

Mt Airly & Glen Davis Weekend

Sat 21st & Sun 22nd August 2010

Trip Leaders:

Chris C & Lydia – GU wagon
Cindy & Brett - GU wagon

Followers:

Scott & Wendy – GQ wagon
Wayne & Brandon – GQ wagon
Mark & Peter – Hilux
Georgia & Geoff – Prado
Andrea – GQ wagon
Fred & Robyn – GU wagon
Dave & Nicci – GU wagon
Chris, Ruth & Eric – TJ Jeep
Iro, Tania, Scotty & Fiona
Fred - Pathfinder

Sat 19th

An icy cold mountain wind greeted our group as we assembled at the Capertee meeting point for a 9am departure. This time around we were looking forward to actually driving up to Mt Airly, as the weather had been favourable over the past week and the property caretaker, Col, had told us that the track was dry enough to drive.

Chris C gave us a brief rundown on what to expect from the trip and what we intend on seeing. With firm instructions given to the group to have both our front and rear recovery points on our vehicles and ready to be used at a moments notice, Chris was hoping to ensure we had a trouble free trip.

Heading off down the Glen Davis Rd, we soon turned left into Col's property which is the access point to the track that leads up Mt Airly to Genowlan lookout. With hubs now locked and 4wd engaged, we started the climb.

Towering sandstone cliffs, steep rocky hills and magnificent scenery greeted each vehicle as we slowly meandered our way up through "Gun Shot" pass and onto the top of the first on many sandstone plateaus.



Our first stop for the day was at the old diamond mine, now caved in, but still showing the old rusted buckets, relics and small elevated rail line used to haul the rock out from underground.

We then drove a short distance further up the track to the sorting shed with more old relics

and rusted bits and pieces, with some people joking every



few minutes that they had found a diamond on the ground. A spectacular lookout allowed us to view across the valley to where old Airly Village once stood and also where we drove on the first part of this trip earlier in April. Heading back to the main track we passed a second diamond mine, although just like the first one, it had completely caved in.



Our next stop was at the Grotto. A secluded fern lined walking track leads you in between some breath taking sandstone rocks that have been carved out over millions of years from the trickling water that leads to a small waterfall and down into a larger cave like area amongst more sandstone lined walls, making for spectacular photos. An old metal ladder precariously resting against a tree with a thin piece of rope holding it on, allows you to climb down to the base of the small



waterfall and walk further down into the Grotto. It's a wonderful, tranquil spot that is tucked away and unknown to most.

With a quick bite of lunch, it's back behind the wheel for some more driving. Now the track was becoming fun, as our first of many small rock steps and steep climbs tested us out. With everyone lending a hand to guide each other over, around, up and down the obstacles, the trip was becoming very enjoyable. Some track building in one or two spots assisted the lower vehicles and those with a lift and mud terrains helped the others through with a, short, gentle tow here and there.

At about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up, Chris C decided that this is as far as we will go. A few sections of track now had deep washouts and with the convoy progressing slowly, and with our dinner date at Glen Davis, it was the time to turn around. Making our way back up a muddy, rutted section of track saw the first couple of trucks through with out too much trouble. As Chris's truck straddled the ruts, the soft mud and dirt gave way and got some fantastic wheels up as the truck leant on a decent 45 degree plus angle with the rear bar embedded in the muddy



embankment and the spare wheel on the swing-a-way touching the ground! A quick snatch from Iro's vehicle in front had the truck level once again, with no damage to it or the people inside.



But now Chris' truck wouldn't start! The engine cranked but didn't fire. After about 20mins of checking this and that it was realized that we couldn't get any fuel up to the filter and hence the engine due to either a blocked fuel pickup or fuel line, neither of which we knew for sure. The decision was made to tow Chris' truck behind Iro's. That all went well until we came up to a small rocky hill and we just couldn't get enough momentum. So in came Cindy with her truck to make it a two vehicle tow.

This worked fine and after a few attempts at getting moving, we cruised along ok. Then we hit a steep sandstone hill with a 90 degree left hand bend in it - the towing came to a halt and the winching started!

With Iro's truck doing the first half of the hill and Cindy's doing the second we managed to get the truck around the tight bend. Then it was just a simple two vehicle snatch up the final ledge and we were up.

As we attempted to get the last couple of cars up the final ledge, more drama ensued. On his second attempt Dave asked for an assisted gentle snatch up the rocks. Wayne happily obliged and all was good until the hook on Dave's A-frame chain slipped off the chain link it was securing and was flung up with brute force under the front of his truck punching a hole in his oil cooler and spraying engine oil everywhere. On our first quick look at the damage we thought just an oil line had broken but further inspection revealed the busted cooler.

By now the sun had just about completely set, so with darkness setting in and dinner waiting for us, we decided to split our group into two with Andrea guiding the majority of the convoy out the final section of track and down to Glen Davis. With the main group of trucks now all underway and off to Glen Davis we set about fixing Dave's truck.

This is where Wayne became very handy to have around. In between boiling up water for us to soften up some spare heater hose, to hack sawing the ends off a copper 'T' piece, Wayne was constantly coming up with a thousand and one alternatives to help solve the problem. In the end a plastic elbow joiner taken from Chris' shower setup in his engine bay had the two oil lines connected and hose clamped together and provided Dave a trouble free run for the remainder of the trip, and even all the way back to his home in Bowral.

As Chris' truck was still not going we (including Chris C, Dave & Nicci, Chris & Ruth, Wayne & Brandon and Cindy & myself) all camped the night on the track, hoping to get Chris' truck running first thing in the morning.

The following morning Chris decided to blow some pressurised air down the fuel line from the engine bay to the fuel tank. We then sealed the fuel cap with a plastic bag and pressurised the tank causing fuel to come back up the line, past whatever blockage was there, and into the filter. With all lines reconnected, the truck started after a few hiccups and ran perfectly for the rest of the trip. Phew!

Back down the mountain we went, meeting up with the rest of our group who had attended the dinner and camped at Glen Davis. After a chat with Col we decided we still had the whole of Sunday to find Leonie's father's old mine from the directions she had given Chris & Cindy. We headed into Glen Davis and past the old refinery to find the remnants of the old bridge that once spanned the Capertee River. A bunch of intrepid explorers, led by Chris & Cindy, waded across the cold water to the other side of the river and trudged the kilometre or so up an old disused road in search on the old mine. The rest of us stayed back at a nice little campsite to enjoy a relaxing lunch in the warm sunshine.



After about 45min our excited explorers returned with the news that they had located the mine and had taken plenty of photos of it and the surrounds. With the final part of the trip now

complete, and the afternoon getting late, we all aired up, said our goodbyes and headed on home.

Thanks to Chris & Cindy from all participants for running an exciting trip.

Brett.

