



Mt Gipps Station, Broken Hill 22nd – 26th April 2011

Friday 22nd April - Day 1 (Good Friday)

This extra long weekend began with 8 vehicles pulling away from Tarlee Car Park at 7.00 am sharp. Trip leaders John & Jane lead the way up the Barrier Highway and off we went, Burra being our first stop.



The weather was a bit drizzly, but Keithy wasn't with us for a weather report, so a few tried but not the same as our dry, old Keithy. From Burra we moved on with the addition of Norma & Bronte. After Mount Bryan, some poor people lost their sleeping bags, clothes and a big carry bag full of gear which we picked up and dropped in at Hallet Police Station. Looks like a trailer rear door sprang open losing all their goodies for a not so enjoyable weekend.



At Oodla Wirra we had our morning tea stop with hot cross buns on the menu at Lyn's outdoor palace (tail gate of ute). (After leaving Tarlee, time didn't matter anymore because we were now on holidays!) On we travelled to Broken Hill with the addition of Roy & Bronwyn. We lost Brent & Keryn for a moment as they went "coaching" (locating things with the GPS) and found a huge black and white dice near the railway line. Time for a fuel up at Broken Hill then had lunch at a park where the sun decided to shine.

After lunch we headed north bound on the Silver City Highway for approximately 32 km till we reached the Mt Gipps turnoff. We had 10 km of dirt which would be interesting if it was wet, and to our right was the entrance gate to the homestead with other accommodation and the shower blocks.



Near the showers, they had erected a rain water tank onto a large earth mover tyre.



Our camp was approximately 7 km out bush from here. After registering, our hosts lead us to our camp site. That night you wouldn't believe Peter & Sandra rocked in, with Sandra still suffering from jetlag - our gang was now complete.

[Max]

Saturday 23rd April - Day 2 (1st report) (Easter Saturday)



Set off at 9 am sharp. Plenty to see on a beautiful sunny day. First stop goat yard then onto the old dam. We got out and explored around the dam. Here we saw a Golden Orb spider. Some of us almost became instant ninjas as we nearly walked through its web. As we walked along the concrete wall Jane thought it would be a good idea to drop the only mud map she was given into the dam. A sight to see Jane on her stomach on the concrete wall with a stick retrieving the mud map. Yes, Jane did well not to fall in.





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Off we set to the next stop Old Alendale Town. Upon arriving to the town, the Sturt Desert Pea was sighted. It was like finding a needle in a haystack for these flowers as the goats had eaten all the flowers from the plants. At the old town we saw old bottles, tobacco tins which were pretty ancient and ruins of the old stone buildings.

Next stop the old mines. Here there were quite a few mine shafts that had water in them some deeper than others. On



the way back to the cars a shingle back lizard was sighted or shall I say nearly trodden on.

Off we set to find the 4x4 track. However this was a little bit difficult as the mud map that was given to our trip leader was a little bit wet and not too readable. This might be the reason why Jane couldn't tell her left from right or was that right from left. We decided it would be a good time for lunch. We had lunch on a dry river bed under a big gum



tree. The surroundings were beautiful a nice spot for a picnic. Time to pack up and head off to find the 4x4 track.

There's the track, quick turn right, sorry left. The track was a little hidden with overgrown shrub that was as tall as the bonnet of the car. It was more like bush bashing but it was fun being a first timer at this. There were plenty sightings of kangaroos and goats. There was one poor kid that got separated from its parents as we went through the shrubs. (We're talking about the goat kind of kid not human) as we were

driving this kid is coming closer to us. Poor thing got a little confused.

Finally after we got our left and right sorted out we found the old miners hut. Here there was an old hoist line out the back, (a little worse for wear) outside oven and an old cast iron bed that had seen better days. Although Max thought it was a good idea to test it out and see how comfy it was. He wasn't on it for long. The scenery from here was awesome. Nothing but hills and flats for miles.



Off we went to find our way back to camp. On our way back there was an old car that was rusty. Few of the men got in for a memorable picture.



