of the forest and shrub clad landscape, with rocky peaks rising above it all here and there, whilst beyond was a patchwork the bright yellow or green fields. New plants appeared almost straight away with flowery bushes of *Eucalyptus staeri*, *Xanthosia rotundifolia* (southern cross), the pretty *Cyanicula sericea* (silky china orchid), lipstick red *Gastrolobium leakeanum*, jumbled heaps of saw-toothed *Banksia montana* foliage and the prostrate stems of *B. petiolaris* with attractive saw-toothed leaves. More orchids appeared as we walked, also seeing increasing numbers of white *Sphenotoma dracophylloides*, bushes of *Acacia pulchella* laden with balls of yellow flowers, the attractive larger shrub *Gastrolobium bilobum* with golden-orange flowers and then a colony of delicate snail orchids; *Pterostylis nana*. With a bit more height we found the first lovely *Darwinia lejostyla* growing close to the scarlet bottlebrushes of *Beaufortia decussata*. The latter looked wonderful mixed in with the architectural *Kingia australis* topped with silver mops of long leaves. We pushed on a bit further, but the flowers more or less petered out higher up so after savouring the last big view we walked back down finding more good specimens of various plants to photograph including a flower on *Banksia petiolaris*. Driving back down we made a few stops, first for some fine clumps of *Xanthosia rotundifolia*, with rich mauve *Dampiera parviflora* (?) growing nearby and then another stop for a red *Beaufortia cyrtodonta* growing with *Banksia nivea*, the attractive creamy flowered *Stylidium schoenoides*, various peas, a yellow *Melaleuca* sp. and a slim *Boronia* sp. the last stop was for the lovely sky-blue wands of *Conospermum coeruleascens* and violet *Hovea stricta*.

Lunch was back at base where *Chorizema cytisoides* was flowering in the woods and then we set off for a gentle walk across a flat area of heath and broken



Beaufortia decussata & *Kingia australis*

woodland, soon finding the large mauve flowers of *Patersonia occidentalis* followed by fiery *Lechenaultia formosa* in combination with the almost equally vivid large flowered pea; *Gompohlobium polymorphum*. Bushes of *Calytrix depressa* dressed with starry mauve flowers were scattered among grass trees and the gangly stems of eucalypts recovering from fire. The attractive leaves of *Banksia gardneri* rambled about and we found a few good flowers of these too. Cowslip orchids were everywhere, but we were searching for some other specials and eventually found our first *Caladenia cairnsiana* (zebra orchid). Brightly coloured *Diuris decrementum* (bee orchids) were close to these and a bit further on were some fine *Caladenia longicauda* with very long sepals and petals followed by a pristine *C. polychroma* and third species *C. radialis* was flowering close to this.

From here wandered back and got ready for a good dinner in the local pub.

Day 10 16 Sept – Fitzgerald River



A day among the botanically rich southern heaths with many stops as we drove east to Fitzgerald River. A tall and pristine spike of low-growing *Xanthorrhoea platyphylla* (a grass tree that does not develop a trunk) started the ball rolling, but once we turned off towards the national park things really started to get interesting with first some flowery shrubs of *Grevillea coccinea* growing along the roadside with plentiful *Calectasia grandiflora* covered in variable colours of purple to bronzy stars and lots of creeping plants of *Banksia gardneri*. Among these grew small flowered *Conostylis plathyrantha*, the peculiar fleshy leaved *Isopogon polycephalus*, a floriferous bush of *Kunzea affinis* and along the stony edges of the track were many tiny orange flowered *Drosera* sp. A bit further along a we stopped for the first large plants of multicoloured *Hakea victoria* though we needn't have bothered given what was to come. However, growing with them was *Lambertia inermis*, a low-growing *Hibbertia* sp. with small flowers and a white *Drosera* sp. Next stop, and there were more and better *Hakea victoria*, this time with rich heath that included fuzzy masses of *Conospermum distichum* growing with its delicate blue cousin *Conospermum caeruleum*, *Lysinema ciliatum*, the large bicoloured pink *Gompholobium scabrum* and some lovely colour forms of *Chamaelaucium pauciflorum* in which the creamy-white flowers were suffused red-pink. Yet another tiny *Drosera* was found in the sands. In places the *Hakea victoria* and *Conospermum distichum* grew adjacent to one another in a striking contrast of species that belonged to the same (large and varied) family. Some fine bells of *Pimelea physodes* were also found, some attractively suffused with pink.

