

The camp site by the Snowy River at Willis only needed a hot shower to get a 5 star rating. We all found flat shady spots and most of the crew enjoyed a relaxing swim in the fast flowing river. An environmental release of water from Lake Jindabyne prior to the trip ensured that there was plenty, but not too much, water. As there were no fire restrictions at the time we were able to enjoy a camp fire (as we did at Limestone Creek and later at Bentley Plain).

On day three we travelled back down the Snowy River Road to Gelantipy, stopping along the way at the old Suggan Buggan School House which was built about 1860 by the O'Rourkes – the first permanent settlers of Suggan Buggan. From Gelantipy we enjoyed a forest drive west to Bentley Pain where we set up camp for the night. The Bentley Plain campground is a short walk from the Moscow Villa Hut which must be the most palatial hut in the High Country. As for the previous two nights, we had the campground to ourselves and again enjoyed a campfire with wood provided by Graham and the Ranger.

Day four was return home day with coffee at the Omeo Bakery and lunch and ice-creams at Harrierville.

Overall, we travelled about 800 kilometres. We enjoyed sunny 26 degree days and cool nights. There was no vehicle damage, no mechanical issues, no one needed a second go at any of the hill-climbs, and no other traffic on the Cobberas Trail. Many thanks to my fellow travelers for making the trip one of the most enjoyable I have been on in the High Country.

Bruce Gooday

## **Edi Cutting Xmas Weekend**

On Friday, there was some preparation attended to for the Xmas weekend with the cleaning of the fire pit, setting up of the club marquee and hanging up the red and white balloons to guide members to the campground. Thanks to Graeme Martin for helping with the marquee and hanging the balloons, despite popping some of them. Nev and Monica French arrived after lunch and set up their tents. At 3.00pm I left to go back home to get ready for my work Xmas party that evening. During my absence, Graham and Sue Abotomey, Damian, Kerry and Tom O'Connor, and John and Beryl Strang arrived. A lovely campfire kept everybody warm I was told when I returned at nearly midnight.

Saturday morning was very leisurely with members having breakfast and spending time chatting with each other. Graeme Martin had already left at 7.15am to attend a meeting in Merrijig. The O'Connor's packed up and left after breakfast to attend a wedding that day and just before lunch DJ arrived and brought a guest, Peter Squire, with him. After introductions were completed we all had lunch before heading out to the planned trip of the day with the first destination being Deer Hut.

Well...the track to the hut turned out to be interesting with lots of twists and turns, ruts, tight passages and a couple of fallen trees which Graham Abotomey dealt with competently with his trusty chainsaw. It was a track which required lots of negotiating skills and everybody tackled it very well. The effort to turn 6 vehicles around the sardine can of a parking space was remarkable. The track was a one way in/ one way out and with the smile on his face I knew Burke was having fun. Had the track been wet it would have been difficult. Robbo caught up with us after waiting at the end of the hut track and continued with the group for the rest of the drive.

Due to the time it took to traverse this particular track we were unable to visit the other locations, so the unanimous decision was to return back to camp. We headed back via Black Range Track to find

a large group of vehicles and a police vehicle near a communications tower which the CFA also use. Apparently vandals had tried to break in causing extensive damage to the tower door. The workers were putting up a new fence to deter further break in attempts. We arrived back at camp at 4.30pm to freshen up before dinner. Monica took the 'freshen up' literally and jumped in the King River, clothes and all. Robbo and DJ left to go back home but guest, Peter stayed and Graeme returned later in the evening. After dinner we all sat around the campfire for some more banter and Morton jokes (thanks Graeme - can always count on you for those jokes).

We awoke to a beautiful Sunday morning, filled up on breakfast and this time Nev French led the trip. Graeme Martin left to go back home and the O'Connor's returned just in time for the trip and we set off at 10.00am to reach our first track which was Long Spur track. On the way Graham Abotomey provided a wonderful insight into the history of the tobacco industry which originated in the area. Burkey and I had always wondered what those hut-like things were. Thanks Graham.

After airing down the tyres and crossing a shallow river we entered Long Spur track. The Strangs got a little stuck at one point but with directions from Graham, they were on their way again. We turned into Sandy Flat track and Burkey was wondering why the vehicle was not braking evenly downhill only to find he had turned the hubs 'off' instead of 'on' by mistake. We crossed another river (a little deeper this time) before getting onto Top Crossing track. Burkey and I were behind Nev and we came upon them stopped on the track with Nev's bonnet up on his vehicle. Apparently the radiator cap was loose causing it to boil. The problem was sorted quickly with Damo coming to the rescue with 10 litres of water he had in his vehicle and Burkey carefully pouring it in bit by bit. We turned into Buckland Spur track which proved to be a little rocky calling on more negotiating skills, then onto Evans Creek track to Evans Creek Hut for a break and photos. We got back onto Top Crossing track, drove past Lake William Hovell, checked out the spillway and then headed back to camp arriving around 2.30pm. It was a great drive and all drivers enjoyed the trip, even Peter, our guest. Thanks Nev.

A big thanks to Sue Abotomey for babysitting all our camping gear both days whilst she relaxed with her reading and enjoying the peace.

And thank you to those that attended to make it a fun trip.

Kate Burke

Photo: *In front of Deer Hut*

