



# Ophir Gold

a brief stop as one of the kids was sick.

About 15km's out of Bathurst we stopped for a short toilet break and coffee top up which took a little longer as the coffee maker was very slow. Ron and Carl carried on into Bathurst to top off the fuel tanks before continuing on.

We arrived in Ophir about 1pm and despite it being quite busy we found a nice spot along the river with enough room for the 3 campsites.

Once set up we loaded back into the cars, Carl and Colleen in the Patrol so they didn't have to put down their roof tent, and we went back up the hill a short way to explore the old mines before getting back to camp for happy hour.

While we were sitting around for happy hour the kids explored the area and discovered an apple tree at the top of our camping spot. This inspired the chef in Colleen who cleaned, cored, filled with lovely things and baked them in the Cobb after her lamb racks were done.

We built a good fire and after the kids went to bed carried on enjoying the warmth of the fire and the wine. When Craig and Fran wandered off to bed we were met with screams as their camper trailer started to move down the hill when they got into bed... it didn't move too far due to the tent section being well secured by tent pegs, but Craig had neglected to chock his wheel and use the stabilising bars. Craig of course came out of the camper trailer and made some adjustments to secure the trailer before heading back to bed.

Ophir / Hill End / Capertee Trip- 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> April

Trip Leader: Craig Upton

Attendees:

Craig, Casey and Shane Upton, Fran, Joshua and Laura – Toyota Landcruiser

Carl & Colleen Bleazard – Mighty Eighty

Ron, Jenni & Toby Mason – Nissan Patrol

Day 1 – Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> April

Meeting time was 8am at McDonald's Rouse Hill and Craig's group was already busy having breakfast and getting their morning coffee.

After getting some additional bags of firewood loaded onto roof racks we headed off towards Windsor and Bells Line of Rd, with our destination Ophir for the night.

Traffic was not too bad up the mountain, we had

Day 2 – Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April

We woke to a chilly morning and view up the hill of Craig's trailer looked like Glenn Evans had erected it for him... as it had moved a bit more during the night and once everyone was awake and moving it continued to move another couple of inches.

Once we were all packed up and ready to go

# Fields to Hill End

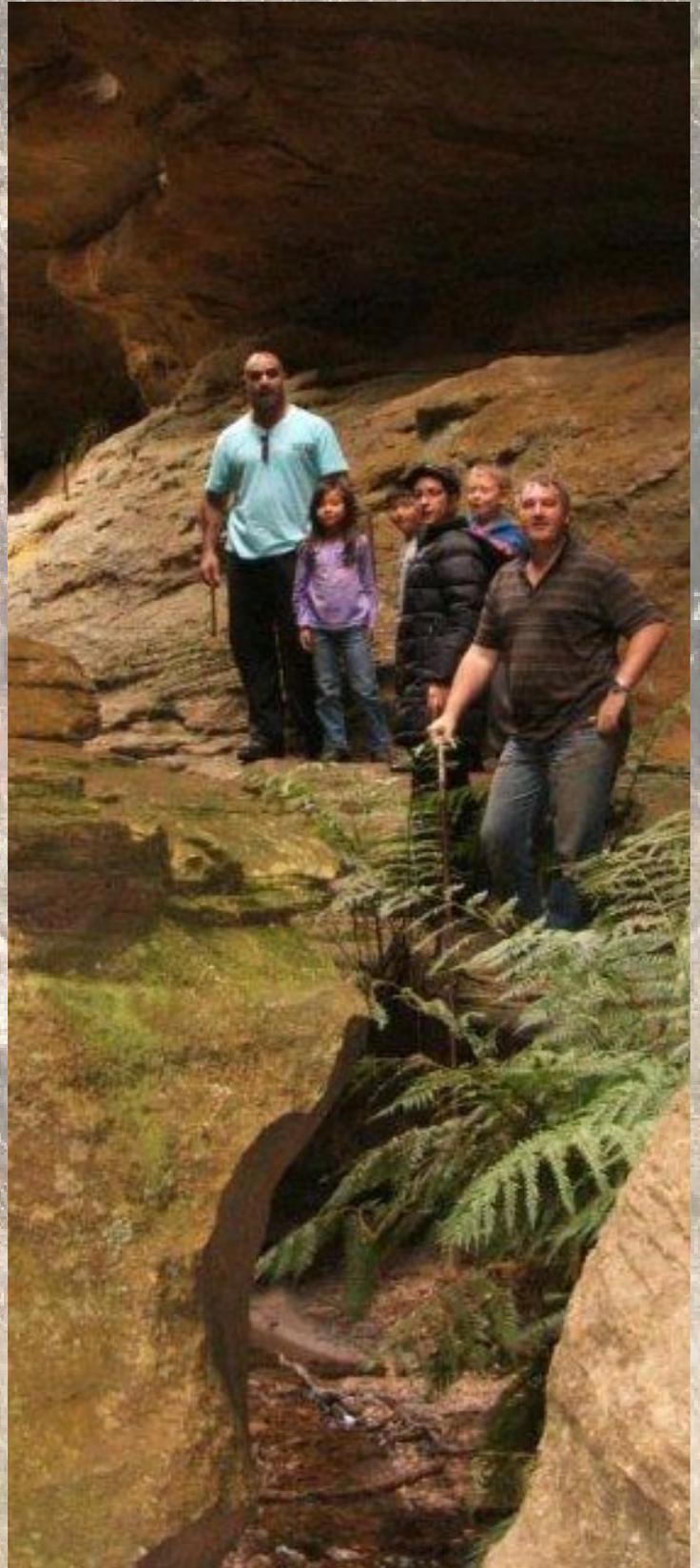
Craig discovered he had a flat battery... he had changed his fridge over from an Engel to a Waeco and as the plugs are different he used the 12V plug in the back of his car which he didn't know was using his main battery not the 2<sup>nd</sup> battery.... but the Patrol came to the rescue and jump started the car and he hooked up his trailer and we were on our way.

