

Newnes & Hill End

Trip Participants:

Ian & Rhonda McKinley	Colorado
Trip Leader	
Paul & Wendy Budd	Patrol
Brian, Sharryn & Mathew Harris	Patrol
Bruce Gendle	Troopy

Trip report by Ian & Rhonda McKinley

Rhonda and I departed from Seven Hills at 7:15 to meet up with the Budd's and Harris's at Richmond air base at 8:00am then continue on to the Zig Zag railway to meet Bruce at 9:am.

When passing through Rouse Hill Bruce called and requested for us to go via his house as he had left his medication at home. So after a detour and several phone calls we finally met up with the others at MacDonald's in Richmond. After Coffee and breakfast we continued to the Zig Zag railway and aired down.

The next stop was at the Glow Worm tunnel where we decided to complete the walk after deciding the rain would hold off. The air was a crispy 7 degrees and the walk included wild flowers, ferns, sand stone cliff faces, stairs, caves and finally the tunnel. There was a steady flow of water through the tunnel and the wind was at least two degrees cooler. In the middle we turned off the torches and the worms were glowing on the roof and along the walls. At the end of the tunnel there are many tree ferns and a couple of walks to venture along. After taking photos we returned to the car park travelled down the track a bit and had lunch.

The next leg of the trip would take us to Newnes via the Black Fellas Hand trail where we gathered some wood for the camp fire at night. We arrived at Newnes around 3:30pm and after setting up camp we walked around the historic coke ovens and returned to camp in the dark. The fire was lit, happy hour was had, dinner cooked and we all sat around the fire and discussed various trips we had been on and retired to bed around 10:30pm.

Sunday morning came to quick as we were all up by 7:00am cooked breakfast, packed up and headed for Hill End via the Baal Bone Gap Capertee Turon River and Sofala. Shortly after leaving camp Bruce called Brian on the radio to advise him the tent poles were hanging out the side of the trailer. After stopping Brian discovered the cap had unscrewed it self. so the Gaffa tape came out a make shift cap was made and we were soon on our way again. As Brian was towing a trailer he decided to bypass the Baal Bone track and would meet us on the Mudjee road. The track is an interesting trek with a couple of good lookouts, some steep climbs, lots of deep ruts and a couple of mud holes. We arrived at one mud hole just as another vehicle had hand winched himself out of trouble. After surveying the mud we all passed through without incident and continued on to meet up with Brian, a short time later we arrived in Capertee where we had lunch,

After lunch we headed out and turned towards the Turon Gates where we would follow along the Turon River to Sofala, however Bruce convinced us it was not the correct track so we turned back and continued down the highway for a few kilometres and was not sure if we were heading the right way. After a lot of discussion on the radio Carl came across the radio and advised to



continue for 15 kilometres then turn left. It was not the track we wanted however we arrived at Sofala just in time for the opening of the rebuilt footbridge in the park. A quick look around Sofala, a few photos and we departed for Hill End, along the way we collected fire wood for tonight's camp fire. We arrived around 3:30pm, and tried to book into the Hill End Hilton. The Hilton was booked out so we had to settle for the camp ground across the street where we set up camp had a nice hot shower and discussed the next days adventure. The Budd's and McKinley's decided to go to the Hill End Hotel for dinner while the Harris's cooked dinner at camp. The log fire was so good we had trouble pushing ourselves to leave and return to camp however back at camp there was a good fire burning to which we all sat around and discussed each others life's stories and solved the worlds problems and retired to bed.

Monday we awoke to a very cold wind however it was not raining so we ate breakfast packed up completed a tour of Hill End and headed for home via Dixons Long Point on the Macquarie River which would be a good camping spot. Next we turned down a road that had a "road closed dry weather road only" sign as it was not raining and the roads we had travelled on were very dusty we thought it would be ok. At the end of the road there was a sign displaying the same information. Next stop was near the Ophir gold fields for morning tea then we continued on to Bathurst via the back roads which displayed some very nice scenery. We had lunch beside the Macquarie River while looking towards Lithgow it appeared to be raining. This was confirmed only a few kilometres after leaving Bathurst. The rest of the trip the wipers worked continuously as the traffic started to build we decided it might be very slow and painful trip. After we turned at Lithgow onto the Bells Line Of Road the traffic thinned a lot and we arrived home on schedule at 3:30 pm.