Our lunch time stop was also very productive with an area of heath that included the lovely *Actinodium cunninghamii* a very daisy-like member of the

Myrtaceae. With this was peculiar *Conospermum bracteatum*, flowered-laden *Daviesia incrassata*, a bush of *Melaleuca suberosa* with pink flowers lining the branches and two very different species of *Conostylis*; thin leaved bright yellow *C. vaginata* and pale flowered larger clumps of *C. plathyrantha*. An *Anigozanthos rufus* was very nearly in bloom too. Driving out we stopped for *Goodenia scapigera* growing with a tiny white *Drosera pycnoblata*. Our final location for the day was a bush camp with flowery heaths all around. We had hoped to find custard orchids, but alas we could only find them in bud. However, there was plenty more and we did find white *Prasophyllum hians*, lots of *Pimelea lehmanniana*, fine shrubs of pink *Isopogon formosus*, the trailing stems of *Grevillea nudiflora* with bright red flowers and blue *Chamaescilla spiralis*. There were also many new and confusing peas including the large flowered yellow-and-red *Gompholobium preisii* and blue *G. cyaninum*.

Day 11 17 Sept – Stirling Range II

Today the heaths of the Stirling Range and a day of many stops. Leaving the pleasant surrounds of our rustic accommodation we drove a short distance and then stopped for flowering *Kingia australis*. At first there seemed to be little else on offer, but as ever closer examination proved otherwise with first the narrowly columnar *Drosera ramellosa*, then on the other side of road some pretty yellow sun orchids were opening and the heath had *Isopogon brevifolia*, fine clumps of a *Synaphaea* sp alongside *Isopogon formosus* and the large yellow pea; *Pultenaea aspalathoides*. Following the gravel road through the park we stopped next for the handsome *Banksia formosa* growing with *Gastrolobium leakeanum*. Plants of *Gompholobium villosa* were laden with large flowers together with red *Beaufortia cyrtodonta*, a shiny leaved *Pimelea* sp, a sweet smelling *Hakea ambigua* and yellow *Petrophile divaricata*, whilst in the stark stony ground opposite we found two species of *Drosera*; pink *D. scorpioides* and large dark-eyed orange flowered *D. minata*. *Stylidium schoenoides* also grew here as did the prostrate *Hemiandra pungens* and a third species of (climbing) white *Drosera*. Indeed, sundews were very much a feature of today with new species seeming to arrive at every stop and the next stop was no exception with at least three species present, including the localised *D. monticola*, growing with *Bossiaea* sp. flowery bushes of *Pimelea*



Banksia coccinea

sylvestris, creamy *Petrophile serruriae* and a pretty orangey *Velleia* sp. Clumps of *Synaphaea polymorpha* grew with a slender *Boronia* and then we found a shady spot for lunch.

The many stops continued afterwards with *Calothamnus gibbosus* followed by architectural *Banksia solandri* and then some superb stands of *Banksia coccinea* the slender shrubs topped by stunning and complex inflorescences of countless red styles. Low-growing *Petrophile longifolia* and a pink *Andersonia* sp. grew beneath them and there were at least four other *Banksia* species present. An even more impressive stand of *Banksia coccinea* was just down the road and walking across to a good group we suddenly saw a very delicate *Drakaea confluens* (late hammer orchid) growing beneath. A real bonus. More orchids followed at our last stop in the park, where we found *Caladenia denticulata*, with *C. longicauda* which were appropriately home to crab spiders as well as the dainty *Leptoceras menziesii* (rabbit orchid). Pale blue *Orthrosanthus laxa*, pale yellow *Drosera subhirtella* and a fine rosy form of *Caladenia polychroma* completed the plants here.

There was time for one last stop near Mount Barker where a local nature reserve had plenty of *Cyanicula sericea*, a *Diuris longifolia* and a tall and slender *Isopogon* sp topped with fluffy white flowers. A more open area had experienced a fire and in the regrowth were lots of a form of *Conostylis setigera* and *Calectasia grandiflora* plus a few *Anigozanthos bicolor*. From here it was just a half hour to Albany and our comfortable hotel with its good quality restaurant to bring us back to the comforts of civilisation.

