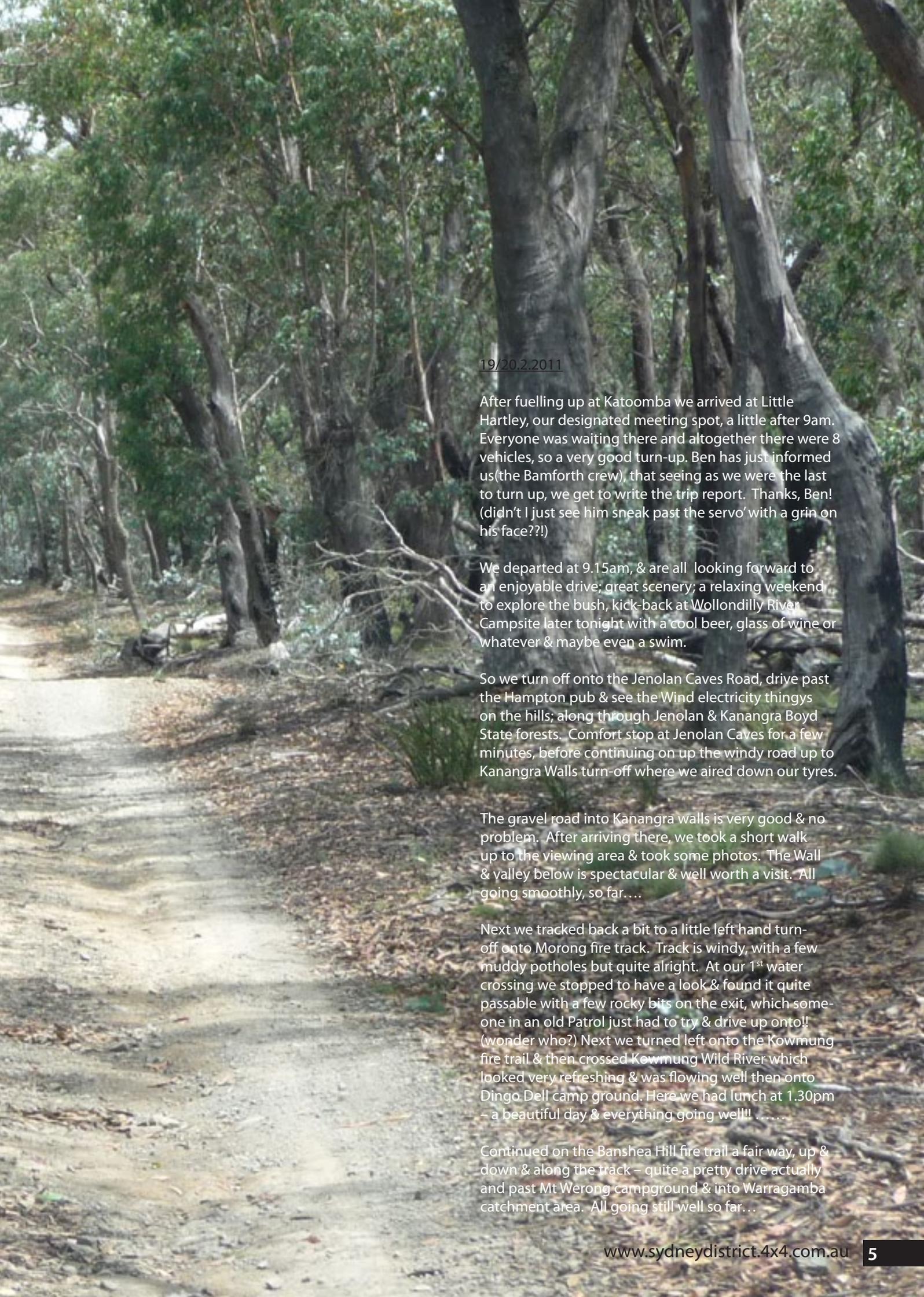


Caves 2 Caves





19/20.2.2011

After fuelling up at Katoomba we arrived at Little Hartley, our designated meeting spot, a little after 9am. Everyone was waiting there and altogether there were 8 vehicles, so a very good turn-up. Ben has just informed us (the Bamforth crew), that seeing as we were the last to turn up, we get to write the trip report. Thanks, Ben! (didn't I just see him sneak past the servo' with a grin on his face??!)

We departed at 9.15am, & are all looking forward to an enjoyable drive; great scenery; a relaxing weekend to explore the bush, kick-back at Wollondilly River Campsite later tonight with a cool beer, glass of wine or whatever & maybe even a swim.

So we turn off onto the Jenolan Caves Road, drive past the Hampton pub & see the Wind electricity thingys on the hills; along through Jenolan & Kanangra Boyd State forests. Comfort stop at Jenolan Caves for a few minutes, before continuing on up the windy road up to Kanangra Walls turn-off where we aired down our tyres.

