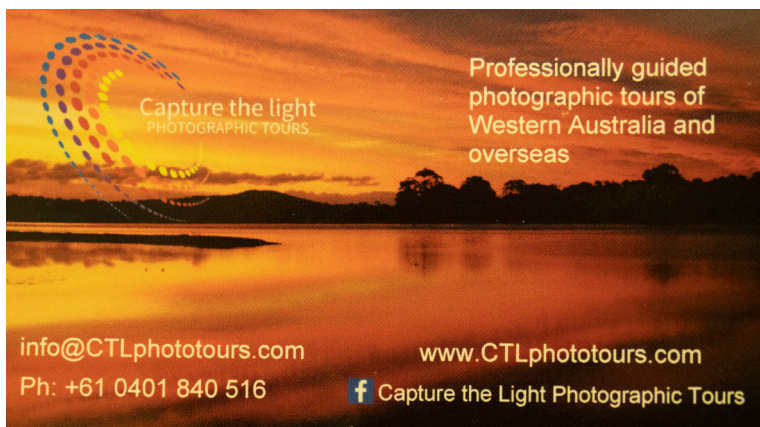


In mid August, Judith, Anne Mackenzie and I, traveled to Wave Rock and the surrounding area, with a photographic tour company called Capture the Light Photographic Tours.



Wave Rock is around 340km south east of Perth and we travelled the more northerly route through York, Quairading, Corrigin, and Kondinin on the way there. On the return journey we went via the Tin Horse Highway through Kulin and along the Brookton Highway. On both journeys we had multiple stops for photos.





Of note on the way there we stopped at this still functioning, old Anglican Church of St Andrew's which was built in 1912. It is all that remains of the town of Greenhills. We found a variety of different wildflowers in the surrounding bush land.

We also stopped at Shackleton where there is a metal sculpture trail in the Main Street, and the smallest bank in Australia which also happens to have the shortest opening hours.

Wave Rock is 3.9 km from Hyden which is the nearest town. We stayed at the Wave Rock Resort which is 1.5km from the rock. It is made up of 14, 2 bedroom, self contained chalets on the edge of Lake Magic. These chalets are large and very comfortable.

The landscape between the Rock and the Resort is nothing if not stark. Like a lot of Western Australia, the widespread removal of trees as part of the farm based land clearance schemes has resulted in a dramatic rise in the water table with resultant salt damage to the soil. These areas have a bleak beauty of their own.

Lake Magic provides a great backdrop for sunrise and sunset photos, although as with everywhere else you are at the mercy of the weather and the resultant clouds.



The first night was ok for sunset but the following day was a bit of a fizzer as far as the sunrise was concerned. Judith was all set up but nothing was happening.

After breakfast we made our first visit to the Rock and found some wildflowers on the way to the base. I had heard mixed opinions on the Rock, and “underwhelming” was a common word used to describe it. If you are after something akin to Ayers Rock you will be disappointed, however I thought that it was quite beautiful. We were lucky that it had been raining which emphasised the colour banding. We were also lucky that there were very few tourists there and we had the Rock almost to ourselves so it was great for photography.

The rock is a granite cliff 15m high and 110 metres long. In 1960 some of the crystals from the rock were dated as being 2700 million years old, amongst the oldest in Australia.



After visiting the Rock we were taken to an area which was previously a wildflower farm. Many of the plants that were being farmed have unfortunately died but some are still there and there are many wildflowers growing amongst them.



Later in the day we went to Mulka's Cave and the Humps which is another granite rock formation 15km from the Rock. On the ceiling of the Cave there are many aboriginal hand prints. The name Mulka comes from an aboriginal legend believed to be associated with the cave. Mulka was the son of a woman who became pregnant to a man she was forbidden to marry because of skin group. Her son who was cross eyed and despite him growing to be a very tall, strong man he was unable to hunt as he couldn't aim a spear because of his eyes.

Out of frustration Mulka resorted to catching and eating children, thus becoming the terror of the district. It was said that he lived in Mulka's cave, where the imprints of his hands can still be seen, much higher than that of an ordinary man.

After Mulka's cave we walked to the Humps. On top of the humps there were shallow marshy areas in which there were lots of wildflowers growing. Some of them quite unusual, including a number of different sundews and this Wurmbea.

Back to the Resort for sunset across Lake Magic.

Later we went back to the Rock for some light painting and some astrophotography which turned out well. Then we returned to Lake Magic to do some further astrophotography over the lake.

The following morning I was the only one to get up for sunrise and it didn't disappoint. The Lake was like glass.



Later we went to the Hippos Yawn, and unlike some rock formations with descriptive names, this one doesn't take any imagination to see the Hippo's yawn. Anne and I then walked along the base of the rock to the path leading to the top of the Rock and up to the top. The views of the surrounding area are extensive and there is some unusual rock formations on top of the rock.

We then set off back to Perth. On the way we stopped in the town of Hyden to look at the streetscape art, some of which is supposed to be of local residents. And we had to stop for the obligatory photos of the canola fields. Our guides were more interested in the wildflowers but I think that we were all interested in photographing the canola fields.....but we didn't go and trample some poor farmer's fields.



We also stopped at a number of places along the Tin Horse Highway to look at some of multiple quirky metal sculptures based on horses, and racing which are spread out along the highway..I am not sure what the aim of them are but they seem to be advertising the Kulin Races which are run at the beginning of October.

We then continued on to the Corrigin Wildflower drive and Lew's Lookout. Again there were some unusual wildflowers here. The views over the surrounding countryside was worth the climb.