Back at camp base we sat round the fire that night while Martin sang a tune or two for us with his guitar. It was a good day for all. I would like to thank everyone for making us feel welcome on our first trip. Look forward to more. Special thanks to John and Jane for being our trip leaders.

[Joann and Peter]



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Saturday 23rd April - Day 2 (2nd report) (still Easter Saturday)

Another day in paradise, camping out at Mt Gipps Station. We were woken by our alarm clock the crow in the beautiful creek bed gum trees.

Off by 9am, John & Jane our esteem leaders, stopped at the sheep yards at Allendale Bore where there was a bit of fun and games and photos taken. There was a goat yard to catch the goats - they can go in but can't get out. They get paid for them, 45cents and \$1.60 live. Saw a magnificent eagle in flight with a couple of crows being brave and having a go at it. The large moon was still out in the morning with a clear blue sky.



Next on the list - the dam, what a fantastic place to have in your back yard and it was built back in 1884. Not a bad effort with the amount of rock to move by hand. They also had a mine here which produced silver, lead and zinc, Allendale mine. A bit further on we found some wonderful Sturt Desert Peas in flower that the goats had missed eating. What a wonderful contrast to the surrounding land, can't miss the brilliant red and black of the flowers. Allendale village was a treasure find that had to be left behind as we were not allowed to take anything. My little fingers did an awful lot of

twitching not to take anything. What I did do was set up a lovely photo shot of old rustic findings including the tin I couldn't take. Lots of discussion took place on the many parts of machinery, car parts and homes that were built from the local rock which were pretty basic.

Over the hill and we came to a large mining area. Big mine shafts, slag heap and stone water tank, there was exploration work going on and markers everywhere. Our esteem leaders seemed to have a bit of trouble reading the map and missed the red flags. Found a creek bed and had lunch with a rest then moseyed on to the next



track. Passed the Curly Mallee or Broken Hill Wattle a type of eucalyptus tree which only grows where there is limestone in the soil. Now the vegetation changes and we are going through tall Rock Sida plants which are that tall in places that you can't see the car in front. It was like being explorers trying to find tracks to go forward. Went up & down some hills and then through a few creek beds.

Found a couple of rusted out cars on the side of the track and 3 wanted to be hoons relived their younger days by sitting in the car. Next find was the old miner's cottage which smelt pretty badly of mice. Pretty ruff & ready but knew how to collect rain water with what ever was available. Fantastic view they chose but it must have been windy. Went back to camp for happy



hour with the wood collection taking priority for the fire and what a fantastic one it was. Everyone showed their culinary skills for tea. A bit of a quiet night around the fire, while people just winding down with the skilful guitar player Martin serenading us. Jessica and I built a nest for Easter Bunny because can't miss out on the chocolate Easter eggs!!

[Sandra]



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Sunday 24th April - Day 3 (Easter Sunday)

Today was the day most of us were waiting for to find out what our leaders had planned for us.



Our Easter Bunny love (Sandra) went with us everywhere. 1st we checked out the Umberumberka Reservoir which supplies the Broken Hill township with water. Catchment for this dam has an area of 407.5km².



Went to a lookout viewing the plains and then arrived at Silverton for morning tea where Max

prepared his damper mix for the camp oven tonight so it could rise while travelling. Mind you we had to bang it down several times – overflowed the pot while rising!!



We spent several hours looking around the Ghost town which was once used for mining. While walking around the heritage buildings, old goal and souvenir shops, Max just had to check out the Mad Max car from the movie. Found a funny little critter outside one of the art galleries we looked at.



After lunch we were booked into the Flying Doctor Service in Broken Hill. First we watched a video to show us what the service does then from a viewing platform looked at the aeroplane hanger via a guided tour.



A few vehicles went to Broken Hill to check out another lookout and restaurant. Outside, several ladies decided they needed a rest on a very large chair.