The destination today was Hill End. Not long after we got on the road we came across a couple on the side of the road with heads under the bonnet of a Troopie, they had camped along the side of the road the night before (as Ophir was packed) and when ready to go the next morning the car wouldn't start. The boys ready for a challenge had their heads under the bonnet as well and after discussion and trying a few things got the car started and we continued on our way. There wasn't too much traffic along the tracks and we made good time

Our lunch stop was just before we crossed over the Macquarie River, and the kids had fun throwing rocks into the river while we had a break. Back in the cars we crossed the river and continued into Hill End enjoying the beautiful country side along the way. Sky's were blue and no clouds which was fantastic... we learnt when we got back to Sydney that we had the best weather.

On arrival it was packed with people so rather than checking out the camp groups in Hill End Carl suggested we head straight for the Bridle track and the camp grounds along the river. These camp grounds were also busy but we managed to find a spot where there was one group camped at one end and enough space for the 3 of us for the night.

As mentioned weather was great and was quite warm by the time we set up camp so some boiled up the water for a shower before happy hour. The kids had a good time playing around the campsite together, and before we knew





it it was time to cook dinner before settling in around the fire with the other group in the campsite to await the arrival of the Easter Bunny.

Day 3 – Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April

Toby Mason was the first awake seeing an “oval” shape reflected on the side of the tent jumped up and said the Easter Bunny had been. He was dressed as fast as he could and out of the tent to discover the Easter Bunny had been and left egg all around his camp site. It was quite cold and a little misty but the sun was trying to get through and we knew we were in for another beautiful day... the other campers were not as optimistic about the sky and packed up quickly to avoid rain... which did not eventuate. After a leisurely breakfast we packed up, leaving a little later than planned as Craig was surprised to hear it was 9am when he thought it was only 7am. Once on the road we headed back up the bridle Track and into Hill End. Before leaving we went up to the Bald Hill Lookout, passing one of the camp ground on the way... we made a wise choice as it was very full and looked

quite dry and dusty compared to where we had camped for the night.

The view from the lookout was great and once photos had been taken kids were loaded back into the cars and we made our way down and headed for Sofala.

It took us about 35 mins to get to Sofala with most of the road now being tar sealed it was a faster trip than in the past.

We stopped in Sofala for coffee and ice creams for the kids and a short wander around. It was reasonably busy but not as much as Hill End.

Once refreshed we started to make our way towards our destination for the next 2 nights – The Diggings along the Turon River.

From Sofala we past the camp ground at Green Point where we had stayed a few times before... it was nice to see it had been cleaned up compared to the last time we were there. It was also quite busy . Crossing over the river we took the hard left turn towards Capertee along Razer Ridge Rd. The views along this road are great as you look back over the valley below... on a nice clear day its spectacular.