Day 12 18 Sept – Frenchman's Bay & Valley of the Giants

A botanically diverse day with some of the smallest and biggest plant marvels at either end. Driving out to the heaths near Albany we stopped for some superb flowers on *Banksia praemorsa*, flushing a red-wattled bellbird as we got out. This was just the start for alongside this was a soft-leaved *Adenanthos* sp, graceful white-flowered *Agonis flexuosa*, an orange form of *Banksia coccinea* and across the road was even more with a wonderful *Eucalyptus* sp. with graceful pendant branches and hanging pink flowers. On the banks was plenty of *Banksia formosa*, the architectural limbs and leaves of *B. baxteri*, little bushes of *Andersonia*





Cephalotus follicularis

caerulea, an interesting upright form of *Acacia littorea* with sharply angled leaves and stems as well as a few pretty pink *Caladenia latifolia*. Then, just as we were about to leave Veronica found a delightful blue-belled climber; *Billardiera heterophylla*. We drove to the coast and then onto a special site. On arrival we found stands of *Anigozanthos flavidus* growing with some fine shrubs of *Melaleuca* (*Callistemon*) *glaucus* with big red bottlebrushes and shrubs of *Kunzea glabrescens* laden with balls of yellow flowers. Following a sandy track flanked by sedge filled flats there were many lovely *Patersonia occidentalis* in perfect flower together with the peculiar spikes of *Anarthria scabra* with flowers of red, yellow or orange, dense tufts of *Dasypogon bromeliifolia* with club-like heads of white flowers, violet *Hovea chorizemifolia* and the spikes of *Adenanthos obovatus* with striking red flowers with long styles akin to a *Grevillea*. The long slender branches of a low-growing form of *Acacia littorea* were packed with creamy white flowers, the branches interlaced and particularly superb mixed with shrubs of *Isopogon formosus*. Then the little masterpiece of botany that is *Cephalotus follicularis*; the Albany pitcher plant. We found a number of groups of pristine little pitchers, the lids marbled or striped and all densely clustered together. They were actually plentiful in the heath but were at first hard to detect half hidden in the vegetation. Walking back a well camouflaged tiny frog was found in the sand.

We drove on a short way and then spent some time investigating a rather dense bit of heath, but at least found some large shrubs and trees of *Banksia ilicifolia* in flower. A bit of a drive and a decided shift in habitat and landscape with lush green fields and lots more trees. These only got larger as we drove west, with the roadside lined with the pale trunks of *Eucalyptus divergens*. A short stop was made for a granite sheet that was home to big drifts of *Burchardia umbellata* and the rather dull mauve *Trobonanthes australis*. Pressing onto to the 'Valley of Giants' we were not disappointed as we followed the well-constructed walkway up into the canopy of the magnificent tingle trees; *Eucalyptus jacksonii*, mingled with a few large *E. divergens*. We enjoyed wonderful views into the

canopy of the huge trees, in places seeding good birdlife too with rosellas and honeyeaters and the cloudy day repaid us with pleasant soft light to enjoy the forest. Back at ground level there was the chance to see the immense trunks and their wide bases up close and wandering along a separate trail there were tumbling masses of ivory *Clematis pubescens* and the unusual bamboo-like shrub *Leucopogon verticillaris*. Gorgeous little red-winged fairywrens added a sparkle to proceedings in luxuriant green surroundings that was such a contrast to the kwongan heaths and wandoo woodlands we had been exploring. There was time for one last stop where on a sandy roadside bank we found a collection of Australia's oddest orchids with both *Drakaea thynniphila* and *D. livida* (warty hammer orchid) growing with a few *Paracaleana nigrita* (flying duck orchids). Dinner was in a good Italian restaurant.

