

TRIP REPORT

Trip Leader: Kevin Flynn

LOCATION: Bright / Wanderinglong - Victoria

DATE: Saturday 10th March – Monday 12th March 2007 (Labor Day Long Weekend)

STANDARD: *Medium / Hard (for AWD Vehicles)*

Participants :

1. Kevin Flynn (Ford Explorer)
2. Geoff Lines & Family (Ford Escape)
3. Ray & Gerda Windmill (Toyota Prado)
4. Bill & Lorraine Anthony (Nissan X-Trail)
5. John Romminger

Unfortunately Lorraine Anthony fell ill on Fri night and was unable to join us. Geoff Lines slipped a disk in his back about 2 weeks before the trip. He was under doctors orders not go driving into the bush. Perhaps driving over rough terrain was not the best thing for a dodgy back.

The Trip to BRIGHT

We met in Seymour on Saturday morning and headed north up the Hume stopping in Wangaratta for lunch. We had lunch under the shade of some lovely trees by the river. Some lunch and a caffeine boost and we were back on the road. We turned right and headed east past the little towns of Myrtleford, Smoko and Porepunkah. We did make one crucial stop; the Michellini Winery to buy some much needed liquid refreshment for the cold nights before us. The Devils Creek Merlot and the Fragolino (Strawberry Wine) was very popular with the group. Many bottles found a good home in the boot of the cars.

The First look around BRIGHT

After booking into our accommodation and camp sites we went into the hills around Bright to see the wonderful surrounds of Bright. We tackled some challenging climbs to test the cars and give everyone a taste for the tracks on Sunday.

The climbs ended us up onto of a place aptly named Mystic Peak. This great spot was ideal for some photos and to see the lovely colours of the trees around

Bright turning orange, brown, red & yellow. Mystic Peak is the premier launch pad for all the paragliding activities around Bright.

Our first evening meal was spent at the wonderful Wandilogong Pub. We had a lovely meal outside on the verandah of this historic hotel as the sun went down. We had possibly the best seafood meal many of us have had in a long time. A real compliment given Wandilogong is at least 4 hours drive from the ocean...!!

Some red wine and back to our camping spots & cabin by the Ovens River in Bright for the night.

SUNDAY DRIVERS

The gang was up and about early. With a hearty breakfast and a top up of fuel, we were off for a days adventure. We headed up to Wandilogong and made our way into the hills around Bright. Many of the tracks were still closed following a long hot summer of bush fires. Just our luck that the tracks we had chosen were reopened only 7 days before the long weekend. All these details were checked (again) before we begun our trip.

The Wandilogong track had several good challenges for all the cars on the trip. Ray & Gerda's brand new Turbo Diesel Toyota Prado chewed up all the climbs with aplomb. Kevin's big Ford also had some fun shod with the Bridgestone Mud Terrains. John Romingers little Mitsubishi Overlander, shod with the new all-terrain tyres, performed very well despite the lack of low range. A few of the climbs needed a few goes to get it right. But eventually we all made it through to our lunch stop and a well earned lunch.

With the trip complete by about 3.00pm, we all headed into town for a well earned ice-cream and a swim in the Ovens River.

In a first for the AWDCV, John Romminger did a reco of the trip with a fly bye in an ultra-lite aircraft the afternoon before the trip. This has set a new standard in trip preparation. We later learned that John has an ultra-lite licence and has flown many times. His instructor handed over the stick to John and he couldn't wipe the smile off his face all weekend. He was unable to convince any others in the club to come up for another flight.

It was decided that the AWDCV was better suited to life at ground level.....!!!!!!!

MONDAY – The trip home

After another big breakfast we headed up to a couple look-outs around Bright. We left Bright with an appetite to come back for more the region has to offer – hopefully when more tracks are cleared and re-opened after the fires.

We drove down to Millawa to the Cheese Factory for a lovely lunch and home made cheese. After sampling the local produce, we all went to the Penfolds Winery to sample more wine. The Millawa Region is famous for its food and wine and I would encourage all members to visit the area. Although there are great things to do in Bright all year round, it is hard to find a better place to visit in Autumn.

Many of these areas, including Bright, have suffered tremendously over the past 6 months due to the fires. On behalf of the club, we would encourage you to return to some of these fire affected areas to put some money into the district. Despite the higher prices, please consider purchasing fuel & other provisions locally as a show of support for the local traders that are doing it tough.

We all said our good-byes and headed south, back down the Hume and the rat-race of Melbourne.

Kevin Flynn
President / Trip Leader
All-Wheel Drive Club of Victoria