

Kanangra Walls / Sunny Corner /Gardens of Stone NP

Steve Lee, Laura Le Van and Tayla-Lee
Sheppie: GQ Patrol
Bruce Robins: GQ patrol
Andy and Sally James: GU Patrol
Pam and John Fisher: Pathfinder
Andrew and Jason Jaber: Prado

The meeting spot:

Two over-excited dogs greeted our intrepid expedition team at the Talisman gallery, Hartley. Unfortunately all hopes of matching their energy levels were dashed- upon the realization that the coffee shop at the back of the gallery was closed for the Christmas break.

Around 10am 4 vehicles containing Pam and John, Andy and Sally, Andrew and Jason and Steve, Tayla and myself commenced our journey battling the dreary, misty conditions. Bruce Robins called a little after 10am to report that he was experiencing tooth issues (possibly the result of excessive chatting- though this was not specifically stated) and that he was just leaving home and would meet us at the campsite a little later.

Jenolan Caves:



“Feeding time”

From Hartley, first stop was Jenolan Caves for morning tea at an outdoor cafe at Caves house. After battling tooth and nail with the local bird-

life in an attempt to prevent them from pinching our food/ drinks etc, and admiring

the enormous lizards sunning themselves on the rocky walls outside the devils coach house- we wandered down to the Jenolan river to complete a short walk along it.

The Jenolan river walk commenced just outside the eastern entrance of the devils coach house and provided us with a fascinating combination of nature and history. The information boards scattered along the walk stated that the Jenolan River contained a hydroelectric scheme (clearly visible by the side of the river) that was built in the late 1800's and, provided enough energy to light many of the caves to this day. The system was driven by a leffel wheel that was apparently located near the waterfall- though I could not spot it. The information boards also stated that leffel wheel driven scheme at Jenolan caves was the first time electricity had been used to light caves anywhere in the world.

The river walk also contained an array of wildlife- some more appealing than others. For example: the leaches that lurked around the large pool at the base of the waterfall- we probably could have done without. In contrast, the rather fat, grey platypus that we spotted frolicking around the weedy shallows was an amazing sight to see.

Upon the completion of the river walk, we wandered around some of the self-guided caves (McKeons and another that I can't recall the name of). These caves were enormous- and though they don't have quite the amazing limestone formations of some of the other caves- they are free of charge!

Our resident cave-hoppers (Tayla and Jason) spent much time exploring the little caves and dark crevices around the place.



“Cave-hoppers”

Kanangra Walls:

We arrived at Ben Boyd campsite, Kanangra Walls round two in the afternoon. After an increasingly misty drive- we were pleased to find that the campsite was relatively mist free making tent construction a whole lot easier than anticipated. Once our tents had been pitched and our bellies had been filled- we drove down to the start of the Kanangra plateau/ waterfall bushwalk. Unfortunately, due to the misty conditions the beautiful view across the valley to the plateau was completely obscured- making the edge of the cliff that we were standing upon look like the end of the world. Not to be deterred- we wandered down the steep and rather slippery waterfall walk and explored the beautiful cascades below.



The end of the earth?

On our drive back from the Kanangra walk car park- we ran into Bruce cruising along casually in his blue and silver Nissan Patrol. Bruce explained that he had just reached the campsite after a very leisurely journey (Bruce- style) that involved two long and involved conversations with a couple of friends from the blue mountains, a tour of caves house that he had managed to talk his way into and a couple of lengthy conversations with staff.

We spent the remainder of the daylight hours driving around some of the four-wheel drive tracks surrounding our campsite. This included driving through a series of increasingly deep river crossings- which were really fun. Bruce's car issued a few complaints after traversing the deepest of the crossings- but eventually made its way up the steep bank.

That evening we were serenaded to sleep by a bunch of drunk, hollering schoolies and torrential rain!



FUN!

