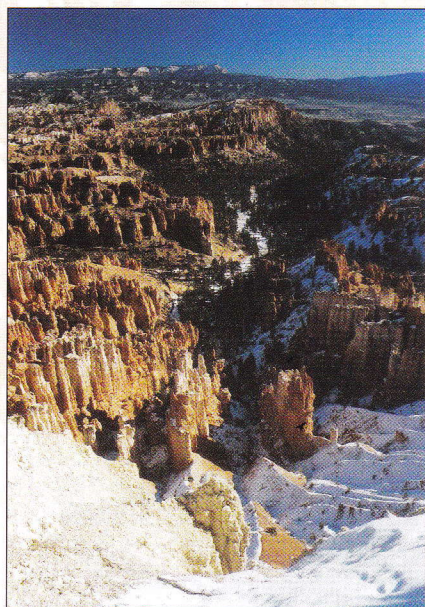


Sylvia Brown and her partner Steve Wright travelled 2000 miles in a campervan through Nevada, Arizona and Utah and had the time of their lives.

All I could say at the spectacular view was 'Wow! Wow! Wow!'

Las Vegas is an amazing place, full of bright lights, glitter, glamour and a million slot machines. This is the home of glitzy shows, lurid cocktails, a huge roller coaster – and gambling of mammoth proportions. It's not every day you find yourself in Las Vegas, so as soon as we got there Steve and I went out on the town.

The next day we explored Las Vegas more fully. I was on my mobility scooter and Steve on foot. We walked and scooted up and down the famous Strip for miles. The Classic Car show at Imperial Palace was fantastic and the view of Las Vegas by night from the top of the Stratosphere tower simply stunning.



The fabulous Bryce Canyon

The next day we were up early and off to rent our campervan. We stocked up on fresh food and then set off on the 300 mile journey through Nevada to the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

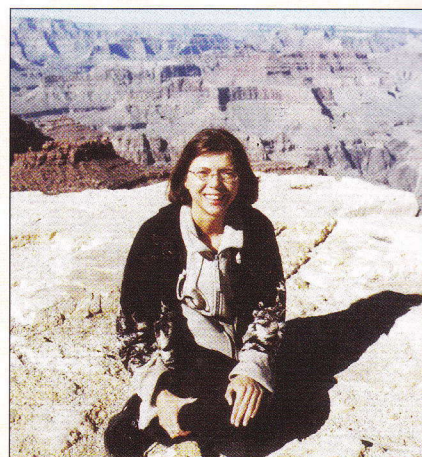
We were campervan virgins

We arrived at the Grand Canyon National Park at dusk and treated ourselves to an electric hook-up for the night for \$25. We were campervan virgins and we had to learn about water, hooking up and dumping as we went.

We went to bed early and arose at dawn with the sunrise. The time had come to see the Grand Canyon. Steve pushed me to Mather's Point in the wheelchair, lowering me carefully down some steps to the vantage point.

All this while I kept my eyes shut. On a count of three I opened my eyes . . . wow! wow! The view was unbelievable. It is impossible to describe just how vast and beautiful the Grand Canyon really is! 300 miles long, 25 miles wide and a mile deep. The colours are truly awesome!

I was so inspired that I willed my legs to function better. I climbed up and down so many steps that day to many a vantage point. We even went on a small airplane flight over the Canyon later that day. The views were glorious!



Sylvia at Grand Canyon

The next day we were on the road again, travelling another 300 miles to Chelly Canyon. On the way we stopped at the Petrified Forest, frozen in time from 250 million years ago.

Chelly Canyon is where the Navaho Indians once called home. Nowadays, genuine Navaho Indians set up and sell their beautiful arts and crafts from the bonnets of their cars by the roadside. I bought a beautiful hand-crafted silver ring and Steve was thrilled to pick up a fabulous big chunk of shiny petrified wood for just \$10.

The next day we drove on through the desert with its volcanic moon-like landscape to Monument Valley, famous for its many Westerns. This canyon is a place where the world drops away to reveal a huge flat valley with tremendous red and brown monoliths arising out of nowhere.

We wrapped up in all our clothes and hit the sack

That afternoon it started to snow and – just our luck – there were no hook-ups available. But by now I was feeling confident about living in the van. I could manage to wall-walk about the van and get to the toilet OK. I could also heat water on the stove for my trustee hot water bottle. We were survivors! We cooked a yummy fish pasta with vegetables, wrapped up in ALL OUR CLOTHES and hit the sack!

