

East Gippsland and the Snowy River – Cup Weekend: 29 October to 2 November 2010

Saturday morning we arrived at Myrtleford with Dave and Doreen, for a cooked breakfast from the bakery at 8am, and waited for everyone else to arrive. We watched as a few Jeep club members meandered aimlessly around the town looking lost and forlorn, it was raining quite heavy at this time and there were many jokes about the lack of tread on some tyres and how serviceable our winches were. (Craig we'd love to read the trip report on your adventures in the Wonnangatta.) Soon Barry and Dennis, Murray and Judy, Alan and Vickie, Dave and Doreen and Bruce all turned up.

Some were doing a mad rush around town looking to buy umbrellas as the rain pelted down. We finally mounted up just as Craig arrived to meet the wondering Jeep owners, who were still driving about town aimlessly, a quick wave to the Cheetham family as we were leaving, and we headed off towards Hotham. We had to make a stop in Harrietville, while Barry checked out a noise in his car which turned out to be a bad (read stuffed) wheel bearing, so he had to head home. As Stan was the emergency contact on the pre-trip report, he had to step-up to lead (as no-one else stepped forward, despite much encouragement and prompting).

We sadly waved goodbye to Barry and Dennis and headed to Hotham, then stopped at Dinner Plain for lunch. We found the hidden Dinner Plains track which wrapped around the rear of the Dinner Plain village and headed towards Swifts Creek. We had some slipping and sliding in the rain, but all made it ok to the Dogs Grave, then onto the Nunniong Road to the Moscow Villa Hut. There were already campers in residence at the main hut and the secondary hut, so we set up in the camping area and watched the rain. We had about two inches, measured on Murray's coffee cup. The next morning we all tracked back to the Wellington Winch, the only remaining preserved steam driven winch in Australia. It is a mammoth feat of engineering and testament to the bygone days of high risk forestry. The signals they used were: One whistle to go, one to stop, two to call for more wire, three to wind it back, four to take up the slack and five to call an end to the day, and lastly six whistles if there was an accident. Didn't they have such wonderful communications back then, what else would anyone need to know?



Dave & Doreen deciding that they might fit a turbo – when they get home – on the Bowen Trail



Sandy Point Camp Ground, between Buchan and Orbost, on the Snowy River

We travelled down the Nunnet Road all the way to Buchan where we all enjoyed the artistic displays including the art and flower show and the photographic display. A lovely lunch was had by all at the cafe. We headed off along the Buchan to Orbost road to the Sandy Point Track looking for a campsite on the Snowy River. The camper already in residence, learned that just because you set your camp up in the middle of the track, it won't keep Stan and Bethne out. We drove around and through the camp and discovered one of the best camp sites we have found, right on the banks of the Snowy



River, just above the water line. We soon had a good fire going, and with a kindly person leaving plenty of cut wood along the track (beside their broken down trailer) we had plenty of coals for the three camp ovens – ah lovely roast dinner. We found the loveliest warm pool drenched in the afternoon sun, where the water temperature was similar to the Benalla hydrotherapy pool.

A relaxing time in the warm waters while our dinner cooked and the tent dried out from the previous night's rain was marvellous.



McKillop's Bridge

We called into Orbost for morning tea, and then headed north on the Bonang road, turning off at the 36 mile creek, then the Black Snake Creek

and had lunch at the Waratah picnic area where the toilets had been recently crushed by a large tree. We were there at the right time of year to see a cascade of bright red Waratah's all around the area, the namesake of the track. Such a beautiful plant species, and how lovely to see them growing in the wild. We made sure not to damage any as we admired their elegant beauty, and left them undamaged, for the next travellers to admire.



Snowy River

We proceeded along the track to a locked gate and a flurry of re-calculations and navigational guesswork (as both the GPS's and the Rooftop maps were not accurate), using the old Hema map got us onto the Bowen trail, which was a marvellous and eerie drive through huge forests soaked in mists, and out onto rocky outcrops which no doubt offer fantastic views when the weather is clear. We came eventually to the Deddick trail, and meandered our way back to the Snowy and camped upstream of McKillop's Bridge at Bull Flat camping area.

The environmental release of water from Jindabyne had not reached the bridge as yet, but by the end of the week (5-6 Nov) it should be in full flow. What a sight that would be. We were all very tempted to head up to Jindabyne for a look, but had to head back home instead. We headed home via the Limestone track to Benambra for an ice cream, then to Corryong and Tallangatta where the Hume Dam is very full, a great sight to see all that water storage.



Murray Crossing the bridge.

We called in to see Barry and then headed home, after a fantastic weekend, with great company and plenty of jokes and stories around the campfire. We appreciated the help of fellow travellers with packing up the toilet and starting the fire (and keeping it going), which shares the workload of the trip leader. Total distance for the Williams 1050Ks Cheers Bethne (*and Stan agrees*)



Little River Falls near McKillop's Bridge



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