Once on the main rod we passed out turn off to out camp ground and detoured into Capertee for a light lunch at the pub and a drink.. for those who stop at the pub in the future please note a

bowl of chips is very large and is enough for 2-3 people. There is also a playground for the kids so you can enjoy your drink in peace. With full bellies we were back into the cars and retraced our route back to Turon Gates Rd, and along the tracks to our camp ground. Coming into the campsite there were quite a few campers but we continued in further and found a great spot. Carl and Colleen found a secluded spot along the river to take advantage of their shower, while the rest of us after setting up camp found a spot along the river for a cold water wash and freshen up. It was fun to watch the kids getting cold baths (is that mean??). Now we were all clean and refreshed it was time for a fire and happy hour. Carl and Colleen did most of happy hour this night, starting with hot cross buns, followed by cheese and what the others contributed, and topped off with ginger and cinnamon damper. Most of decided not to cook dinner after this feast. A great fire was built and we all sat around and star gazed while enjoying our wine. We were joined by a couple who were camped a short distance away. The stars were fantastic and the night clear, even if it was a bit chilly.

#### Day 4 – 25<sup>th</sup> April

Colleen decided to stay behind at camp today so Carl played passenger with the Mason's. We left camp about 9.30am and explored a couple of tracks from camp first. Both took us back past our campsite so we waved to Colleen and continued on our way... twice. Back up the hill and to the main road we turned right to Capertee, with a short stop for ice creams for the kids and coffee for the adults. From Capertee we took the Glenn Davies Rd, and turned off about 5 mins along into private property to explore Mt Airley. Craig knows the owner and while he was talking to him, the kids had a great time looking at the old planes he had scattered around. With a few guiding instructions from Col (the owner) we headed to the tracks. The track started off like most 4WD tracks but pretty soon became very interesting and challenging. One section had one child in tears (first time 4WDing) and others of us gripping on tightly. Craig was in front and took on the challenges well. The Mason's car not yet being lifted was helped along with Carl guiding

wheel placement through this section. Once passed the challenging part it was a good 4WD track that kept the drivers alert. We started heading into sections where each side was a rock wall... made me think of the Kimberly in some parts.

At the top we found a couple of really nice camp sites (camping unfortunately is no longer allowed) where we met another group out for the day. The views over once valley were amazing and were a cross between the Bungle Bungles and the Lost City.

We were in search of the "Jurassic" section which took us along some interesting tracks. We found what we thought was the area we wanted (we later found out that this was the "the grotto" not "Jurassic"). Stopping for lunch we then took to the walking track. Some of us turned back as the track lead us to a wire ladder that some were not brave to take (me being one of them) At the end of the walking track Carl and Ron discovered the end of a 4WD track that once back in the cars we went to find. We found it but after walking the track first decided





that Craigs car was suited to it so he went for a play and we stayed at the bottom.  
The weather then started to close in, we only had a few spots of rain but knew we had to get back down through the very challenging section and if it was wet would not be good so we headed back down.

On the way back to camp we became concerned for Craig hearing. Carl tried called Colleen on the radio but with no response, and as we only had hand helds, Craig offered to try a “bigger unit” to help us contact Ian McKinley..... not sure if there was too much noise in his car but as Ian was down the Murray River I doubt we would have made contact... but it was good for an afternoon laugh... sorry Craig.

On arrival back at camp passengers were off loaded and the 3 boys took off in Craigs car to collect firewood for the night. Happy hour was ready when they returned, the fire lit and dinner started a bit later. We all took advantage of the fire and cooked on it.

The weather held off with just a few spots of rain now and then but unfortunately too much cloud cover to see any stars. But the cloud cover was good as the temperature was not too cold and the next morning the ground was dry.

Last Day – 26th April

Once awake and breakfast over we started to pack up. The clouds were coming in and we were lucky that we were all packed and ready to go before it started to rain, only lightly but we knew it was going to set in.

We left camp about 10.30am and travelled home at our own speed. The rain got heavier once we left Capertee and our great weather had left us.

It was a great trip, with good weather and good company.. Thanks to Craig for organising and Carl for his help in putting it together.

Trip Report by: Jenni Mason