That night was extremely windy and the temperature dropped to minus 10. Steve found the rocking of the Campervan very relaxing, but not me and I didn't get much sleep. We awoke to find the water in the sink had frozen, but in all our layers we were still surprisingly warm.

The next day we travelled onto Moab and Arches National Park. Along the way we saw The Goose Neck viewpoint, so called as the river curves around in the shape of a goose's neck.

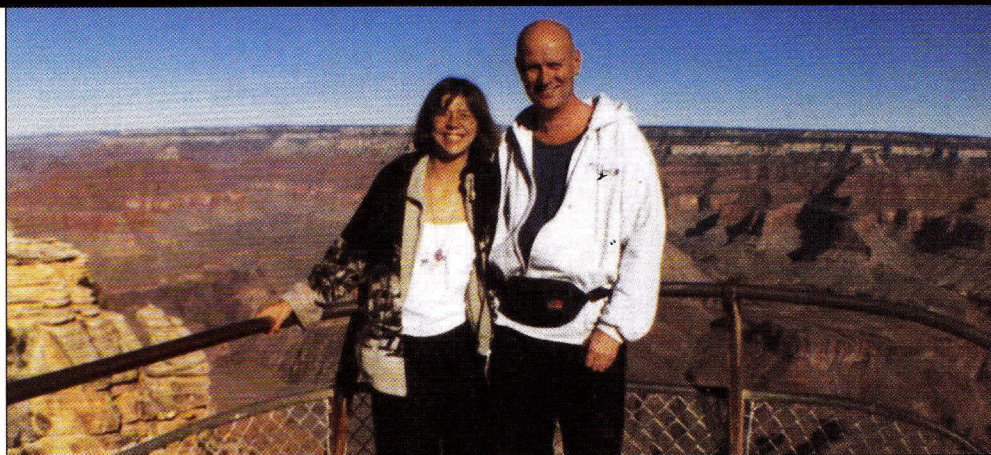
We also went to Needle Overlook and quite how Steve managed to get the wheelchair over the rocks and snow so I could see this stunning view, I'm still not sure, but he did!

I wonder how many disabled people have made it up there

Again, I was so inspired by the view that I walked with Steve up to a further vantage point. This involved Steve hauling me up a rock face covered in snow. I wonder how many disabled people have made it up there.

At Moab it was even colder. Hotels were very cheap so we enjoyed the luxury of two nights of hot water, flushing toilets and even a hot tub.

Arches is a most unusual park,



Sylvia and Steve at Grand Canyon lookout

full of rock formations of a very phallic nature, as well as numerous natural arches and bridges cut in the red-tainted rocks. The high point is Delicate Arch, a phenomenally huge stone arch so named because it looks so fragile but it is actually the size of small church.

Getting up to the Arch involved a mile long trek on rough terrain, so I had to be content viewing it from afar. I waited in the campervan while Steve made the trip. I waited and waited and waited ... slept, read, ate and then started to worry ... Three hours later he returned. Was I relieved to see him!

What had taken him so long? Well he had only managed to drop his £250 lens and filter off the edge of the Arch. Remarkably he managed to retrieve them and, miraculously, they were still intact. Only the crystal lens protector had been smashed.

The following morning we travelled onto Capital Reef via Goblin Valley. This valley is full of rock formations shaped by the weather to look just like goblins. What a sight!

Capital Reef is so named because the volcanic ash-covered hills bear a striking resemblance to the Capital Buildings in Washington. These petrified dunes encase monoliths such as the ones we saw at Monument Valley. We drove

down into Capital Gorge, an ancient riverbed. The river has carved away the petrified dune surface exposing red, brown, green and grey rock formations.

The scenic Highway 12 took us over moon-like terrain and the tree-covered mountains of Dixie National Forest onto Bryce Canyon. The snowy road was hair-raising at times with sharp corners, steep climbs and drops of 100 feet either side.

Wow! Wow! Bloody Hell!

Once again Steve took me up to the viewpoint with eyes closed. When I opened them, my usual "Wows!" went right out of the window. All I could utter were the words "Bloody Hell!". This was the climax to our whole trip.

I looked down on pink, orange, red and white rock formations that looked like a mighty army of Chinese warriors. You could look at this view for a thousand years and never tire of its awesome beauty.

On leaving this area we travelled down through Zion National Park, a bigger version of Capital Reef and back down to Las Vegas.

The places we saw were like nowhere else on earth. The Grand Canyon is truly one of the seven natural wonders of the world.

Testimony to this is that not many people know what the other six are.