

Trip report - Bendethera

Trip dates – 18 & 19 May 2013

Participants:

Glen & Kim Coddington	Trip leaders	Hilux
John, Joanne & Andrew Vergos		Hilux
Greg & Helen Swasbrick		Patrol
Marian, Michelle & Maks Markova		Patrol
Duane, Tammy & Aiden Rieser		Triton
Sam, Poppy, Jenny & Kay Alexandrou		Prado

Saturday 18th

We met at the Kings Roadside Diner at around 8am where most of us had a big breakfast. After all the introductions were done, we worked out that some of the guys had driven down that morning – that was a big drive, while others stayed at various places nearby. After breakfast, Sam and Poppy had to make a quick stop at the camp store to get a heater as little Kay was not well with asthma. Heater bought and we were on our way.

After travelling about 15 minutes, we couldn't understand why Sam could not hear us. We pulled over to air down and Glen went to see if there was an issue with the radio. Well there was an issue with the radio, Sam had it on the wrong channel!

It was quite cool airing down. Duane was telling everyone how he had to scrap the ice off his window in the morning before meeting up with us. We had checked the weather before leaving and they were predicting about minus 1 or 2 for Saturday night.

After we had aired down, we continued on and into Deua National Park. The weather was awesome. Beautiful and sunny, nice and warm. The drive into Bendethera was very good. A lot of steep sections but the tracks were in excellent condition with a grader recently going through most parts. There were a few little water crossings which were very pretty. Very soon, we were at our camp ground. We camped at the far end of Bendethera which was very quiet and beautiful. It even had a drop toilet. We arrived at camp just after lunch, set up and settled in for a chit chat about the day.

Happy hour was called at about 4pm where we all gathered around the table for nibbles and drinks and more talking and laughing.

We had all had a big day and drive so we decided that dinner would be had before it got dark. Sam and Duane

went and got some firewood for the camp fire. One by one we all had dinner and settled in around the fire. Duane wanted to have the fire down on the lower ground nearer the river as he didn't want his tent to get smoked out. As the sun went down, we began to realise that it was going to be a cold night, and then the temperature really started to drop. The cold became freezing and we all decided bed would be a much warmer option.

Sunday 19th

Everything was white! The frost was so thick on the ground. Tents were frozen as were thongs, tea towels, water, washer bottles, tooth paste – you name it, it froze! Must have had something to do with the minus 6 it actually got to! Our plan was to leave the camp site by 9am so everyone was up having breakfast and packing up. The sun didn't hit our camp area until 9am just as we were leaving. All tents and tarps got packed up frozen with ice still thick on them. Cars had been warming up for about 30 minutes just trying to defrost the windows. The kids made the most of this and sat in the cars while the adults packed up. Smart thinking kids!

It wasn't long before we were on our way out of the camp ground. The plan was to finish the Bendethera track, unfortunately the navi took a wrong turn and had us all heading somewhere else! We regrouped at Hanging Mountain lookout and decided that it would be more fun to switch trips in the book and finish the Hanging Mountain trip. We stopped for a morning tea break just before we started the steep descent into the valley. The sun had definitely warmed everyone up now which was good, although it was probably only 5 degrees (but that was a heat wave compared to what we woke to). Back behind the wheel and we headed down some very steep sections of track which were fun. We continued on for a while and eventually hit the bitumen.

It was here that John had a wrestle with his air compressor – and lost! With only one tyre left to inflate, John's air compressor decided to detached itself from the battery terminal, go into the engine bay where it came in contact with the fan and almost took out Glen and his Hilux, before finding John and narrowly missing his head. 45 minutes later, it was cut out of the fan and all was good. Glen had to finish blowing up John's tyres AGAIN. Last trip, he told everyone that the compressor wasn't working. He wasn't using it properly! Nice one John. From there, most of us headed back to Braidwood Bakery for a pie for lunch. Sam and Poppy were heading home via the coast road. We had all just sat down to have our pies when Sam walked in the bakery. We told him the coast was in the other direction! After lunch we all headed home to unpack our frozen camp gear (ours still had ice on it when we unpacked it at 5.30pm!)