Kanangra walls to Sunny Corner:

The following morning was wet and soggy. The awning of our tent had collected about 40Ltrs of rainwater- some of which dripped directly into Steve's boots! Pam and John and Andy and Sally discovered that their tents had a few holes in them, and as a result of this, had small pools of water in various locations around their tents. Andy threatened to attack his tent with Gaffer tape- a threat that was subsequently followed through with. Andrew and Jason were dry- but complained that the noise of the rain against their tarpaulin had been unusually loud, and Tayla stated that she had slept rather well and didn't know what all the fuss was about.

After packing our soggy things back into our soggy vehicles- we set off for Oberon for a well deserved pub lunch.

From Oberon we farewelled Pam and John who had to return to Sydney to attend to grandparenting duties, and also Andrew and Jason who had to return to Sydney to attend to play station duties. The rest of our crew drove the short distance to Sunny corner state forest for some absolutely awesome 4wd-ing. The tracks were long, windy and steep in parts and the surrounding bush was beautiful. We reached our campsite round 6pm.

By evening the sky had cleared completely to make way for a stunningly clear night. Steve, Andy and Sally erected an impressive shelter area using a number of tarpaulins. This construction was to prevent any future leakages should the weather turn foul on us again.

One minor problem with this beautifully remote campsite was that it was inhabited by

a particularly aggressive breed of bull ant. These brutes had blue heads and enormous pincers and would walk up to you stand on their hind legs and gnash their pincers about in a most threatening manner. Andy and I experienced the questionable pleasure of being nipped by a couple of them- very painful. Tayla utilized the following anti-ant-nipping strategies and they appeared to be fairly effective: wearing multiple layers of clothing, constantly stamping her feet on the spot.

The second minor issue with the campsite was that it was located on a slope. This meant that tent construction had to be carried out in such a way that everybody's head was able to be at the top of the hill. Due to the magnitude of the slope however, I found that I kept having to wake up and climb back to the top of the hill before I could get to sleep again. When I was asleep I dreamt of hills and steep things.



The "Slippery-Slope" campsite
Sunny Corner, Garden's of Stone, Lake Lyall

The following morning we had two exit options out of the campsite. The first was an absolutely enormous and rugged hill- complete with multiple rock steps and large holes and just about any other challenge you can think off. The second option was a slightly longer and slightly less steep track out. Due to the extreme nature of the hill and the lack of winches available to us- we decided to give the large hill the miss this time- though I noticed that several members of our party (not mentioning any names Steve, Bruce and Andy) were licking their lips and rummaging through their diaries in search of "possibly dates" to conquer it. The longer track out of the campsite was by no means tame, however, and the drive up to the

town of Capertee was full of giant wombat holes and other great challenges.



HEAPS OF FUN!!

HEAPS & HEAPS OF FUN



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From Sunny corner we drove through the tiny village of Capertee (literally just a pub) to the Gardens of Stone National park to have a look at "the Lost City". The Lost City is basically an enormous valley scattered with vast, towering rock formations that make the place look like cityscape out of the Lord of the Rings. Every corner we passed I expected to see some sort of talking woolly beast emerge

and try to eat one of our party, or at the very least a small hobbit hunting around for lost jewellery. The place has an incredible atmosphere- not really like any other area I have ever visited.



Lost City Dwellers??



Funny-shaped rocks

The final stop of the day was our campsite on the banks of Lake Lyall which was about a fifteen minute drive from the town of Lithgow. Our campsite was up on a hill overlooking the vast lake and the wooded hills beyond- it was absolutely stunning. Bruce set up his accommodation for the night (his car) in such a way that he would have a “five star” view across the lake in the morning. The rest of us hastily put up our tents and threw a few belongings around before sitting down to relax and watch a beautiful sun setting across the lake.



“Hotel Bruce” (1,000,000 star accommodation)



Stunning view across Lake Lyall

Home

The following day we packed up and made our way down the Bell’s Line of Road towards home. We stopped for a pleasant pub lunch before saying our good-byes.

The end of another terrific trip!

Story: Laura Le Van

Photos: Steve Lee