

Cap 2-89

On the Eyre Highway
Cocklebidy, Western Australia
26 November 1979

Greetings

It's nearing the end of the year, and here we are at Cocklebidy with little but the Indian Ocean and Antarctica to the south of us, and all around us, a vast sheet of limestone, the edge of the Nullarbor Plain, covered with scattered bushes, mostly less than knee-high. It is country as the Aborigines knew it, and the explorers found it. For several hours, driving along today, we were completely detached from the troubled world, the only evidence of human existence the "bitumen" under our spinning wheels. But the bitumen eventually leads back to the mundane world. Service stations, food vendors, and motels -no towns- are spaced barely close enough to rescue the motorist in need of gas, food, and lodging. The highway route, once a terror for motorists, is now a pothole-free strip of 2721 kilometres connecting Adelaide and Perth. Still maintained, and marked by signs are huge rainwater tanks, 80km apart, protected by wire fencing. The Nullarbor Plain gives way to vast areas of eucalyptus and acacia scrub (fascinating in its dryness and the grace of its trees' branching and plumed tops), but no terrain higher than very low hills. In fact, in some places on the plain it is so flat that one sees to the horizon for 360 degrees, with the sky a dome over all. One stretch of the highway leads straight ahead -no bends, practically no ups or downs- for 160km. At one spot, close to where the desert plain jumps off the cliffs at the ocean's edge, we could see the white caps of the Great Australian Bight.

Two months of planned field work in Australia (two more to come) have taken us by car from Adelaide across to Perth and Geraldton and back via Esperance -Muriel taking flower photos, Norman wearing a very small anthropology hat, and spending much time on some long-term biological problems associated with his ghost moth and satyrid butterfly interests. Renewed contacts with fellow researchers in Australia are being treasured. A tour of the southeastern states is planned for the beginning of the year before our returning to Palo Alto, come February.

The year of 1979 has been one of our good and very busy years. The spring and summer simply flew, complicated by the many things to do to get away at the end of September. Muriel had some health problems that slowed her down, but didn't stop her. Our Loxton family came again to see us in California, and we toured with them as far as Colorado. Norman completed his several chapters for the new Allen Keast-edited Biogeography and Ecology of Australia. Otherwise his nose is deep in the writing for his study of the "World of Milerum" about the southern tribes of South Australia. A brilliant highlight of the year was seeing the fabulous and stunning treasures of King Tutankhamen in a San Francisco exhibition.

We had guests from far and near, all of whom we thoroughly enjoyed. Perhaps the farthest were Dr. Ian Common and Jill who deviated to visit us on a world trip from Australia via Alaska where Ian had presided at the Lepidopterists' meeting, and Dr. Gordon Bowles and Jane from Syracuse, New York, at a physical anthropology conference in San Francisco. To these, and all our visitors who did not make this column, we say, "Do come again!"

With 8240km of car travel behind us, and some 5000 to go, not considering the thousands in the air to get "down under", our letter this year must be brief (all right, briefer than it might be!). Although it was a rushed trip, we did enjoy stop-overs in Hawaii and Rarotonga. In Auckland our "adventure" was to wait all day for our flight to Melbourne, only to have it cancelled. Thus we became overnight guests of British Airways.

Our ever-helpful Collis and Catherine Bardin are posting the California edition of this letter in stamped addressed envelopes we left with them. We will have no opportunity to add notes as we like to do. We hope to hear from you -perhaps we will be enjoying some of our Christmas mail in February. Do come to see us when you are near - if you can catch us!

We do hope that you will enjoy the festive season, as we are looking forward to doing with our two families in South Australia.

CHRISTMAS 1979
2314 Harvard Street
Palo Alto, Ca. 94306

We send our good wishes -
CHLERIO -

Muriel and Norman Lindale

Ce. 11.1.73.1

Mr. & Mrs. Norman B. Tindale
2314 Harvard Street
Palo Alto, Calif. 94306



Ce-11.1.73.2



Dr Don E. Crabtree,
Route 1. Box 39,
Kimberly,
Idaho 83341

Cep 38-90