



High Range 4WD Club of SA Inc

"The Rocks", Balaklava

Sunday 14 December 2008

Submitted by Helen (Highwater) and Phil (McCracken)

The Rocks Reserve is located south of Balaklava. It is a pleasant 11.5 hectare picnic and walking destination on the banks of the Wakefield River. It takes its name from the attractive rock formations which have been created by the river.

This trip was our Xmas picnic and the last for the 2008 year. We were to meet at 9.00am on the side of the road past the last Service Stations at Smithfield.

Cuffs, our trip leader advised us that from now on we would be given call names which would determine our position in the convoy. The call sign for the club was "Ranger" and the number that you were positioned within the convoy determined what number you were given. We were Ranger 8. Having call names would enable easier identification and would provide a more orderly trip when travelling in convoy. This proved to be a great idea. We had nine vehicles and departed at around 9.20am.

For this journey, Phil and I were joined by our kids, Jim and Anton and Philip. The weather was VERY WET! Cuffs hoped that the rain would not deter members, because it would guarantee for an exciting trip. We were not disappointed. After encountering very muddy tracks early on into the trip, we stopped at Freeling outside the Gungellan Pub.

We then set off and travelled the back tracks, encountering much mud and water. Phil was determined to go through every single puddle! For around the next six hours we subjected our vehicles to more mud than was decent! But what fun we had. Rob and Barb were the proud new owners of a Nissan Patrol and just had to christen it!! They got bogged! In all fairness they were Tail End Charlie and by the time they encountered the tracks, the roads were seriously churned up by the previous vehicles. When Rob got bogged, he couldn't get out because he was surrounded by water, and so Keith with his trusty galoshes, waded in and tightened Rob's wheel nuts so that he could shift to 4WD. This did the trick and he escaped! Cuffs also had a near encounter when trying to traverse a very long puddle, and advised us to avoid this one. Phil had some trouble getting the Territory up a slight embankment, and we nearly landed in the same puddle Cuffs told us to avoid!

On one occasion we were confronted by an angry farmer who criticised us for travelling the roads and accused us of churning them up. As Cuffs pointed out to him, we were travelling on gazetted roads.

At around 2.30pm we reached The Rocks Reserve. We enjoyed a lovely lunch, although it was a little windy and cold. We compared the weather to the last trip we had there, where it was very hot and dusty. For December, this was unusual weather. Some of us took a walk and surveyed how dry the river and the water hole was. There was probably no fish in it by now. We managed to get a group shot of us all, which was fantastic.

At around 4.30pm we headed for home. Not far out of Gawler, the Territory engine, seemed to fail and we lost power. We were able to limp home, but at reduced speed. After turning the car off and on, it seemed to correct. Apparently the large amount of mud tripped the computer and it needed to reset itself. Even though it has been cleaned twice, now and again you can hear another wad of mud dislodge and drop to the road!! Phil has looked underneath and said there is still plenty of dirt there!!

Even though we have done this trip a couple of times now, this was the most exciting. All cars performed really well. The Territory anti skid mechanism was working overtime!!

Weather – cool, windy and wet.

Wildlife – usual sheep, cows, horses, lizards.

Meanwhile, we look forward to the next adventure!!

Cheers

Helen and Phil

Members

Cuffs (X-Trail), Brenton and Mel (X-Trail), David and Sue (X-Trail), Helen, Phi, Anton, Philip and Jim (Territory), Henry and Helen (Santa Fe), Rob and Barb (Nissan Patrol), Nick (X-Trail), Keith and Di (Navara), Ken and Val (Land Cruiser) - 19 people, 9 vehicles

Photo Gallery



Waiting to set off



The best is yet to come!







Not even started yet!









Bogged!



Keith to the rescue!



Oh so dirty!





What a lovely lot!!



Dried up waterhole



Boys at play!





Home at last!!