



High Range 4WD Club of SA Inc

Hahndorf to the Murray Mouth

Sunday 20 January 2008

Submitted by Helen (Highwater) T and Phil (McCracken) R

This trip was a day adventure starting off from Hahndorf, travelling through the scenic hills and valleys of Adelaide to Meadows, then off the bitumen and off-roading to Goolwa, beach driving to the Murray Mouth, then home through Kuitpo Forrest for some rock hopping.

Cuffs, our President was Trip Leader and John was our Tail End Charlie.

Our rendezvous was at the Hahndorf Fruit & Veg. Market for a 9.00am start. For this trip, Phil and I were childless, our kids being with our respective ex partners for this weekend, so it was an opportunity to get up to mischief, with the car I mean!! The weather was cool, and misty rain had been falling, making the damp cool air a nice change from the heat of the previous weeks.



Rendezvous



Howdy to everybody

On this occasion, our club was very pleased to welcome three new vehicles to our convoy. Our new visitors were Nick and Kate in their Xtrail. Nick and Kate are from Poland and were very keen to improve their off-road driving skills. Our other new faces were Jenny and Di in their Ssanyong Musso and Les, Ann, Lee and Sonya in their Suzuki Vitara. Welcome guys.

This brought our convoy number to 15 vehicles. Some of our drivers were the younger members of our regular families and it was good to see Len's daughter doing some of the driving – I am sure you can be trusted Len!! John's son Neil had his Learner's so great way to gain experience. We were also joined by the usual herd of dogs!! (I know it is pack – but herd sounds zanier!)

We set off around 9.15, first stop 5 minutes later, down the road, was the toilets!! After the obligatory ablutions, we were on the road.

We journeyed through the beautiful Adelaide Hills, where we encountered plenty of traffic, mostly going to the Hahndorf Swap Meet Market. We soon left the bitumen, travelling through the winding roads and pretty countryside. Couple of nice churches!! After entering a road "Local Traffic Only", we were surprised to meet a very cranky customer who was intent on taking our registration numbers for whatever reason!!



Convoy gathers

I haven't received his Christmas Card yet!! Luckily Cuffs was not our Tail Ender, otherwise he probably would have biffed the bloke!!

Once again, even in the beautiful Adelaide Hills, where the climate is cooler, it was very apparent that the countryside required a decent soak of rain. The Hills were very dry and dusty. However the light misty rain that had fallen kept the dust down for our journey.

At this stage, just before Goolwa, we were joined by one of our regular members, Deb and her daughter Mel.

We reached Goolwa around midday and stopped along the river for lunch. By this time the weather was very windy and cold and we remembered that it was exactly the same as last year when we did the same trip, except that last year it rained rather hard!! How's that for luck! However, a quick move around of the cars into a wind break solved the wind problem!! After lunch, Cuffs gave us a very informative run down on recovery procedures and showed us some of the equipment that could be used in situations where a vehicle can be bogged. One piece of equipment was an inflatable jack and Cuffs showed us the benefits using this. We said good-bye to Deb who was a fleeting visitor on this trip.



After our pit stop, it was time to head off to the beach. We were then joined by another potential new member, Grant (I thought his name was Graham and it became massive confusion on what his name was – he said he would answer to anything!!). Grant found out about our journey and meeting place at Goolwa from our web page. Grant is a driving instructor, so it was good to receive some of his knowledge and input. After letting down the air pressure in our tyres, it was off to the beach. Hhmmm as there was no photo evidence of the incident regarding the Territory, I can only go on conjecture about the bogging incident, but the story goes that the Territory got bogged, not once but twice and not even on the beach but on the on the path out to the beach! Ho hum. Thank you to Rob who hauled us out backwards and frontwards (using the new front hook which has been installed on the Territory after another such incident on our Christmas trip at Robe where the 'roo bar was just about pulled off – another story!!). Thank you to Phil, running around hooking up the car and even trying to push it out, no you are not Mr Universe!! And lucky for us, there were no children in the car, because the language that came out of your mouth Phil – phew!! Next time we have to tell people not to use the path whilst we are trying to get out!! Lesson –

let the tyres down more than we did!! Doh!! But once again all of this is conjecture only!!