Time to head back to camp for happy hour, nice big bonfire and waited anxiously for the damper to be cooked for everyone to share.

The stress of the day was now taken away from Jane as we all enjoyed playing tourists for the day. Don't know what the worry was about as she organised such a well planned day, even ordered excellent weather to match. Thanks to our great trip leaders.



[Lyn]



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Monday 25th April - Day 4 (Easter Monday)

So we were up and about early again, although not sure if anyone was up for their own Dawn Service as we certainly weren't. We left camp to meet at the homestead for 9 am as the Property Owners - John and Kym were going to be taking us to some MUD (yahh said Bronte with glee). We soon learnt this wasn't possible as it was still too wet, they naturally didn't want us in there making it more of a mess. Brent & Keryn headed into Broken Hill for some sightseeing and the rest of us anxiously waited to hear what was in store for us today.



Luckily Kym and John had a Plan B for us and John took us to the start of a creek bed which we thought looked interesting from the start. Soft sand turned to rocks and then we found a challenging creek crossing which Jo & Peter with tips from Peter H and John got through fine but tail end Charlie didn't have quite so much luck and must have been day dreaming.

So out came Roy's winch after he went back around behind Wayne and with lots of spectators, pushing & pulling by Bronte and the winch they got Wayne out of the rut and all this before 11 am. PHEW!!

A Big Rock was too much of a temptation for Bronte so he had to go investigate where it might be used for winching with the entire club's paparazi following. Dave got a great pic of all the 4WD drives lined up from above.



We headed off again and passed a HUGE Wedge Tailed Eagle nest that was nearly bigger than the tree it was in as we headed into more rocky terrain. With a small creek crossing ahead Martin K couldn't help but advise Wayne which side the rut was on in

case he felt the need to again get stuck. With our Fearless leaders John & Jane swapping drivers, we weaved in and out of a few creeks before John thought hanging on the side of the car to take some pictures would be good.



Nice green scenery and loads of animal foot prints in the creek beds.

Heading out of yet more creek beds we pick up the graded track to head up the hill. We rocked and rolled and bumped our way up the hill for a panoramic view. We soon found we

were passing the old cars from Saturday's track and the majority of us decided to follow an alternative track Peter H and Martin K see on their GPS so while John, Jane & Stephen headed back to camp for lunch we went on. Typically we found more goats on the track to scare off while 2 crows thought it was a good idea to annoy a wedge tailed eagle. Soon we came across an old mine which everyone tried not to fall into. Everyone explored around for quite a while.

Onwards we went again and came across a creek with water in it and after inspection by all decided it was too wet to continue to drive on so lunch was in order. We turned around and said goodbye to Roy, Bronwyn, Wayne & Bronte who headed back to camp. Those of us left headed back near the homestead for another track Kym & John had told us about that morning.





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A verrrry dusty drive followed back to the main road. Took a left into the scrub track in and out of creek beds with some leg work investigations by M&M (Martin and Martin) and Peter as to where to go next as we couldn't find the gorge supposed to lead our feet to a miners hut. Luckily the UHF radio was turned over to the station channel to ask their advice proved we were in the right spot just needed to walk along the creek for a while. Dave & Max saw from up the top of the hill that we could in fact drive further to the ruins to save the legs which suited Jessica and I just fine. After loads of Mountain Goat trekking by the boys and Jo up chest high grass, they returned after finding NOTHING – well not what we were after anyway!!!!

Time to head back to camping (as Jessica calls it) for Happy Hour we thought sounded like a good end to the day and the children (Jessica and Sandra H (hehe) happily took a shiny rock home.

Thanks to John and Jane for a great morning drive.

Thanks to Martin and Martin for an adventurous afternoon to end our driving on Mount Gipps Station Tracks.

A night around the camp fire followed with some good food, good wine and good company to wake up the following morning to us all packing up to go home - our Extra Long Weekend was over.

Thanks again to John and Jane for a fantastic weekend especially for spoiling Jessica so much. The research you did was fabulous and thanks to Mount Gipps Station for having us including Teddy Bear who had a visit in the letter box.

