

Gunbower to Kara Kara

Last night was superb. At sunset large flocks of cockatoos went into their screeching act and flew round and round in chaos. It was bedlam – a cacophony of sound.

Sunset – Cockatoos in the trees, then in the air.



Then after sunset but still light and with the cockatoos settling down, flock after flock after flock of Ibis flew overhead – hundreds and hundreds of them. Maybe not quite as spectacular as thousands of mutton birds flying past Vansittart Island but spectacular all the same.

Just a few of them.



Then right on dusk the tiny bats were flitting around overhead.

At 9.32pm there was a brilliant white flash right where I happened to be looking – a large meteorite at tree top level. It reminded me of the one everyone filmed in Russia recently. I was even waiting for the crash and the earth to shake but neither happened so it must have been a lot further away than it looked – it was gone in seconds.

I'd gathered enough firewood for three nights but when I went to bed just after midnight there didn't appear to be a lot of it left. It was a glorious night for sitting up round the fire. This was a much better site than the one I had to move from and in fact they can count themselves lucky. Of course I don't really need to tell you what state of Australia these rude ignorant bastards were from.



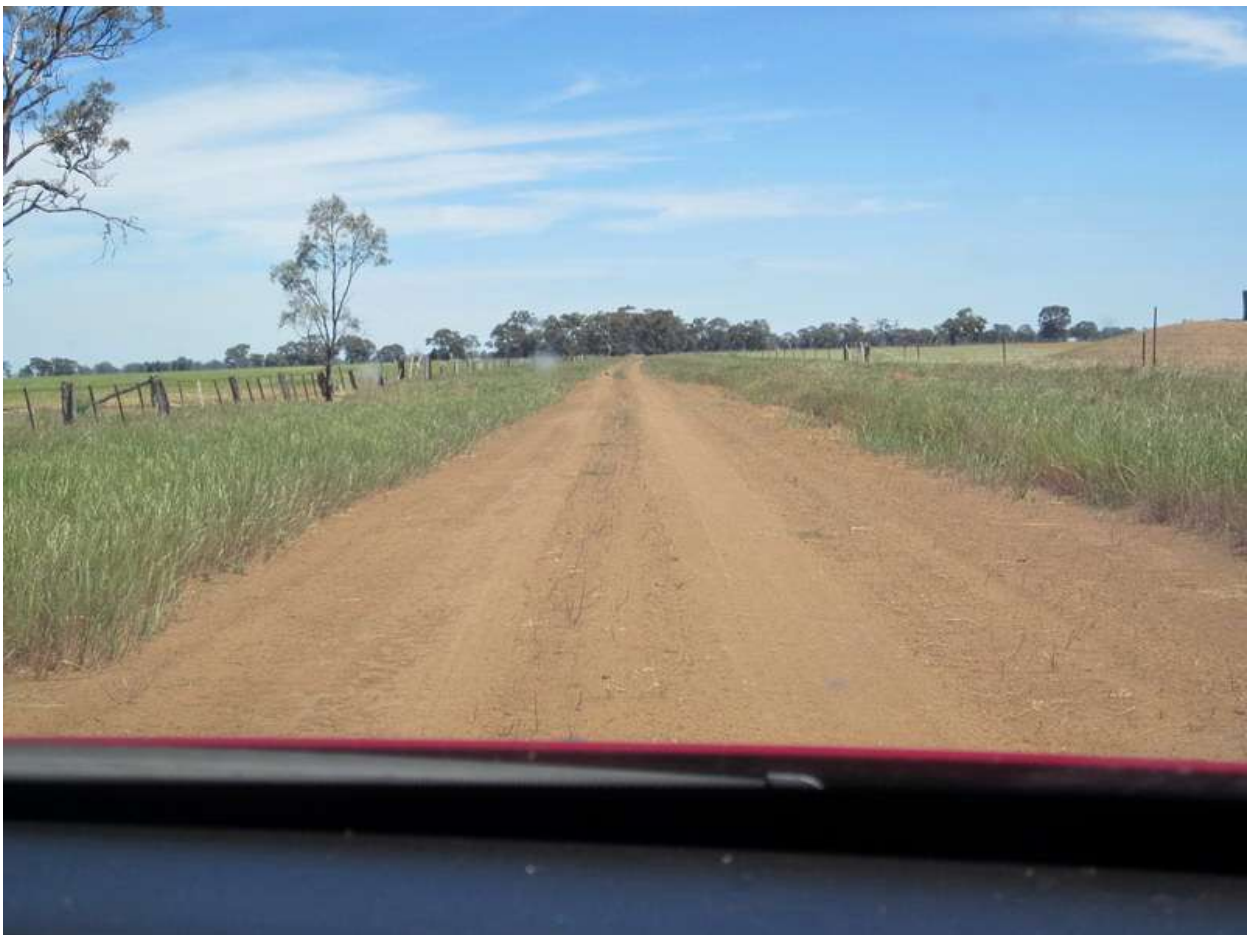
The last people to annoy me with a petrol generator were a young mob and they were noisy till about 2am. That time there wasn't anywhere to move to. However at it started to get light in the morning they were all dead to the world and even though some of them were sleeping only metres away from their generator none of them wakened as a container of sugar was poured into the petrol tank of the generator. I wasn't around later to see the effect of this but I had heard that sugar in the tank doesn't do the motor a lot of good.

So last night I resisted the inclination to walk back along the road. This time the sugar stayed in the car.

It was slightly cool first thing this morning so I started the fire again and again gathered a lot more wood. Midmorning I packed up and moved the car to be able to put a lot of the fire wood in the back. As I finished and was about to leave I noticed a man with a tractor just inside the locked gate 30 metres away. He was leaning over the gate so I went over to say hello. He hoped I wasn't about to set up camp right where I was as it was on the track leading to the gate and he was expecting a truckload of hay. I said I was about to leave and we had a long friendly chat about the area and about campers in general. Apparently Gunbower Island has appeared in one of the free camping books and now is inundated with campers. He had to put locks on his gates to keep them out

of his farm property. He mentioned that Gunbower Island is the largest inland island in Australia but very few people know this. Not even a lot of the locals. Nice old bloke.

I set off towards Kara Kara, and played with the GPS again. It gives you several choices when you select a destination. The fastest route, the economical route, the shortest route, and the easiest route. At Boort I set it for the shortest route to Charlton, and on the Hema map I had it looked as though there was only one route anyway – but it was a long curve. But a few km down the road it took me off on a side road, and then another one, and another one. These roads were almost tracks going between farm properties and I'll swear one was only ever used by the local farmer to get to parts of his property. I had to laugh when eventually it brought me back onto the highway again. I reckon the route it took me on was about 100 metres shorter than staying on the highway – but about 20 minutes longer in time. Elli would have loved it – this is exactly the sort of thing we liked doing – getting off the highways onto the back roads.





Charlton had a great rest area right in the centre of town – a 60 second walk to the bakery.





Moving on I passed this not far out of town.



I think the weir has seen better days but it would make a good overnight rest stop. Only a few hundred metres off the highway.



Kara Kara is within easy driving distance of Melbourne so I quite often make this my last free camp before getting on the ferry to Devonport.





Huge area with tables and fire places.



