

Mt Airly – Glen Davis Trip October 2010

If you're ever looking for proof that Sydney has great stuff in store close to home, the winding road up to Mt Airly is definitely one to do.

The group met up at Capertee and after the usual morning hellos', a few yawns and the hissing sound of tyres being deflated (I missed all this being a little late but artistic license and all that :), Chris gave a short briefing for what was in store and we headed out to find some dirt.

The turn off to Col's place is but a short drive so we were soon off the bitumen and entering the yard that time forgot. Some old classic cars, more than a few wrecks and the odd plane got a few of us out for some photos before we embarked upon the track proper and headed up the mountain.

It gets steep and bouncy pretty quick and while trundling along we're given a brief history of the origination of the track. It was cut by Col and his father shortly after the war using a converted Bren gun carrier. Its purpose was to provide access to a couple of diamond mines somewhere up top at an undisclosed location.

The first 'challenge' we hit was a scramble up a rock face that proved interesting, as well as pretty much setting the scene for the rest of the day. Chris nonchalantly as always got everyone up and let me know this was just preparation for the hard stuff later on. Once at the top, I soon discovered the up had a down equally as interesting which took a little heavy foot work on the brakes to see us all down safely.

A little further on and did someone say 'who brought the chainsaw?'. The answer being no one and the issue being that of a rather good tree like barricade across the track. Lots of options were discussed and most rejected. The path of least resistance being to cut a track around, so the gloves came out and everyone set to. Branches were hacked, another tree was dragged (after claiming the first carnage of the day, that being Wendy's rear quarter panel) and generally a bit of a sweat was worked up until finally we had a route forward.

A little further down and an interesting little wash out had us all back out, shovels in hand (those that had not forgotten them – I'll pay the fine,, honest guv') to fill, shape and flatten. Find of the day has to go to Jody who appeared out of the bush dragging some sort of old collapsible ramp that was quickly embedded into the wash out to provide more stability in the make shift ramp being prepared.

Having spent a fair few hours on the last two obstacles, we were all back in the cars and off again. Numerous little climbs and scrambles later, one of which took out Scott's pan hard rod and another that almost ripped off the right hand side of Michael's rear bar, we finally made it to the top and the start of the walkers track up to the lookout.

I'm not sure exactly where on the route up but should add Wendy twisted her ankle badly, setting off an old injury. I think it safe to say we all hope it's on the mend and you're back out with us again soon.

It was good to get out and stretch the legs again at this point, even better that the sun had decided to pay us a visit. The breeze was cooling and the views from our final destination pretty spectacular.

We followed Scott up who was dutifully taking photos of everything... as per instructions :)

As we'd spent a fair amount of time out of the cars, we were a fair bit behind schedule so after a short time, Chris rounded us all up and got us moving back to the vehicles. The track was just as much fun in

reverse (order that is) and without the need to stop, we were back to the bottom in a quarter of the time and headed off to Glenn Davis to set up camp for the evening.

The drive through the “largest canyon in the world” is simply stunning for those that haven’t been yet and it’s well worth a detour if you’re ever heading out West.

We arrived at the site with just enough daylight left to get the tents up and settle in for the night. Given that it was a pretty exhausting day, most were fed and abed pretty sharpish, with only a few keeping the campfire company into the late evening. I don’t think anyone made it past midnight.

The morning was brisk and we set off at 9 for a leisurely drive up to the Baal Bone gap to check out the pressure reducing station and views. Apart from a few little descents and some slippery slopes, it was pretty cruisy and a nice way to finish off the trip. Chris and Cindy even managed to arrange a little bog hole at the end to wash the cars with, although I’m not sure the order for the clear spring water got through.

It being Bathurst, the group split at this point as some of us wanted to get back before the traffic built up, others going on to do the Blackfellows Hand Trail for a little more fun. So we said our goodbyes and hit the road home.

Thanks to Chris and Cindy for organising yet another great trip, everyone else for making it clubtastic :)

Andy & Mel