

TRIP REPORT – BILLY GOAT BLUFF, WONNANGATTA AND ZEKA SPUR

20 – 22 January 2012

Five vehicles met at Swanpool, south of Benalla, early on Friday (with a small delay caused by two of the vehicles- the President and Vice-President respectively!) to set off for Licola and The Pinnacles, where we were to meet two other vehicles.

Participants were:-

David Blore (Trip Leader) and Geoff (visitor)

David Jackson and Tim (visitor)

Frank Stevens and Frank Snr (visitor)

Murray and Judy Mceachern

Peter Dunn and Ross (Visitor)

Meeting us at The Pinnacles were:

Graeme and Sue Abotomey

Bruce Gooday



An easy run for the Swanpool contingent saw us meet the others at the fire tower in time for lunch and an inspection of the view across the river valleys from the fire tower platform before the descent of Billy Goat Bluff. (The firespotter on duty incidentally told us that on good days he can see as far as the Ninety Mile Beach!) This track is a long steep drop into the Wonnangatta River valley, but with dry weather and only two vehicles encountered coming the other way it proved most enjoyable and not difficult; in the wet it might be a little more exciting! A relatively short run along the rivers saw us reach camp on the Wongungarra River in good time for some relaxation and naturally refreshment – in and out of the river, which was pleasantly warm. The campfire that night was most enjoyable with plenty of willing firewood collectors.

Next morning was overcast but no rain; we travelled along Cynthia Range after ascending Station Track from the river; part way up some bike riders caught and overtook us, with one spectacularly falling on a steep scabbly section immediately in front of us. After a struggle he finally got going again, very red of face from the exertions and possibly the extreme embarrassment.



Camp in Wonnangatta Valley was reached in time for lunch after a diversion to the top of Little Baldy to take in the views and the descent of Wombat Spur. The afternoon was time for more relaxation for most, with the David's in the Disco and Frank and Tim in the Defender deciding to do a quick sortie up Harts Spur, along the Mt Sarah Road and down Water Spur and back to camp, where the rest had again done a great job in getting firewood – always scarce in the Valley. (Got to concede here that the Disco is very nice and extremely capable – when its going!) Another pleasant time around the campfire, helped with some very good (local) red wine which saw the stragglers get to bed near the witching hour.

Sunday saw us leaving the Valley with the party splitting at the Riley Creek turnoff, where some who wanted to get back early headed to Myrtleford rather than choosing the Zeka Spur route. As it turned out they were in Myrtleford about 1 PM, whereas the rest didn't get to Mansfield until nearly 5PM. Nonetheless the trip up Zeka Spur was very enjoyable, with only one group of vehicles providing support to a trail riding group encountered travelling in the opposite direction.





The route along Brocks Road however caused a little confusion, firstly when through a combination of circumstances one vehicle became separated from the convoy, losing a little time whilst we rejoined each other, and then when a very large tree was encountered near Low Saddle Road necessitating a diversion along Refrigerator Gap Track to the Bluff Track and thence to Sheepyard Flat, where we went our separate ways.

Overall a great weekend with excellent company, some good driving, scenery and history to see, pleasantly cool but dry weather, little traffic and great camaraderie around the campfire.

David Blore