The gravel road into Kanangra walls is very good & no problem. After arriving there, we took a short walk up to the viewing area & took some photos. The Wall & valley below is spectacular & well worth a visit. All going smoothly, so far...

Next we tracked back a bit to a little left hand turn-off onto Morong fire track. Track is windy, with a few muddy potholes but quite alright. At our 1st water crossing we stopped to have a look & found it quite passable with a few rocky bits on the exit, which someone in an old Patrol just had to try & drive up onto!! (wonder who?) Next we turned left onto the Kowmung fire trail & then crossed Kowmung Wild River which looked very refreshing & was flowing well then onto Dingo Dell camp ground. Here we had lunch at 1.30pm – a beautiful day & everything going well!!

Continued on the Banshea Hill fire trail a fair way, up & down & along the track – quite a pretty drive actually and past Mt Werong campground & into Warragamba catchment area. All going still well so far...



2 hours on the track, at about 3.30pm Ben says over the radio "Lockie, I think we need to stop & check our maps, cos I think we've gone too far & we're lost....!! L.O.S.T!! Oh no, not lost!. Oh dear, did I hear right....couldn't be...not Ben!!?"

Meanwhile, whilst our fearless leaders were checking their maps & GPS, Dan B is having a problem with his mighty Patrol. It had started spluttering a bit just before we stopped. So, his dad says, "maybe you need to put some more fuel in it, (cos it IS a bit thirsty, the Patrol..) so he put 20 litres in it. It wouldn't start, & the verdict after some tinkering and "start ya bugger" spray it was the coil connection. Fixed that and away we went but no go, no power, new coil needed. The long & short of it was that we need to tow him out cos time was starting to be against us – it was 4.15pm at this stage & a few more miles to go & you know when "beer o'clock" is. (it's 5 o'clock somewhere) Found a camp spot, but discovered it was a bit small & plus someone saw a big black snake, so decided to move on. (the snake wouldn't have anything to do with it, would it??) Back to towing the mighty Patrol, Ben went on to find a decent camp spot for the night. (Wollondilly was fading into a distant memory, by now!) Later, coming up to a sharp downhill turn got a bit hairy & the snatch strap wound around the front wheel, breaking the fuel line. (Dan's girlfriend, Skye was out of that Patrol so fast...!! A bit too exciting, I think.....)

Mended the line enough to keep going & Ben came back to say that Mt Werong is a good camp spot & the others went on ahead. Lochie stayed on & suggested that he go behind the Patrol with a snatch strap as well as Ian's one in front, to stabilise it so it wouldn't get out away down hills. Whew, that seemed to work quite well & no more hairy rides for poor Skye. We were very glad to see camp at 6pm, YAY!! And with enough time to put up the tent in daylight & get dinner happening whilst having a beer!

The camping ground was very nice, with a place to have a fire; a dwelling with a couple of rooms (which Stan & Noelene made use of); an undercover verandah & eating area. Oh yes, & for the ladies the drop toilet was very clean & well looked after. (it is important!) The social circle & glass of wine around the fire after dinner was even better, & well earned by everyone, I think.

Sunday

The plan today, is to pack up (of course) & Ian B to head off to Mittagong to get a new coil, whilst Ben & Lochie towed Dan into Wombeyan Caves where they waited for Ian to return with parts. John & Ben; Brett & his daughter; & Stan & Noelene followed Ian along the Range fire track to Wombeyan Caves where they had a bit of a look around at some walks, caves etc. This track was pretty easy and the scenery awesome. Saw some lyre birds as they raced across the road in front of us & a

mob of kangaroos, just grazing..

Ian & Jill left the others in Wombeyan at 10.15am to get parts. It was a long & arduous trip into Mittagong – took about 1 1/2 hrs one way & were lucky to get the coil for Dan's Patrol. Back at Wombeyan by 1.30pm, had some lunch; fitted the part & fixed a few loose wires etc & the engine purred like a beauty!! Amazing! So happy now...YAY! Brett; John & Ben all headed off earlier in the day, so it was left to 6 vehicles in the end.

Set off for Mittagong, once again. The trek for the 3rd time that day was l.o.n.g.; dry & dusty for Ian B (& his lovely wife), but we made it eventually!! (It seemed like a trip to the other side of the world). Stopped along the road at lookout where all aired up the tyres & set off to Mittagong & home.

I would just like to say a huge thank-you to ALL for their help & support – you were all wonderful & kept on smiling through it all!. Also to Ben "our fearless leader", (who thinks he is let off the hook for getting us lost) & Lochie for your expertise & help to get us safely to a great camping spot/& Wombeyan caves & out of trouble!! The Patrol arrived home safely, but very tired at about 6pm – we couldn't have asked for anything more.

Parts have been ordered and the Patrol lives to drive another day (if not sold in between)

Again Thank-you..