Day 13 19 Sept – To Hyden via Cranbrook & Tarin Rock

We took the scenic route back up and over the Stirling Range, though the ridges and peaks were rather moody beneath a glowering grey sky. On the far side we saw a wedge-tailed eagle in the road trying to carry off a dead wallaby and then further along there were two encounters with emus. Arriving at Cranbrook, we walked into the nature reserve there and over the course of an hour and a half found a great many interesting plants, especially orchids with plentiful *Caladenia longicauda* in various forms, together with the more delicate *C. polychroma* (with white and reddish-pink forms present), slender green spikes of *Prasophyllum gracile*, *Pyrorchis nigricans*, lots of *Diuris decrementum* (bee orchids) and a fair smattering of their larger cousin *D. porrifolius*. However, what was most remarkable about this site was the abundance of sundews with such a range of species seen from tiny rosettes of *Drosera af pchnoblasta*, the twining duo of *D. drummondii* and yellow flowered *D. subhirtella* and masses of upright *D. gigantea* topped with white flowers that stretched across the clearing in their many thousands. In with this was tiny pink *Utricularia tenella*, flowery bushes of *Daviesia incrassata*, a whitish *Velliea sp* and shrubs of handsome *Acacia saligna*.

Lunch was in a quiet layby where there was a fine stand of the dark-flowered South African bulb; *Ferraria crispa*. Moving onto the heaths of Tarin Rock, we explored a couple of areas of heaths, the first seemingly uninviting but subsequently turning up stunning patches of scarlet-flowered *Drosera barbigera*, spikes of rich pink *Chloanthes coccinea*, broad corymbs of *Verticordia acerosa* and among the architectural foliage of fern-leaved



Banskia et al which included the interesting *Isopogon teretifolia* we also found *Verticordia chrysanthella* (with smaller yellow flowers) and the black-flowered *Grevillea hookeriana*. The second area was more immediately flowery with the trackside brimming with electric blue *Lechenaultia biloba*, *Dampiera* sp. and *Pimelea* sp. laced with the delightful orange-and-pink pea flowers of *Chorizema glycinifolia*. Here we also found pink *Verticordia insignis*, *Cyanostegia angustifolia* and an attractive white *Hakea* sp. Moving on there was a large shrub of the striking *Grevillea excelsior* topped with golden-orange spikes, but there were many more and better further on, where they grew alongside the railway tracks with stands of white *Pityrodia terminalis*.

There was just time for one last stop on granite sheet home to the rare *Caladenia graniticola*, which grew with both *C. radialis* and *C. roei*. The many spikes of *Thelymitra petrophila* were stubbornly in bud!

Day 14 20 Sept – Norseman Road & Wave Rock

Surviving unscathed from the breakfast scrum we set off along the Norseman Road, a route that ultimately cuts through a large swathe of interior Western Australia. However, our journey along it was somewhat stop start and we barely made it 45 km over the course of the day. The reason; lots of flowers and flowering shrubs with a succession of short and long stops depending on what we found. The first stop was for bushes of *Seringia velutina* completely smothered in soft lilac flowers, though what was peculiar was that very few of these were open. They grew with a slender leaved *Acacia* and rather graceful *Grevillea biformis*. Not much further along and *Grevillea didymobotrya* brought us to a halt, a shrub with creamy-yellow spikes that put out a strong chocolatey scent. In the adjacent kwongan grew *Verticordia picta*, *Isopogon scabriusculus*, lots of spiky buns of *Borya constricta* with little clusters of white flowers, *Synaphaea spinulosa* with stag's-horn foliage and then superb tufts of *Stylidium breviscapum* buried beneath their remarkable boomerang flowers. Plants like *Dampiera juncea* were ever present along the roadside forming blue or mauve drifts, punctuated by sulphurous stands of *Glischrocaryon aureum* and the grey-woolly white flowered spires of *Pityrodia terminalis*. Three spikes of *Xanthorrhoea nana* came next, with



Conostylis petrophiloides, Norseman Road

one at a rather jaunty angle. Nearby was the rather cute and fluffy *Ptilotus spathulatus* and low-growing *Grevillea huegelii*. An area of recently burned shrubberies had lots of fine *Cyanostegia angustifolia* and looking deeper we also found *Dampiera wellsiana*, *Hybanthus floribundus* and *Thomasia microphylla*. Then there were the lovely ivory to pink spikes of the impressive *Hakea* af. *francisiana* ? and it should be mentioned that the fiery plumes of *Grevillea excelsior* were a frequent sight the whole journey.

