Wind, Stumpies and a Very Quiet Wylie



Joining The Dots: With No Direction Known

We left Beacon today in heavy winds. If we weren't battling them head on, they were trying their best to send us sideways, just for the challenge, you understand.

The original plan was to settle in at the Mollerin Rock campground, but it was only half an hour or so down the road, and we're kinda rocked out. We did it a cupplafew years ago, so it's been there, done that. It's a lovely granite outcrop though, and Mollerin sits among a whole cluster of Koorda-area outcrops, including Newcarlbeon and Badgerin Rock, most with picnic or barbecue facilities. Worth a look if you're not rocked out like us.

Koorda: coffee, a van check and a lizard slalom

We stopped at Koorda for a van check and a coffee, after a couple of swerves to dodge stumpies trying to cross the road. To the uninitiated, stumpies are shingleback or bobtail lizards. They're slower than a wet week, and grey slow-moving lizards on grey blacktop are an ocular challenge.



Not much to do in beautiful downtown Koorda today, other than admire the new rest areas for RVs and trucks, hit the well-stocked IGA and if you've got more time (and less wind) there's plenty to like:

- **Corn dollies.** This is "Corn Dolly Country". Frank Lodge brought the English custom of plaiting straw here from northern England in 1911, and the dollies are now the shire's emblem.

- **Koorda Museum.** It's in the old hospital, which was later a school hostel and then a police station, and has a police lockup on display. It's by appointment, so ring

ahead.

- **Koorda Drive-In.** It’s one of only three left in Western Australia. Movies under the stars beat any streaming service and the cafe is run by St John’s Ambulance volunteers – eat, watch flicks, and feel good about supporting them.

- **Spring wildflowers.** July to October is the time, and the small red Koorda rose is found in abundance.

- **The Agricultural Show.** It’s held early in September, so we missed it by a couple of weeks.

Wylie: the town that changed how we handle wheat

Then it was on to Wylie, with the wind picking up and making it a slow last 44 klics.



Wyalkatchem, to give it its full name, has a bit of history. There are two theories about where that name came from. The official one is an Aboriginal name first recorded for a waterhole in the 1870s, spelt Walkatching. The fun one is that a wily Aboriginal trooper named Wylie caught criminals, and the town became “Wylie catch’em”. It’s implausible, but I know which one I’m telling at the pub. (If it were open for lunch. More on that shortly.)

The railway arrived in the area in a hurry. The line from Dowerin opened in February 1911, and Wyalkatchem was just a minor siding until it became the turnout for a branch line to the Mount Marshall district — read Bencubbin and Beacon. The townsite was gazetted the same year. It was also a handy pitstop for prospectors heading for the goldfields.

Wylie’s big claim to fame is the title **“Cradle of Bulk Handling”**. The first delivery of bulk wheat for market in WA was received at nearby Korrelocking on 9 November 1931, which retired the slow, back-breaking bag-loading routine. You can’t miss the two big grain elevators at the town entrances.

If you’re here at a better time, put these on the list:

- **CBH Agricultural Museum.** It has over 500 relics, including a restored Waterloo Boy tractor, and the main building is a 1936 “K” type wheat bin. Top crew of volunteers and open more often than most; certainly weekends and most days.

- **Old School House Museum.** It’s set up like a house of earlier times, with pianos, dolls and vintage clothing. It’s viewing by appointment only.

- **Main street murals.** They depict town and rural life.

- **Korrelocking Reserve.** It’s a great picnic spot with a pioneer well a short walk from the car park.

- **Starry skies.** They’re some of the best going, and not a lot of competing light.



Where we are now?

The caravan park. More precisely the Travellers Park (check their Google reviews; it’s a top stop). It’s home away from home for us. This weekend it’s full of Avans on their four-day stopover, so we’ve made ourselves invisible in a corner while they kick on and enjoy their pilgrimage to the Wheatbelt.

We’re heading back to Perth for another slew of appointments, and the wind has zero intention of slowing down, so we’ll sit it out here. It won’t be a hardship, but it’ll be quiet:

- The cafe is closed until Wednesday.
- The pub has stopped doing lunches.

- The ex-supermarket, now a general store, doesn’t serve coffee.

- The only thing open after 2:00pm today for a coffee is the servo, for a couple of hours, and then it’s self-serve.

- The craft group holds a Devonshire tea every Friday in the old Catholic school building, stunning scones and your choice of coffee or tea.



So it’s a yarn at happy hour, may be a cup of Kay’s awesome home-made soup, a good book and a van rocking gently in the gale — there are worse ways to spend a Saturday.

Happy travels. And mind the stumpies.