

## Blackfellas Hand Trail / Baal Bone Gap Trail trip report.14/9/08

### Attendees.

Trip Leader Glenn Evans (Patrol)  
Headley Hall. (Pajero)  
Jack & Pam Simpson (Pajero)  
Ron, Jenni & Toby Mason (Patrol)  
Ian Bamforth (Rodeo)  
Glen & Kim Coddington (Toyota)  
Sebastien Fox (Prado)  
Rick & Jenni Vey Cox (Patrol)  
Peter Moss & Laurie (Patrol)

What a change. Saturday 30 degrees Sunday rain and a cold wind. We met at the Zig Zag car park as planned and discussed the options for the day. After doing the normal paperwork and airing down in the wet we got into convoy order and headed off into the forest. As it was raining quite heavily now, we passed about 20 4x4's coming out which looked like that had set up camp for the weekend but were cutting there trip short. After driving along Old Bells Line of Road (AKA Glow Worm Tunnel Road) we turned off at Blackfellas Hand Trail. It was raining. Sebastien, with assistance from Ron, aired down as he arrived late and was having trouble keeping traction with 36 psi of air in his tyres.

Driving along the normal easy grade 2 track was quite different in the rain. Holes that normally are shallow were full of water. The only bonus was no dust for Ron who was T.E.C. A couple of puddles were quite interesting. I stopped to get photos of some of the party going through some of the deeper ones. Luckily I had my Chinese safety shoes on as Glen C seemed to "accidentally" go into the puddle quite quickly and managed to get the back wash to travel several metres towards me while taking the photos. The water was cold which seemed to make Glen think that he had accomplished his mission. Remember Glen, revenge is sweet! We drove several more k's and reached the steep decent near the end of the track. As I was first the track was not too bad but as a precautionary measure low range was selected. Did I mention that it was raining? Listening on the radio, some members had some trouble with the decent but all made it safely to the bottom where we turned left and had morning tea in a nice little area which offered a large rock overhang as shelter just in case it rained. It was decided that it may be a good base camp for a walking tour of the area at a future date.

We headed off when Pam & Jack told us of aboriginal art work a short walk from the track. We decided to stop to look at this feature before the normal vandals destroy anything of value. Luckily it is not sign posted from the track so it seems that word of mouth is the only way you know it is there. Even the visitor's book was still in place. Ron signed the book on our behalf while we looked at the hand prints on the wall. Hence "Black fellas hand trail" Nearing the end of the track was 2 large puddles. I remembered the holes from the reccie I did but they seemed deeper than I remembered. I hit the first one slowly and was battling to recover in time to get momentum for the next one so right foot down hard and into it. It was fun trying to steer, turn on the wipers and grab the radio to tell the other to take the well used chicken track to the left. Of course the Patrol

powered through the water. Glen & Kim were going to try to go through the puddle but they thought that the Pajero behind them would not make it so they opted for the chicken track as well. That was Glen's excuse anyway.

We crossed Wolgan Road and started the Baal Bone Track. Not long into this track it climbs quite steeply. Low range a good option as it was raining and traction was required. Half way up the phone rings. Wife #1. The hardest part of the day and she picks that time to call. Some of the cars with all terrain tyres had some trouble getting traction but with Ron guiding them all made it safely to the top.

Continuing along the track the low cloud started to roll in. This was not good as the main reason for this trip is for the lookouts over Wolgan Valley & Newens. We continued on and after I took the wrong track which I thought was the look out we found the look out platform and had some photos. 2 stainless steel hooks were discovered on the edge of the look out which may have been used for absailing. Some smart person had hammered them flat so they could not be reused. Why jump off a cliff? Got me beat but then why drive along a dirt road in the rain to a look out when chances are it will be foggy or I have low cloud hindering your view?

We continued along to the next look out which gave us a better view up the valley. It started to rain again. Next part of the trip was a decent into the valley. Slow and steady was the order of the day. Next stop was lunch in a large grass level area which would also make a good base camp. Ideal for camper trailers as well. Guess what, it started to rain. Jack & I seemed to very popular as we have awnings on our cars! Lunch was a slow and enjoyable with good company and a beautiful area. We continued up to the pressure reduction pumping station that was built in the early 1900's to supply water to Glen Davis & Newens.

We headed towards our exit just north of Cullen Bullen on the Mudgee / Lithgow road. Only 1 more climb to go. By now the sun was trying to shine but it was a half hearted affair. We travelled to the highway and decided to air up at the Royal Hotel at Cullen Bullen where the trip would be ended. The ladies were please to see a toilet and the men please to see that the beer was cold. Glen C was told the pub was closed to him. His reputation has spread far & wide! All headed home in separate directions with the threat of rain again. I decided to go home via Great Western Highway just in case I could catch the group doing driver training with Shrek. What a day they must have had with the water crossing and hell hill. Driving through Mount Victoria the end of the world hit Rain sideways, wind rocking the car and very small hail. I got on the radio to Ron who went home via Bell. Sun was out and no rain. Only about 10'ks away! I finally got on to Mitchell who was doing driver training in a Suzuki Sierra. I was at Glenbrook by this stage and he was still in Lithgow. Rain, wind, no electricity and hail. He had a good trip home.

The people that were on my trip seemed to have a good time and I thoroughly recommend these tracks as they are easy with no real obstacles. A good track to expand your expertise.

Glenn Evans