

Trip Reports:

TRIP REPORT - BUCKLAND VALLEY 23 - 24 - 25

JAN 2010

Stan asked me to take control over this weekend's activities if indeed there was to be any. Up until Thursday morning no interest was shown, but then there were 3 or 4 parties wanting to do something and others showing some interest.

I know the website says Jamieson or the Murray but I wasn't confident in that area as I've not been there SO the weekend's base camp was in the Buckland Valley at the '19.2 Horseshoe Campground' which oddly enough is at the 19.2 km mark up from the end of the bitumen OR from the Buckland bridge.

I knew Craig was camping there with the JOC (Jeep owners club) and he was happy enough for us to camp nearby (and act as mummy should I have any problems finding my way around)

We met at Macka's at 9.30 Sat morning - as per normal the numbers had dwindled a bit.

Tom arrived in his 2 wheeler, he'd be my co driver for the weekend as his trusty GQ was having her nails and hair done and not available.

Ian W couldn't make it at the last minute but had organised 2 1/2 mates to come from Benalla (Peter and his son and Frank) to come in Franks Land Rover Defender with ever reliable Murray & Judy meeting us at base camp. We were expecting at least 3 more vehicles to join us at some time.

Arrived at Camp at about 11am, first thing we saw was the Wang 4WD sign and JOC sign nailed to a tree and then 'lo and behold' down in the camp ground all on it's lonesome - erected well away from the JOC (Jeep owners club) camp site was our Wangaratta 4WD Club tent erected proudly and conveniently next to a fire place which was to be home for the next 3 days. Craig had earmarked one end of the camp ground for us, the other end for JOC, just to keep the riff raff out. Thanks Craig for your preparation.



Talking about preparation, yours truly took the 2 canoes along for a paddle down the river except there was not enough water to even launch them.

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Leaving at 1 pm we tagged along with the JOC for an afternoon run, Craig felt sorry for me so he let us (the Defender and the Maverick) hang onto the JOC coat tail.

I'm not sure exactly where we went BUT the driving was fantastic with the scenery at times being the highpoint of the trip

Half way up one 'mother of a hill' there appeared to be a stoppage and you guessed it a TOYOTA - only this one was a new 4Lt supercharged petrol Hilux who apparently had water problems and cooked the motor (said it sounded like a diesel rattle)

SO, hooked the front up to the Wang clubs LR Defender (we do come in handy sometimes) and the rear was hooked to a grouse looking black Jeep wrangler with Craig not only acting as scout up front but lashing his Jeep to the Defender in order to get the convoy up some of the very steep hills that we still had to traverse to get back to camp. Every uphill of course there was a downhill so in

the end the (once brand new) snatch straps were left on and the now totally dead Toyota was pulled up and down many, many hills before it was picked up by the RACV for a heart transplant the next day.

El presidente robbo spoke with us over the UHF on top of one mountain (he was 25km away) and met us at camp for Sat night, only to leave early Sunday on another mission.

Next day it was off to Blue Rag and Mt Murray and lots of beautiful views and excellent drives with only one puncture.

But today was different - after (almost) our Hero status from the previous day - Craig and the LOC pleaded (well almost) with us to come with them just in case they got into trouble - Murray and Judy joined with us today with the big stonkin F250 so that if it got real bad we could probably tow them all home.

It was a fantastic day - just the best driving, with some of the views the best I've seen.

Got back to camp in daylight today (we'd got rid of all the Toyota's the day before) and settled down to a lovely meal and a couple of orange juices.

Unfortunately Peter and Frank had to leave us for work on monday - they were great people, fitted right in - we were sorry to see them go.

Guess what? We were invited into the sacrosanct - to join the JOC camp fire that evening - what a privilege - we had almost come of age!!

Monday, Murray & Judy packed up - Tom had left Sunday night for work which just left me alone. I couldn't both lead the trip and be tail end charlie, so I snuck down and joined the JOC gang for their final days drive (I don't think they even knew I was there) Got back about 3pm after another fantastic day - had a quick nap and packed up camp and joined JOC for pancakes with local blackberries and cream.

The JOC crew were terrific people most equipped with vans or campers at base camp, their Jeeps some quite stock did everything asked of them and if you've been up Blue Rag, that's quite an ask for a stocky. Also met a local Benalla family in their Prado who was a friend of Craigs - lovely people, who together with Peter and Frank showed an interest in joining our club.



I'd just like to throw a bouquet at Craig - he's a consummate leader and guide, we started on time every time, he was there to answer questions and give advice, he knows the area's really well and knows how to put a day together - he even set up our camp on Friday so there would be room for us in case the camp ground got busy. Well done.

Took the canoes home Monday night, had a shower and restocked the fridge and together with Jim & Kerryn Bramich & family and Rob Beurs and Mark Beasley & family (new members to be) joined the 4WD members of the Wangaratta Wesleyan Church - 14 vehicles in total and over 50 individuals for a day out into the hills - from Lake Buffalo/Buggery track thru to the Buckland Valley finishing at Harrietville - a great day out, good company and extremely well organised for such a large number of vehicles. Including a driver that we met on the top of Blue Rag a few days earlier.

I don't know what you did on the long weekend but with Ozzie flags flying from our vehicles I enjoyed our great backyard with over 120 other individuals and loved it!

David Jackson



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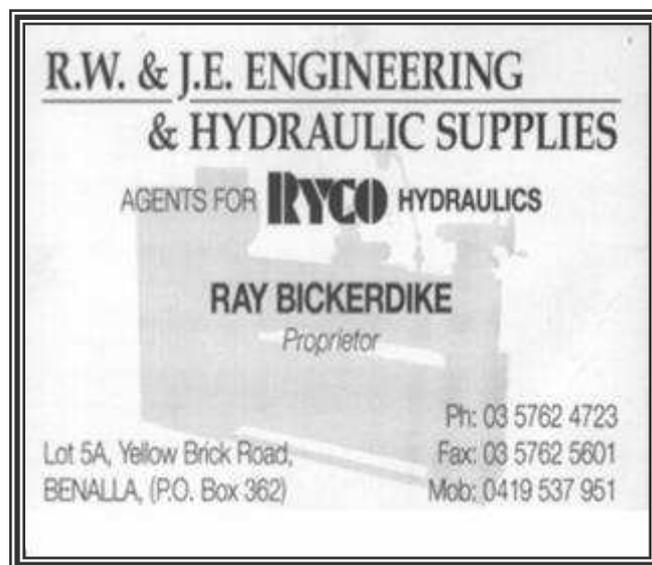
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