After enduring the teasing and embarrassment of being hauled out onto the beach, we assembled into convoy mode. Cuffs put Rob and Barb in the larger vehicle in front and bought up the rear with Tim in the Cruiser. Our aim was to get to the Murray Mouth and the larger vehicles could assess the viability of the sand. The beach was beautiful, the weather was sunnier, and although there was a stiff breeze, this only served to enhance the moodiness of the Southern



Ocean. On our trek we encountered dozens of families taking advantage of the cockling season, kite sailing and even horse riders. Once we reached the steep climb towards the mouth entrance, we all stopped to watch Rob attempt the climb. After watching him sliding around and then bouncing about alarmingly over huge bumps, I have to admit I was feeling horribly nervous. However, it was a matter of wait for the vehicle before you to ascend the hill, gun the engine and go flat to the floor

over the hill! Once you were over the hill, basically you had to keep the accelerator flat as you slewed over the sand to the mouth entrance. It was an exhilarating ride, ending in relief that you made it without getting bogged. The handling of the Territory was fantastic, once the tyres had been let down to the required 18psi. Once all vehicles assembled at the mouth, (lesson - don't brake too hard in the sand because you can get bogged - nearly - again!!) and we had exchanged our stories and all admitted to feeling relief!!, we took in the moment of actually making it to the mouth of the mighty Murray. John was looking a bit pale with Neil driving, but as he said, the exuberance of youth can get you anywhere! It



was quite a desolate place actually, with the wind howling, little vegetation and a couple of dredges sitting idly by. Barb took the opportunity to collect some shells - couldn't help herself!! I took the opportunity to scout around for a Church, but alas not even a dune to be found, so had to hang on!!

It was then time to head back to the beach, where Rob wanted to do some cockling. We were lucky to have a dodge tide, so we were safe from the incoming waters. We stopped at one spot and Phil with his trusty spade helped Rob amass a handsome cache



of cockles for a feed. Good time to disappear behind a sand dune, whilst Jenny and Di let their dogs loose for a well earned beach run. Then on to another spot, unfortunately leaving Jenny and Di trying to catch their errant dogs who knew better than to get into the car!!

The next cockling spot proved just as rich in cockle treasure and I took the opportunity to educate new member Nick (from Poland) on what a cockle was and how you eat them. He thought we were quite mad I think, but Kate, his partner took great pleasure in pulling up the jeans and helping Rob, Phil and Tim extricate the cockles from the sand. It was very amusing watching Jenny and Di



Those errant dogs!!

coming towards us in their car with the dogs running alongside, having the time of their lives. Eventually they were caught, but boy were they in trouble!! Alas it was time to join the others in the car park. Everyone else had been studiously re-inflating their tyres, so it was quick pit stop to the servo station for re-inflating and petrol.

Then back in convoy for the next leg of the trip through Kuitpo for the journey home. Bryan had a noise problem with his vehicle and after driving around the car park, it seemed to rectify itself, whilst John then had some noise coming from his vehicle also. That also came good, and so off we went.



Yep that is a rut!

The drive through Kuitpo is always lovely and this was no different. The scenery was magnificent. We got to Cox Crossing and were amazed. This water crossing same time last year was full and for our vehicles impassable. This year was dry, not a drop of water. Ok, so this then gave us the opportunity to attempt the descent. Not easy, challenging and scary. The aim was to stay out of the ruts and to gauge your

course, sometimes getting out of the car to work out the best route. The first lot of ruts was relatively easy, (although some vehicles were on three wheels!) the