Lunch was near another area of recently burned heath and we spent some time exploring this (trying hard to ignore the flies which were particularly annoying this year). We found white *Orianthera judithiana*, abundant *Verticordia chrysanthella*, more *V. picta*, the white and blue whorls of *Conospermum brownii*, fine clumps of *Conostylis petrophiloides*(?) with large brimstone drumsticks as well as *Chamaexeros fimbriata* with airy spikes of smaller yellow flowers. There was a red *Grevillea* sp, a lovely little waxflower; *Chamaelaucium megalopetalum* which varied from creamy-white to deep rose

and the latter were best near a lovely drift of small *Calytrix leschenaultii*. *C. sapphirina* grew with these too. A final tract of heath had a third *Calytrix* species, the very pretty *C. decandra* and these were with bushes of *Hakea*, *Isopogon* and a flowering *Calothamnus quadrifolius*.



From here we drove directly to Wave Rock and set off on our walk to the iconic granite curl, the pink-gold rock streaked with black. Continuing up and onto the rock dome we found an interesting selection of plants that grew the pockets of soil among the large-crystalled rock including better bushes of *Calothamnus quadrifolius*, *Dodonaea pterimicaefolia* laden with angled fruits, diminutive *Prasophyllum gracile*, *Thelymitra antennifera* (yellow sun orchid) and *Ptilotus polystachyus*. The rocks pools had tadpoles and some crustaceans and an ornate dragon scuttled across the stone. Further on we found *Diuris hazeliae* (granite donkey orchid), as well as lots more *Thelymitra antennifera* and frustratingly, several spikes of *T. petrophile* (granite sun orchid) only days from opening. There were fine views out across the landscape of woods, fields, lakes and distant granite domes all the better for the soft late afternoon light.

Day 15 21 Sept – To Perth via Yeerakine Rock & Cooragin

Our first planned location was only an hour from Hyden, but we were side-tracked on the way first by trees of *Eucalyptus stoatei* dripping with either waxy reddish flowers and developing buds (with peculiar pointed bud-caps) or ripening fruits and then next, by Yeerakine Rock, a large granite dome which begged investigation. In the light woods here we found a succession of *Caldenia roei* as well as various colour forms of *C. hirta*, *Diuris porrifolius*, the small blue drumsticks of *Brunonia australis* and the blue flowered shrub *Halgania cyanea*. Climbing onto the rock there was a cool breeze and this no doubt kept the spikes of granite sun orchid we found from opening. Moving onto Corrigin we found a way to the nature reserve and spent time looking along the flowery access track with scented bushes of *Hakea lissocarpa*, flowering *Xanthorrhoea nana*, lots of big clumps of *Dampiera wellsiana* and flower-laden shrubs lining the disused railway track. A solitary purple enamel orchid grew at the edge of a large burn, posed symbolically as a sign of recovery as did the clump of *Xanthorrhoea nana* with four flower spikes.

After lunch we pinned our ears back and drove directly to the suburbs of Perth arriving at a bushland reserve where we spent the rest of the afternoon, finding some fine specimens of *Caladenia discoidea* and pretty pink *Petrophile linearis*. However, the most obvious plant that was on show was *Anigozanthos manglesii* and these grew in quantity as we walked along the sandy path, culminating in a superb area where many of their architectural inflorescences combined with the gently grey-white of foamy *Conospermum incurvum*. We did find a couple of spikes of *Thelymitra macrophylla* (scented sun orchid) too, but alas they had closed for the day.

It was just a short drive onto our hotel....but a long check in!

Day 16 22 Sept – Flights or to Geraldton

Leaving a touch earlier we drove for an hour and a half before stopping in a recently burned tract. There was plenty of colour on offer (even though some of it was by now familiar flora) with many clumps of fiery *Anigozanthos humilis* growing with *Patersonia occidentalis*. Among them grew the creamy



Petrophile linearis

drumsticks of *Dasypogon obliquifolius* and dense tufts of a large *Conostylis* sp. and walking further into the area we found a number of *Verticordia grandis* in flower, a slender pink *Stylidium*, *Croninia kingiana* and there was a plant of *Conospermum acerosum* with its distinctive starry flowers.

