

Trip Report - Whitfield to Lake Buffalo Day

Trip Sat 4th June

Written by David Jackson

Meeting time was 7:45 for an 8am start as usual at Macas in Wang. The day was put together as a 'short notice trip' for newish members and those that don't get out much.

Tom our Trip Co-ordinator and I did a ring around on Thursday / Friday night to those that had responded to my offer of contact for these short notice trips (at last month's meeting and in last month's Presidents Report.) The offer remains open.



Present on the day. Myself as leader with Tom as 2IC & Charlie. Barry Burns a newish member, at last out for a drive. He had as his co-pilot David Ashford a veteran 4wdriver (currently without a 4wdride), the film crew for the day comprising the old stalwart David Ferguson with 2 new recruits, Tom Ashford and Jack Jefferies - Tom's brother-in-law. Young David was in with Tom teaching Jack the finer points and Tom A was in with me setting up filming situations. They all did a sterling job - we spent a little more time on this trip setting up film situations, I believe the video is now complete so we'll see how good it looks at one of the general meetings. You may notice in the video young Tom A is quite often out of breath from chasing the vehicles up and down hills all day. A first class job young Tom with nothing being too much trouble on the day.



A quick drive out to Whitfield with a slight diversion thru Edi Cutting, then up into the bush near Gentle Anny. Our plan was to give Barry a bit of a workout with his yet untried GQ Patrol. His comment at the end of the day was "nothing we've done has fazed me". He drove very well and had no upsets at all.

Up into the Black Range track we went - despite what I said in the pre-trip report that it would be dry - it had rained and in spots was a little sticky. If you've done the track before you'll know that it gets progressively more challenging - not difficult but for an untried newby (sorry Barry) it is the perfect track to learn on. At one stage he said "this is easy" - which I was pleased to hear, for around the next few bends our first detour was fast approaching. Called 'Smalls Track' which is supposed to have an old hidden hut on it. We didn't find the hut this time (maybe next time) but what a fabulous down hill run to test out the diesel braking (and the nerves), after a few km we got to bitumen so turned around and went back up again.

A few km further on (and incidentally no more comments from Barry) we again did a detour this time onto Carsons Track to try and find an old Sapphire mine - next time I'll bring the 'old timer' that knows where these 2 elusive sights are. Again a nice track and again we turned around and wound our way back up to the Black Range track and on we went. Some fantastic driving and magnificent views - thanks to DSE or Parks for grading this complete track, smoothish since the floods.

Once we got to the top of the track - not really at the end, but at that altitude we had a few choices for the rapid descent into Lake Buffalo area. We spent quite a bit of time checking out some exciting shortcuts and some we checked out 2 or 3 times - they were that good.





There was one particular ugly, muddy, rutted er 'short cut' - the Disco got thru the bog hole, around the bend and a little way up it to find that only a D8 dozer would go any further, with some intelligent directions it backed its way out. Next of course the mighty patrol wanted to have a go - "no hill has yet stopped her" or some comment like that was uttered. A first effort nearly got thru the bog hole (ofcourse the Disco's effort made it harder to get thru the bog by now - or so Tom said) so another shot, and another shot and still not around the bend. Tom would still be trying had I not vetoed any more try's. And all this on video - I hope!

Thinking about it now - it probably won't be on video as Tom is doing the editing himself!! A very proud Nissan man our Tom, as most of them are!

Couple of more short cuts - (and yes Barry was doing a great job - infact he was doing a fantastic job. I now had just about exhausted my time and opportunities to prove/show our newbie Nissan driver that some hills are meant only for the likes of the mighty Land Rover Discoveries and that Nissans may just have to have a couple of cracks at them to get up) and we were at the lake ready for a bite to eat and to call it a day. A quick discussion (apparently I was out voted) and we decided to have a look upstream - Tom knew the area so we changed positions and he led while I took over Charlie. We went thru unbelievable country decimated by the last floods - wow the black berries will take advantage of any circumstance, they were out of control. Went thru some fairly low lying country - kept well apart just in case the leader went down. All's well - we're trying to reach a track to get us back to the lake, "just around the bend behind those trees" - just one more water covered track to go - Toms call - trust me he said and goes for it.

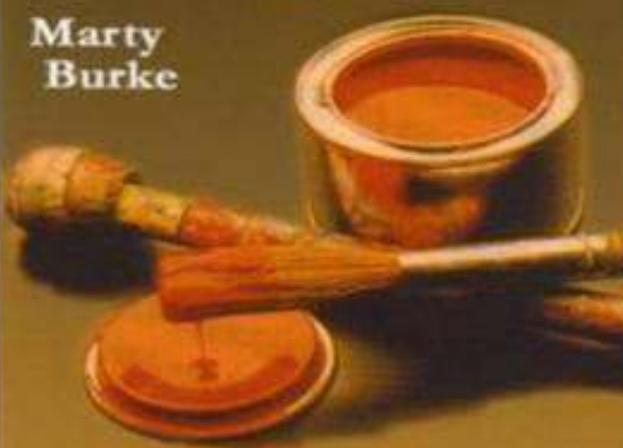


Well I turned the Disco around so I could snatch him in a forward motion - I know how Toyota's don't snatch too well from the front. 3 snatch straps and a dirty long winch extension kept me well out of the soup and 'plop' - out he came. He didn't say too much - just ashamed I guess having been pulled out by the Disco???

It was getting a little dark by that time, so we high tailed it out of there the way we came in and soon found ourselves at Myrtleford having a milkshake and a feed. Had a great day - protected our newbie who now wear's a stripe for a job well done and a smile from ear to ear. A big thanks to the film crew and all who made it a great day. Pity you weren't along too!!

burke signs

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