

# Trip Reports:

## Our Beyond Hotham Experience

A couple of years ago we noticed some advertising in Trackwatch for a four wheel drive event being held at and therefore aptly named Beyond Hotham. While the program seemed interesting, we'll reluctantly admit that we looked at the price tag, added up the accommodation cost and dismissed the concept as a rich person's way of 'roughing it' in the high country. Besides, why pay to do most of the things we could already do for free?

An invitation by Jim Attridge for our club to actively participate in the event, prompted us to rethink our first impressions, and we decided to enrol. We were joined and assisted at various times during the 10 day event by David Blore, David and Chris Jackson and friend Tim, and Craig Cheetham.

Unexpected family commitments meant we were a day late getting up there, but as soon as we walked into 'the General' on the Friday evening, the wonderful atmosphere and enthusiasm of those in the room who were sharing their day's experiences, was certainly infectious. The guest speaker for the night was Ian Stapleton, local author and historian who presented a fascinating insight into the contributions of many of the pioneering women in the general area. If you ever get the opportunity to hear Ian speak, don't hesitate to take it up!



The snow overnight was a glorious sight in the morning. Unfortunately a tank of summer diesel reacted rather badly to the conditions but the fuel waxing problem was solved just five minutes before acting as TEC for the Machinery Spur trip.

specifically opened by Parks Victoria for the Hotham participants. We were also very to have Ken Harris provide a guided tour of his battery and some interesting anecdotes of his operation. A picture of the crew was taken walk into Dibbins hut, much to the satisfaction leader Ross Grant, who later confessed that he with his office colleagues that he could get wheel drivers' to go for a walk.



This track was

Beyond fortunate mining

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Sunday was a glorious day. It was the day the real pressure started, as the Wang Club was to lead a 'Mystery Trip' for the day. With little idea of local history we felt a little out of our depth, and were unsure of what to present to our participants. Jim inadvertently solved our dilemma when he said to everyone assembled that by the end of the event, everyone would have a better understanding of the

capabilities of their vehicles and themselves. It was decided then to present the technical side of four wheel driving, as this is what our club does well. We led our group down to the bakery at Bright via Sugarloaf track and down Demon Ridge Track. David B, D.J and Tim headed home from here and the remaining crew took Wet Gully Track to Harrietteville, then up the bitumen to Hotham.

Our three day club trip was lead by Craig and ourselves and covered a ‘helipad tour’ to Wonnangatta. We drove in ideal weather conditions along Sugarloaf track to Clear Creek crossing, up Scotchman’s Track to Buffalo range track. After lunch we continued onto the Mt Selwyn helipad before heading along Tea tree range track and down Water spur track to camp on the Humphray river. We had a great crew with us, and enjoyed a pleasant evening by the campfire that night.

Next morning we arrived in Wonnangatta station and took some time to share the history of this area with our crew, and then travelled to Talbotville via Wombat Spur track.



The gathering at Talbotville was quite a sight as the various groups all converged into the one camping area for their evening meal, and plenty of socialising, around another warm fire. In the

morning each group found their own way back to Mt Hotham along various routes. We chose to head up Collingwood Spur and into Grant. The walk into the Union mine was enjoyed by all.

Lunch was at Harrison’s cut and then we headed up the Birregun track where we stopped at the lookout and Dog’s grave.

We continued along Dinner Plain track back to the main road and once again to ‘the General’ for another enjoyable happy hour and trip sharing stories from the rest of the crew.

A women’s day was held on Friday, so Irene took to the wheel for the day. This trip headed down the old coach road for a museum tour at Harrietteville. We then headed back along Shamrock and Wet gully track. This left Noel looking for a lift on another trip, which ended up being with the group restoring the Trig point on the top of Mt Blue Rag – a little more restoring was required than expected, as on the way up the leg of the new stand broke off and a mercy trip to do some quick repairs was required.

Our final day saw us TEC for a trip into Beveridge’s Station and down the Link track back into Harrietteville. The dinner that evening was a culmination of the 10 day Beyond Hotham “experience”. Noel and I looked back over these days, and realised, that although we have driven many of these tracks before, it was the ‘experience’ shared with others, particularly many with an immense wealth of knowledge of the area, that made this event unique.

We are grateful for the opportunity to represent our club in this event, and hope that our contribution was also of benefit to the organisers and may lead to an ongoing relationship in the future.

Irene and Noel

(Photos: Irene H and David B)



We were also fortunate to win the raffle for this wonderful photo of Blowhard Hut. The ARB fridge in the photo was won by David and Chris.

## Well Done

A big thank you to Irene and Noel for this trip report but can I add a vote of thanks to all Club members who participated in this event and represented us all by doing so.

## **Kate's Trip Report – Buckland Valley training weekend.**

Burkey and I arrived on the Friday night at camp to find a nice little fire going with a few people gathered around. We had travelled with Tom and David from Wangaratta and after stopping for a quick meal in Myrtleford we continued with our trusty little trailer behind us taking shortcuts as we followed Tom and hoping to goodness he knew where he was going. After a few drinks and a catch-up it was time to hit the sack for me as I was pretty tired. Burkey stayed up and, I believe, didn't come to bed till the wee hours of the morning.

**Day one** – Awoke to a beautiful but crisp morning. Breakfast on the way and some warm clothes was in order. It was great to see a good turnout for the weekend as we viewed all the vehicles and their attachments. There were some other visitors which were not part of the club but we definitely outnumbered them all. After greeting everyone, washing up after breakfast and teasing Chris and DJ with their 'camping in style' 240volt kettle and generator, Burkey and I assisted with the setup of the recovery gear whilst those for training went to attend the theory with Stan.

Craig was the instructor for the recovery gear and gave some excellent tips on how to recover a vehicle. A very informative session and I'm sure those who attended and participated learnt a great deal on recovery