Moving on there was a larger plant of *Verticordia grandis* beside the road and looking around it we also found superb bushes of woolly-flowered *Lachnostachys eriobotrya* and tufts of *Thysanotus triandrus*. Our search for *Macropidia fuliginosa* proved fruitless and instead we carried on to Tathra national park, stopping for fine specimens of *Petrophile linearis* growing with small plants of *Verticordia ovalis*. It was a warm day and we ate lunch in the shade created by the vehicle's rear door before exploring the surrounding heath. Here there were many bushes of *Petrophile megalostegia*, pretty *Stylidium crosscephalum*, stag's-horn leaved *Petrophile macrostachya*, orange-flowered *Eremaea parviflora* and the pink helicopters of a *Tetrandra* sp. among the rocks below the attractive contorted pale boughs of *Eucalyptus* that sprang from the burnished rocks. A plant of the interesting *Darwinia neildliana* was in full flower as we walked back.

Continuing our journey north there were several short stops for *Banksia prionotes* in flower, the arching stems of *Grevillea leucopteris* tipped by milky spikes, followed by a plant of *Goodenia reinwardtii* that grew opposite a stunning patch of scarlet *Lechanultia hirsuta*. The final plant of the day was a *Banksia attenuata* in flower with several pristine cones of yellow flowers. from here we drove the remaining hour through rather ordinary countryside to Geraldton.

Day 17 23 Sept – To Kalbarri

A flower rich day that started not that far from Geraldton when a colourful rocky slope caught our eye. Pulling up on a side track, we could access part of the slope and it contained a treasure trove of new species beginning with green-stamened *Melaleuca longistaminea* that sprawled over the lower slopes. Looking up there were drifts of pink *Schoena cassiniana* and the broad corymbs of *Verticordia laciniata*, but among them was also the lovely pink *V. monodelpha* and pretty tufts of *Stylidium bulbiferum*. A fine plant



Thysanotus manglesii & *Verticordia laciniata*



Pileanthus peduncularis

of *Dianella revolutum* had unusual blue flowers with prominent golden anthers waving in the breeze, whilst rich mauve *Dampiera altissima* grew with the blue of *Halgania gustaffsenii* and flowery masses of *Hemigenia diplanthera*. As Hugh and I were photographing a particularly fine strand of *Thysanotus* growing on barbed wire the owner of the adjacent land came by and we started chatting. He instantly invited us onto his land and were we ever so glad he did for though the show was good on our side on his there were hundreds of dazzling *Verticordia laciniata* interspersed with *V. monodelpha*, some strung with necklaces of *Thysanotus patersonii*, with a sugar coating of pretty *Stylidium calcaratum* beneath in all. Bushes of yellow and mauve *Calytrix depressa* grew nearby too and it really was a stunning display.

Moving on we stopped for a plant of *Grevillea leucopteris* in flower, but really need not have bothered. Reaching the start of Kalbarri national park the kwongan instantly changed and the deep sand had a selection of new plants with greenish-gold *Beaufortia aestivalis*, pink *Calytrix brevifolia* and an attractive slivery-lilac *Thysanotus* sp. we made a series of stops, though it has to be said our botanical dedication was in the face of numerous annoying (but not biting) flies. At one stop there was white *Isotoma hypocrateriformis* (Woodbridge poison) and *Halgania sericiflora*, whilst Hugh drew our attention to the other side of the road and some flowering *Drosera menziesii*, which grew near the dazzling orange *Pileanthus peduncularis* (copper cups) and glancing across the heath a prominent yellow spike turned out to be a pristine *Thelymitra villosa* (custard orchid).

We tried to find the breeziest spot possible for lunch and a place that also had *Verticordia picta* and a fine bush of *Melaleuca filifolia*. Not far away was a viewpoint along the Murchison River gorge (where we also found *Calothamnus homalophyllus*). Later stops were for showy *Grevillea annulifera* and then remarkable 'forests' of its leggy cousin *G. leucopteris* with long gangly flower stems arching everywhere. In both locations there were many more intense orange *Pileanthus peduncularis* too. A peculiar plant with flat-topped inflorescences was the final botanical note and we arrived in Kalbarri is plenty of time to relax before walking to dinner at a rustic fish restaurant. On that walk the lights in the town were swarming

with moths and it has to be said that being in WA is like it was in most of our childhoods with an abundance of insect life that is no longer seen.