I'll drive over the ruts



I'll drive through the ruts

second not too bad and the last lot, caused some problems. No incidents on the first lot of ruts, everybody congratulating themselves!! The second lot was hairy and yes Neil I did take out a tree, the scratches on the Territory are proof, even though I didn't think I did!! The desire to stay out of the rut proving stronger than scraping a tree!! Whilst waiting to attempt the third lot of ruts, we heard on the radio that one of the vehicles was stuck. Ho hum! It was the other Territory (Keith and Di). A grim day for the Territories!! They had become wedged over a rut with their fuel tank guard resting on the rut. It was ascertained that trying to pull them out would compromise the fuel tank. Grant was going to attempt a backward pull out



I think, but by the time he came back with his gear, Phil had come up with the idea of building up the area underneath the tyres to give them traction and rocking the vehicle onto said rocks. So a bunch of fellows jumped into the back of the Territory, started rocking it and hey presto, problem



solvered!! Lateral thinking!! After guiding Keith's Territory through the rest of the descent, Phil and Rob took on the task of directing all vehicles over the tricky section to the bottom of the hill, and no more incidents, although John did lose a part of his vehicle, hope it got repaired John, and Rob did



leave Phil to direct me, saying that it would be the only opportunity that Phil had to tell me what to do!! Yeah yeah!! Thanks boys though for helping all the vehicles make the descent safely. Although Grant's beast did not need any directing, he just went into the ruts and Phil just watched!! From the photos, I can tell that Tim and Rob's vehicles did the same. After making the descent, we discovered that two very patient young men had been waiting for us to get all vehicles down the hill, so they could make the ascent. I think they were going fishing, hope they were still biting!! I have to say that the

descent was very challenging and I had a headache and needed a beer!! Didn't have one, had to wait till got home!!

We all got our vehicles through with no major damage, I think, providing Keith and Di's Territory was ok and we were all happy. I think that I can say, that probably apart from Cuffs, who seems to take all of this in his stride, and the guys in the larger vehicles, there were some very nervous drivers, but once again, because we were part of a club, we all pulled together as a team. Everybody pitched in to get the vehicles out of trouble and the camaraderie and fun that we had was a pleasure to be part of. Everybody got good photos, and it was quite funny watching people getting into positions trying to get the best shots.

Once all vehicles had assembled at the bottom of the hill, we began the journey home. Tim and Mark left us, with Mark promising to bring his souped up, revved up, built up vehicle next time. Can't wait!!

The rest of the convoy continued the journey back to Hahndorf, with Jenny and Di making a wrong turn, catching up fortunately, onya girls!! Once back to Hahndorf, pit stop then back to the Fruit Market to sign off.

Cuffs told us about the next few trips and some ideas he has for further trips throughout the year. One of these includes a car rally (hunt for clues and find destination) as well as the regular one day trips and overnights.

I think the overall consensus was that we had a massively good day. A lot of fun, together with the challenge of the off-roading aspect, made it a day to remember. I hope that our new faces become regular faces and I know that we are all gaining more experience with our vehicles (maybe!!).

Thank you to Cuffs and to everyone in the club. Once again we conquered!!

I think that the next trip is Black Cockatoo Bush Camp on the Easter long weekend. Phil and I are going, and we will have the kids, so should be a fun time. Hope to see you there.

Meanwhile, we look forward to the next adventure!!

Cheers
Helen and Phil



The last word – there is nothing like a good sand dune!

Convoy

Cuffs (Xtrail), Tim & Mark (Landcruiser), John, Neil & Helen (Hyundi Tuscon), Rob & Barb (Landcruiser), Helen & Phil (Territory), Keith & Di (Territory), Len & Mary (RAV4), Bryan (Mazda Tribute), Deb (Subaru), Dave (Xtrail), Geoff & Ruth (Suzuki Jimny), Brenton (Xtrail), Nick & Kate (Xtrail), Jenny & Di (Ssangyong Musso), Les, Ann, Lee & Sonya (Suzuki Vitara), Kristen & Andy (Patrol), Grant & his wife (Nissan Patrol)

P.S. If I have your vehicle wrong, please tell me (I have been peering at all the photos, and Jim helped me – clever kid!!)