

## Dixons Long Point

12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Ben & Connor Sweetnam – Nissan Patrol (Trip Leader)

Glen & Kim Coddington – Toyota Hilux

Alan Willingale – Mitsubishi Pajero

Craig, Christine, Callum & Brayden Wallace – Toyota Prado

### Saturday

Kim and Glen met up with Ben and Connor at Kurrajong for the trip to Bathurst. Ben asked to follow Glen so he didn't get lost. During the trip it was learnt that Ben tipped boiling water on his hand before he left home, trying to make himself a latte and Glen had a flat battery because he forgot to shut his car door the night before.

We stopped at the Caltex to fuel up which was only 5 minutes from the meeting spot where Ben took the lead. I know why. I am now in charge of the trip report – again!

We met at the info centre at 8.45am before heading off to find a pie shop. Connor turned into a rooster at the pie shop much to the amusement of Ben. We all ordered our pies and Kim and Ben went to find the toilets. The men's toilet was engaged and Ben could obviously not wait so he decided to put his girly head on and use the ladies (I think the caramel latte he ordered was starting to take effect).

We headed out of Bathurst and toward Ophir. Craig nearly got a kangaroo between his car and camper trailer. It was so close we could hear the roo's claws dragging along the tar trying to stop. Thankfully everyone came out alive! We made the picnic area at 10am where Ben told us this was our lunch break. Here we go again! We left the picnic area at 11am and started to head towards the Cornish Roasting Pits when trouble hit the Nissan. Ben overheated going up a big hill while Glen had to clean his thermo switch of dust so the fan could turn off. We arrived at the Pits at 1pm and got out to have a look around. Alan gave us the history of the pits before Ben decided that it was not pretty enough for a lunch spot and that we would find somewhere else to eat. We continued on to Hill End where we set up camp and then had lunch at 2.30pm. Whilst we were setting up camp Princess Craig had about 10 attempts of reversing his camper trailer to the perfect level spot (the place is not called HILLend for no reason). That kept us entertained for about 10 minutes. Not long after that Shenanigans was called! Alliances were made by the ring leaders and havoc was about to reign. Kim and Glen set up in 10 mins, Princess Craig spent the next hour fixing and fussing over his camper, Alan was hammering so many pegs in at one stage we thought he was pegging his bed down also and Ben didn't even bother to set up. We sat down for half hour, quick chin wag and in the cars for our next adventure. Alan wanted to find some ruins situated on a track of the Bridle Trail. We headed down the hill, passing mountain goats and roos where Alan showed us a hill that was quite steep. Apparently to see the ruins you had to get up the hill but Alan was telling us that his previous trip was not successful. Alan and Glen walked the track before Glen called Kim up. With some tricky ruts and wicked side angles, she made it to the top. If a girl can do it, so can the guys! One by one we all made the top with wheels being lifted and Alan took the lead again to the ruins. Not far into the track Alan blew a tyre. Kim was running around with no shoes on so Ben lent her his thongs (thanks Ben, those spiky things hurt!!). A quick tyre change and we were mobile again. It was decided to head back to camp and leave the ruins for another trip as the light was fading. Happy hour was had and then Princess and Super Cods did a timber run. Nice one boys. We all sat around the fire sharing plenty of laughter and stupidity before going to bed.

## Sunday

We woke up to a beautiful morning with all the birds singing their own songs. Ben made his fruit damper as promised which was delicious. We had coffee and breakfast, some of us a shower before packing up camp. The ranger came and collected out money before we left. The breeze was picking up as the morning went on. We could have used it yesterday to blow all the dust away. The kids were having fun kicking balls around the park.

We were all packed up except Craig and Christine were still trying to do up the zipper on their camper cover. Unfortunately the zip was not in any mood to be fixed so they decided to go back via the tar as the dust would have gone right through the camper trailer. The rest of us headed off the check out a couple of lookouts then to Golden Gully and the cemetery. We then started towards Sofala where we were going to have lunch at the pub. We arrived at 12pm (nice timing Ben). The pub was only just opening and didn't cook food anyway! Ben and Connor had an ice-cream and Alan had a pie. We left the town and stopped in a park by the river so Glen and Kim could cook their kangaroo for lunch. They even had enough to share. It was here that Ben realised he had broken his exhaust. Seems that his rear exhaust bracket broke and fell off somewhere along the track!

All full of food and we headed off. We went through some gates and came to a mud hole. Ben had to check the depth before driving through, almost covering Kim in mud. While that was happening, Glen's thermo fan blew a fuse. The another fuse and another fuse. The thermo fan was starting to become an issue! Ben came to help with his pretty purple tool box and he, Glen and Alan proceeded to make some wiring harnesses to bypass the switch. Luckily we were not in any hurry to go anywhere. Glen took a leaf out of the 'Glenn Evans Repair Manual' and cable tied it together. Tension was growing as was the audience. The cows had taken over the mud hole that we still had to go through. I think they were the only ones surprised that the Hilux had a fan problem!!!

We continued down the dusty track. Thankfully the river crossing was very shallow and the next crossing had a bridge. Ben was testing his Nissan on his overheating issue for Fraser Island. It all seemed good. We made the highway at 3.15pm and proceeded to air up. As we were airing up Alan blew a fuse on his compressor. There were short fuses all round today! Ben temporarily fixed his exhaust with...yes you guessed it – cable ties!

We all said our farewells and made our way home. Thanks Ben for a great trip and to you and Alan for helping with the fan.