Day 18 24 Sept - Kalbarri

Our second day in Kalbarri and whilst most of the many cars driving in whizzed straight to the main attractions (skywalk and Nature's window) in twenty minutes we took over four hours. Indeed our first stop for *Anigozanthos kalbarriensis* was within sight of the ticket booth, whilst across the road was the attractive *Quoya oldfieldii* and many more stops followed for an array of things. There was a wonderful tract of heath filled with flowery bushes of *Calytrix brevifolia* and the waving wands of *Grevillea eriostachya* together with *Thysanotus sp.* and *Lasiopetalum oldfieldii*, and some wonderful grass trees, one of which grew in the sand at such a height that its drooping old leaves created a botanical mirror with the fresh green leaves above. A recent burn had superb clumps of *Patersonia occidentalis*, among some more statuesque grass trees, vigorously resprouting after the fire, whilst the blackened and twisted stems of *Banksia attenuata* bore hard seed pods that had burst open in the heat. A drift of the delicate soft pink form of *Verticordia picta* followed and then gangly lax shrubs of pink *Pileanthus bellus*. Little bushes of *Pileanthus peduncularis* provided regular flashes of fiery orange throughout and another common sight was flower laden *Grevillea annulifera*. Nearing our lunch spot we saw *Calothamnus homalophyllus* and vowed to stop for those in the afternoon.

Lunch was in a breezy spot that kept the flies at bay and had the bonus of a fine view across canyon country. From our vantage we could see rounded white bushes and the path to Nature's window passed some good specimens of what turned out to be *Verticordia polytricha*. The views from the window were worth the walk as an osprey swept overhead. A few small yellow *Verticordia galeata* sprouted from the rocks and much larger shrubs could be seen across the gorge. We stopped for the *Calothamnus* and then drove onto the skywalk, a rather impressive construction with good views of the Murchison River canyon. As we left here there was the bonus of an echidna beside the road, the shy spiny mammal hiding beneath its armour at first then poking out a snout before ambling off into the scrub.



Patersonia drummondii



Macropidia fuliginosa

The final act of the day was a walk to the 'z' bend view seeing the angled fruits of *Dioscorea hastifolia* strung over shrubs, flowery mounds of *Calytrix harvestiana* and many bushes of *Melaleuca filifolia* and a taller *Grevillea sp.* before arriving at the viewpoint with fine vistas along the rocky channel and its limpid waters. These rugged gorges of Kalbarri represent a transition zone from the Mediterranean climate region to the warmer semi-arid lands to the north with a subtle shift in vegetation and ambience of the landscape.

Day 19 To Perth

There was a long drive to Perth ahead of us, but nonetheless, botanising was hopefully to be fitted in. Driving directly to Geraldton, we dropped off Veronica and Dave (who were staying on for three weeks more in Australia) and the plan had been to head inland to a nature reserve. Alas, a quick calculation of route timings meant there was no way we could fit this in and it seemed prudent to at least be heading south towards

Perth. So we pushed on to Eneabba and the nearby Lake Indoon, which was an ideal picnic spot with a shady breezy bench. Afterwards we did find a spot in the kwongan for a short foray, finding quite a few new things such as slender a slender non-climbing *Thysanotus sp.*, *Isopogon drummondii*, some fine *Banksia hookeriana* flowers, pretty *Verticordia ovalifolia* and a gangly flowering *Hakea*.

That seemed to be all we had time for and we drove on until suddenly there were the dark stems of the remarkable black kangaroo paw; *Macropidia fuliginosa*. A necessary fifteen minutes was spent enjoying the intriguing green flowers, with arching anthers that emerged from fuzzy haired black buds. A truly unique plant and the perfect finale.

From here it was non-stop to Perth, our hotel and a final meal with some good wine.

Day 20 Flights

We all had flights later (or very late) in the day so opted to see more of Perth or chill before making our way to the airport for return journeys to the UK, USA or Turkiye.

Xanthorrhoea preisii

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