

Trip Reports:



Club Trips

Kate's All Girls Weekend

Girl power ruled at Wangaratta 4wd Drive Club's first annual all girls camping adventure. Trip leader Kate Burke was joined by daughters Steph and Manda, club members Irene, Alyce, Helene and Maria with her daughter Jessie and her friend Michaela. Each member took turns being Tail-end Charlie throughout the trip so no-one felt left out.

After spending a worrisome night on Friday night, wondering if the trip should go ahead due to reports of fire activity in the area I decided to continue on as there were no further reports and phone calls only led to messages stating no significant fire activity was reported in Victoria. Everyone was given the opportunity to pull out if they desired but no-one was going to wimp out.

So, on Saturday the 16th of November, after meeting up at the Woolworths car park at 9am in Benalla the pioneers left travelling in convoy style to the picturesque Rubicon State Park. We arrived around 11am and our first stop was Snobs Creek Falls where we marvelled at the 100 meter cascade which was spectacular and the wonderful views. Lots of female posing and photos were taken there on the newly constructed platform. Then we continued onto Morris Lookout where we viewed the beautiful sights towards Eildon and Thornton before having our lunch.

After lunch most of us aired down before continuing on our drive through the scenic forest with some photo stops along the way for those snap happy campers before arriving at Kendall's Camp at 3pm. A definite highlight of the day's trip was in catching sight of the famous mythical Black Panther! I turned a corner and there it was, it's yellow eyes totally mesmerising whilst it stretched itself leisurely before bounding back into the scrub. It happened so quickly I didn't get a chance to take a photo! Darn it!!!

At the camp ground we all found a lovely flat spot not too far from the toilets and the river within easy walking distance. Both my daughters were traumatised by their first visit to the toilets as I had neglected to tell them they were 'pit' toilets. I still don't think I've been forgiven yet. We all set up camp and I had my daughters telling me that I was setting up our tent all wrong because it looked all funny. But thanks to Ian Barry showing me how to set it up two days before (I bought the tent off him) I proved them wrong with the exception of the outer cover being 11cm lopsided. Maria and her companions slept in swags, Irene in her trusty roof top tent and Helene and Alyce in the back of their vehicles.

Then, the wine came out, with nibbles of biscuits, dips, cheese and fruit which were shared by everyone. Despite the weather warming up considerably no-one was daring to go for a swim in the river

as the water was still quite cold. Pretty soon we had a superb campfire going and were organising dinner when there was a little comment of "I think I've caught on fire". We turned to see a member with her gas burner BBQ alight. One member bravely ran to the rescue much to her own astonishment. After turning the gas valve off and letting it cool a bit we checked the gas fitting to find it had come loose. Once that was tightened we tried again and - voila, there was a lovely meal cooking merrily away on it.

After a delicious dinner we were all entertained by Irene's Australian tour story by the campfire. Maria and her girls lit up the night with spectacular light shows including fireworks and a glow ball show. Marshmallows were toasted and eagerly consumed and we all relaxed and chatted. Later, as Irene attempted to retreat for the night we were visited by an unexpected guest. The police had popped in. Irene narrowly escaped being arrested for indecent exposure and they shone their spot lights on each of us before continuing onto the next camp without even buying her a drink.

After all had retired for the night, giggles could be heard throughout the campsite. Manda and I were at it for at least 15 minutes before exhaustion overtook us much to the relief of my other daughter Steph. I have to say at this point that the tent was great. We were all snuggled very comfortably with room to spare and slept like logs.

Next morning we all awoke to a beautiful sunny day, had our breakfast, packed up our stuff and decamped around 9.30am. First stop for the day was at the Rubicon power station which is part of Victoria's first hydro-electric power scheme. After we wandered around, admired the long aqueduct piping running up the hill and posed for more photos we continued on to Rubicon Falls. Alas, when turning a corner we were greeted by very dark thunderous looking clouds. Soon it began to rain and then hail. Helene says she thinks it may have been snow. It did look kind of slushy. Catching a look through rain we were able to see the falls but unfortunately it was not a good time to take photos. We continued on until we came to the 15000ft Siphon Trestle Bridge, one of three trestle bridges that form part of the tramline. Fortunately, the rain had stopped so we were able to take some photos.

Continuing on, I could see smoke rising through the trees and thought to myself, "uh oh". It was in an area where the logging had been conducted and there were trees on the ground still smouldering slightly. My guess is this had been a controlled burn and that we had found the source of 'the fires'. Before our trip ended we went to Snob's Bar where we aired up our tyres and ordered lunch. As I had not eaten here before I was a little concerned how the food would turn out but all our meals were of good size and enjoyable. After lunch the conversation veered naturally towards horror stories of pit toilets and most had a story to tell about their toileting adventures. It rounded off a great weekend and we arrived in Benalla at 2.45pm with the exception of Irene and Helene whom turned off at the Hume Freeway to go home.

- Special thanks to Burkey and Toby for clearing fallen trees and branches and to all the partners of the girls for their caring consternation and loving advice prior to the trip.

By Kate Burke and Amanda Burke

(Photos below...)

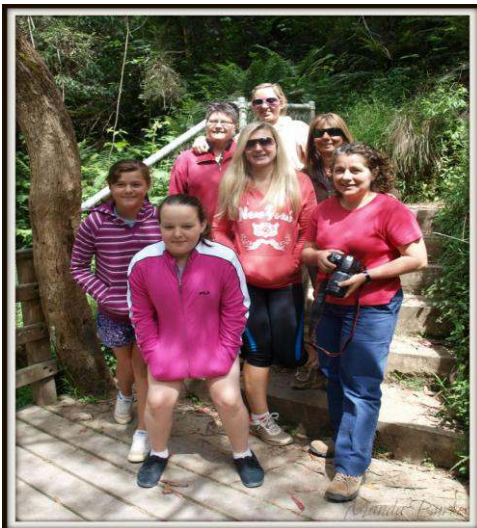
At Kendall's campground



Snobs Creek Falls



Snobs Creek Falls



Five vehicles, nine lovely ladies



Rubicon Falls



Setting up camp- I needed a pair of long legs

