

# Bendethra

By Stefan:

We left Thursday morning at 5 AM to meet up with Duane, Tammy and Aidan at Frank's place in Moruya at 10 AM in the morning. After our first meet and greet Frank was still doing some final checks on his Discovery 1 and as planned I filled up our camper trailers water tank.

Shortly afterwards the Riser family arrived and we made our way into Deua National Park. This time we took the only access road for camper trailers and after a one and half hour drive we arrived at the beautiful Bendethra Valley. Frank who spent his 30+ time at Bendethra had a specific camp spot in mind however it was occupied by single camper will fortunately was packing in and leaving. While the three of us picked our campsites and started setting up the kids roamed the area and enjoyed themselves.

The evening was spent around the campfire listening to Franks incredible stories, he truly is a walking encyclopedia of the local area.

The kids spend the Friday morning picking up crickets alive and the shelves, finding the bones of a nearly complete wombat Kaelan, spent two hours brushing the teeth of the skull in the river and cleaning up the head ( needless to say the toothbrush was discarded afterwards).

I did spent the morning doing bush mechanics with Duane and Frank as my solar panel stop working and after a while we figured out that the Chinese regulator had given up. Fortunately I had a second regulator and after little bit of work everything was working again.

In the afternoon the Tessier's, Kench's and Lytl's arrived and night was spent around the usual camp fire.

Friday onwards by Stuart:  
 As Wendy and I sipped our free coffee at Braidwood (thanks to the local Rotary Association) and threw down our last chocolate biscuit, we reflected on our adventure in Bendethera over the last two and a half days.....,  
 We entered the Deua National Park approx.. 27kms past Batemans Bay at Moruya (we had a slight de-tour around the suburb of Moruya when the Sat Nav had a meltdown). Heading off to Wamban Rd then Little Sugarload Rd we took the Bendethera Fire Trail to the Camping ground which took about an 1 ¾'s . We found our fellow club members at about 4.30pm Friday afternoon.

After a quick but very welcoming start, we were under the pump to get un-packed, set up and fed for the night. After the usual camp fire festivities and "getting to know you" chatter we settled in for our first night.

Some of us were up bright and early, as our first full day was rumored to be a quick three hour trip. With some of the ladies staying behind at base Camp, we said our good byes and headed off.

The three hours soon turned into five hours as everyone was having such a great time! We took many photos of beautiful blue/purple mountains, cycads and tree ferns as big as satellite dishes, stringy bark gums and glorious wattle that had the most amazing perfume! We criss crossed streams and rivers and took fire trails and tracks up to a peak of 1100m. We even brought back souvenirs of (cow ?) skeletons and teeth, (much to the delight of Stephan's children and Frank for that matter). The sun was resting low on the horizon so it was time to head back to camp. Even Stephan's disco was keen, because it actually took off without him!!

The next day all were aboard for another fun filled day with Frank taking us to a picturesque spot for



morning tea. Nestled under the shade of a massive pine, we chatted and told stories. We stretched our legs and explored the river bank and surrounds. Not wanting to move and with Franks yarns still ringing in our heads, we reluctantly left our oasis and headed deeper into the park.

I am not sure what the tracks are graded, but some areas really tested man/woman and machine! All too soon the day ended and as we fell asleep that night, the rain began to fall.

Alas, it was our last day. We were up early and keen to get out while we could, (hoping the wet would hold off – it did), we said our good-byes to the rest of the crew and hit the road for home.

Casualties : 1 x Matson Fridge, 2 x flat batteries, , 1 x trailer safety latch,

Questions : why didn't the Jeep use any fuel on the way home to Hazelbrook. And what did happens at the long drop that left a non-club member so traumatized?

Thanks guys we had a ball, let's do it again !!!

