

# High Range 4 Wheel Drive Club

[www.hr4wdclubsaustralia.org.au](http://www.hr4wdclubsaustralia.org.au)

## Trip Report - Adelaide to Blinman

Long weekend – 29 September 2007 – 1 October 2007

Submitted by Helen (Highwater) Taylor and Phil (McCracken) Rocconi

I joined the High Range 4WD Club SA Inc. around a year ago, after purchasing a Ford Territory. Since then Phil and I have participated in several day trips that the club has put together around the outer Adelaide areas.

Even though I have been aware of the longer weekend trips, I had not felt very confident in my driving skills with the Territory, nor my camping abilities! Phil is a seasoned camper, whilst I am a definite five star gal, requiring facilities such as a toilet within spitting distance and a hair dryer!!

Because we had been getting to know the other club members, we decided that we would like to participate in the Blinman trip.

Our rendezvous point was at Hawker, around a 6 hour trip north of Adelaide. So on Saturday (weather cool, raining) we set off around 6.00am to meet at Hawker.

We travelled to Clare, through to Jamestown and then on to Orroroo. Because we encountered very little traffic, we arrived at Orroroo at around 10.00am. So we found time for a refuel and a leisurely coffee, then a walk around the town, where we discovered the very pretty Lions Park, together with water in the creek and Aboriginal carvings.

Then on to Carrieton, where some members had gathered and had discovered that the petrol pump at this little township was open EVERY day except Saturday. Therefore one member ran dry!! We have to remember to factor in fuel consumption when towing!! However, help was at hand and we then travelled on to Hawker for our rendezvous. Another refuel, lunch and a meeting, we formed into convoy and set off for Blinman.



***Oops ran out of fuel – Cuffs to the rescue***

We had 10 vehicles, 4 dogs, teenagers (some of whom drove), a gaggle of adults and one young lad. By then the weather was sunny, warm and dry.

On the way to Blinman we journeyed through Brachina Gorge. This gorge was lovely with spectacular photo shots, wildlife (including emus and their chicks) and interesting driving. We did come upon a small water hole, and all vehicles passed through safely. This gorge proved to be a popular camping spot and the area was busy with campers and other vehicles.



***Brachina Gorge***

We arrived at Blinman around 3.00pm. The reason this weekend was chosen for the trip was because of the Cook Out Back festival which was on. So Blinman was quite busy when we got there (however, because of Grand Final weekend, numbers were down). We sourced out our camping spot and proceeded to set up. Some campers went to the town and sampled the bush tucker for dinner, whilst others cooked their own fare. We took the opportunity to also check out how our other members set up camp and marvelled that some of them actually did bring the kitchen sink! We were grateful that Cuffs (our trip leader) had some duct tape because our tent broke and had to be taped back together!!

Phil did a reconnaissance to find out the best toilet spot for me and the trusting soul that I am, proceeded to use the spot at every moment I could, not realising that the road I was facing was a busy thoroughfare to Glass Gorge!! The fact that it was behind a church, only added to the humour of the situation. Hence the new name of St Helen's Church. Of course notwithstanding that there were three Helens on the trip, this turned out to be a well named church!!



*Blinman*

Phil and I took a wander to the mines and speculated about the conditions these men worked under to try and mine resources. We also explored the very eerie Captain's Cottage (bed and breakfast) and I was very certain that I would never be staying there as we think that the amenities were a long drop toilet!! We also admired the beautiful sunset.

After dinner, we went to the main street to listen to the local entertainment and join some of our fellow travellers in conversation. The rest of Saturday night was spent getting to know our immediate neighbours and finding out who the snorers were!! The night was clear and cold, with spectacular sky.

Sunday dawned clear and cold and we were woken up at 5.50am (thanks Bradley!!). After blaming each other on who was the loudest snorer!!, we had breakfast, tidied up and had our meeting. It was decided to travel to Mount Chambers Gorge for the day. The drive proved to be another spectacular photo journey, with some intrepid members attempting a near perpendicular vehicle climb. One member succeeded, well done Luke. We encountered wildlife – emus, kangaroos, frilled neck lizards, sleepy lizards, and wild goats.



*Aboriginal Drawings at Chambers Gorge*

We arrived at the Gorge around lunch time, whereupon we embarked on a short walk through the creek bed to discover some beautiful Aboriginal carvings. By then the day was hot. After lunch we started journeying back. Our vehicle suffered a flat tyre from an errant rock. This is where we learnt the true value of being a member of a club. Once the word was out that our tyre was flat, the convoy stopped and the tyre was replaced in around seven minutes. There were plenty of willing hands to help and we were able to learn quite a lot (well I was, because Phil already knows how to change a tyre!!). Before I joined the club, I didn't even know how to use a radio (still have to remember to turn the radio off at night, so as not to flatten the batteries – did bring spares though!!). The incident even provided photographs for posterity – thanks CJ.



*The road back from Chambers Gorge*

Upon arriving back at camp, we lazed around in the shade (hot!). Some campers were running low on fuel so they decided to head out to Angorichina to refuel. One of the vehicles suffered a tyre puncture on this trip (Henry), which was again repaired efficiently. We then proceeded to start our campfire and have dinner. Our campfire proved to be very popular with every member joining in and even some ring-ins checking out the warmth!! Lots of jokes and laughter (mainly about puddles around the church!), ensued. Then it was off to bed.



***Tubeless Tyre Repair***

Monday was also clear, and amazingly, a little warmer. Deb discovered that her car had also suffered a flat tyre, which her daughter repaired, well done Mel. After breakfast (still working out who the snorers were!!), we had a meeting on the day's agenda. It was decided to visit the mines nearby then Glass Gorge and return to Blinman via Angorichina. Once again, this proved to be a spectacular photo opportunity. The roads were very easy, but very dusty which required safe driving. All cars tackled a small hill and the effort was rewarded by very spectacular view.



***Glass Gorge Trek***

We returned to Blinman around 11.00am and packed up ready for our return journey, leaving Blinman around 12.00 noon. We travelled in convoy to Hawker, gathered to say good bye and arrived home around 7.30pm (I think we live the farthest away).

In conclusion, Phil and I would have to say that it was one of the best trips that we have been on. Everybody knows that the Flinders Ranges are a beautiful

part of South Australia. It was quite sad encountering the dry creeks and dusty roads. One of the locals said that there had been no rain since February. Despite that though, there was plenty of wildlife and even wildflowers making a show.

I feel that I am a better, more confident driver, especially off road and I enjoy the experience of learning these skills within a group.

On our journey, we had three flat tyres, one asthma attack, one vehicle run out of petrol (some close I think!!) and one fuel line come loose. However, because of the knowledge of the group as a whole, none of these issues became a problem. All the dogs behaved themselves!! Our trip leader, Cuffs provided us with information and knowledge which was invaluable, and Rob I am sure carries a garage in his vehicle!! I think that everybody helped in some way to make the weekend enjoyable and interesting. We learned about the wonders of off road trailers, camper vans and even how much one costs to hire!! I think that we had the smallest tent, but it did not matter. We also learned about camaraderie, friendship and bush ethics. This was apparent when we came upon camps set up along the river sites and even though we were within touching distance of the tents etc. nobody interfered; to me this is a wonderful experience.

We would like to thank everybody for their warmth. We would also like to thank Cuffs and Deb for putting together the trip and Rob and Barbara for their research and input into the daily journeys. We would also like to extend our thanks to Brian, who was our "tail end Charlie". Everybody else, thank you.

One day we may return, (possibly to check out whether any wildflowers have grown behind the church!!).

Meanwhile, we look forward to the next adventure .....!!

Cheers  
Helen and Phil