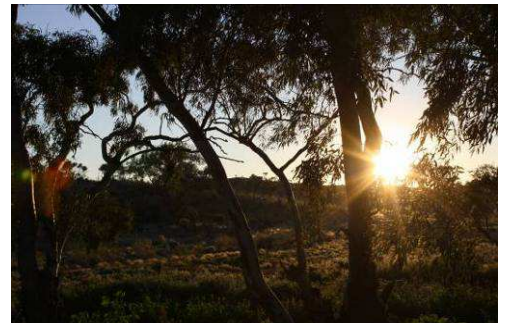


[The Riddles]

Tuesday 26th April – Day 5 (Anzac Day)

The day began early with plans to leave for home at about 8.30 am. The sunrise was very bright, followed by a cloudless sky with signs of a warm day to come. By 8 am breakfast was over, the 4WD was fully loaded, the goodbyes were being said.

I was travelling with Jane and John, first to Broken Hill to fuel up, then on our way. Most of the group went their separate ways. Roy and Bronwyn left the night before. Martin went looking for backtracks, with Stephen, Peter and Jo tagging. Peter & Sandra and Wayne & Sandra had more to do in Broken Hill. A final milkshake or two perhaps? Max and Lyn had a project to catch yabbies for a few days. Others took their time to get going.



We were making good time when large strips of black rubber went flying past, then John said he better pull up. His camper tyre was shredded. A quick change to the spare and we were on our way to Yunta. There we bought lunch and crossed the road to the park. Brent and Keryn pulled up, fuelled up and were off. We drove on without further incident, down through the sheep country of Hallett and Mt Bryan. We took the bypass around Burra to the Mid North, through Saddleworth, Riverton and Tarlee where the long Easter break began for us last Friday.

The traffic was fairly light throughout the day which made our journey very comfortable. A total of 1270 kms was recorded throughout the weekend. This was a very enjoyable trip with a good mix of 4 wheel driving, sightseeing, campfires, cooking and music. Thanks to Jane and John for the research and planning.

[Marie]



(EXTRA) Wednesday-Sunday for Max & Lyn

Yes, as was stated previously, we went on our yabby mission alone after enjoying such an excellent time with friends at Mt Gipps Station – what a fantastic start to any 10 day holiday.

Wednesday night was spent at Wentworth Caravan Park, charging up batteries and filling our water supply preparing for more bush camping and planning to catch that BIG yabby.

The tourist office told us this Caravan Park was flooded but we stayed on dry land together with everyone else. Max led our caravan to places he had not seen for about 40 years. A few landscapes had totally changed due to new land developments.

After checking several prime spots, we settled by a lovely creek near Chowilla and of course the yabby nets had to go in well before actually setting up for the night. Excitement shone over Max's face that yabbies were actually biting and when I was shown



the size of them, I needed to get my gloves on to help with the catch. This was certainly the spot to set up camp with not a soul in site – total isolation with peace and quiet. No animals came to visit us, just the delight of the birds singing different tunes every day. Surprisingly we did not get sick of dining on yabbies.



Time to move on to recharge the battery and the water supply so we stayed at Paringa Caravan Park for a night. I was asked if we should book in for 1 or 2 nights but having a taste

of a good time a few days prior, 1 night was sufficient. Next morning we set up camp at Custom's House where house boats come in. The free camp sites were like little private camping bays and of course once again yabbing needed to be tried.



The creek had subsided and was quite muddy so best results were achieved off a bridge. Sunday morning we slowly packed up and stopped at Banrock Station for a 1 ½ hour boardwalk – the remainder still under flood. We treated ourselves to a delightful meal at the winery but you really wouldn't read about it. Max chose a steak with YABBIES!!!

So nice to go home after 10 days bush camping and soak in a long hot bath. The van has since had an internal

spring-clean ready for the Willow Springs trip in June.

[Lyn & Max]

