



Chris Keys (Patrol) – Trip Leader
 Ben, Giz, Conner and Zoe Sweetnam (Patrol)
 Stan (Defender)
 Alan (Pajero)
 Lachie, Bronwyn, James and Lisa Michie (Navara)
 Sebastian, Alex, Daniel and Gabby (Prado)
 Tapan (Taps), Venita, Naiyan, Ariyan and Amani Sharma (100 Series)

We all met up at the Zig Zag Railway at 8.45am on Sunday morning aired down ready for the day's fun. Lachie and Ben had already been having fun the day before, much to the amusement of their other halves.....NOT !!!! But that's another story I'm sure you'll hear about.

After a brief run down from Chris, we headed out. To get back into the swing of things, we followed the main track for a while until we found some mud....glorious mud !!!!! The sticks came out, the depths were checked and it was a unanimous decision that this bog hole would be better left alone.....until Chris couldn't withstand the urge.....

It didn't go well. He lined up, planted the foot, and with a spray of mud pushed out everywhere from being abused by 3 tonnes of Patrol, he came to an abrupt halt.....well the car did....the tyres kept spinning ... "um Chris, you ain't going anywhere". After bailing out of the car through the window, off came the shoes and socks, and in he trudged.

The first obstacle we came across, and the mighty Cruiser was already needed for the recovery.....it just seemed too easy to pull the Patrol out, it was almost a non-event. The amusing part came when Chris opened the doors.....and half the puddle was emptied out of his truck.....Mary will not be impressed!!!! Licking his wounds, we turned around and kept going up the 'Powerlines'.

We found a decent looking climb, and while we were surveying it another two cars through....and 80 series and a Jimny. After seeing the ease at which the 80 series climbed it, we were all itching to give it a go.

We got up there without too much fuss, though Alan in the Pajero struggled in a couple of places, while Stan in the Defender made it look too easy. Leaving this track, we went to Bird Rock for some morning tea and then proceeded to the main event....the Spanish Steps. The track leading down

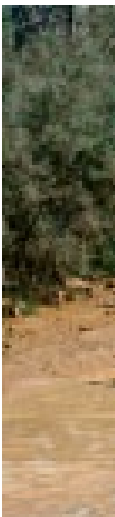
to the steps was a bit of fun too.....after the call from Chris to hold back while he checked it out was heard over the radio, he disappeared and after about 10 minutes, Lachie came running up and advised there were two tracks, one hard track and an easier one. Lachie, being the blouse he is took the easy track, while the rest of us set off down the hard track. It was full off ledges, and picking the right line was a must. We weaved our way down and there they were, the infamous steps.

We all walked down the steps together, noting the best lines and doing a bit of road building, before we got going. Again, we all made it down without any hiccups, and the creek at the bottom, which in years before had apparently troubled some (probably Patrol drivers), was noting more than a trickle. Lunchtime was called, so we stopped for a bite and chat on what must have been the narrowest section of the track. Stan was lucky to get a few drops of water out of his tank due to the angle we were all perched on, but we still a decent break. When we got going again, the next challenge was another climb, again full of steps.

Chris led the way, and after some road building, and what seemed like hours, he got up....his truck was probably weighed down with all of the mud from his "shackle winning effort" earlier in the day. I was happy that the cruiser made it up without any fuss, but then amazed at how easy the Defender got up.

Sebastian got to try out his diff-lock, and he too made it look simple, while Alan once again had to coerce his Pajero up the hill. A few stop/starts later, he was at the top. Lachie bounced his way up, and then Ben showed him how it "should" be done, again making it look easy.....but I guess with a truck like that, it would be easy.

That was it for the fun.....it had to end some time, and that



Spanish



Steps



...was it. We proceeded back to the railway, and got the tyres back to highway pressure and called it a day. On the way back home, Lachie, Ben and we stopped in for some refreshments in North Richmond, where I had been mistook a bollard for a small tree, and uprooted it while parking.....he'll say he only glanced, but pictures don't lie !!!!! (unfortunately, I don't have the picture....bugger)
It was fun day out, and I'm appreciative I was given the green light to go. Thanks for everyone on the trip who made it such a great day out.

Cheers,
Tapan (Taps) Sharma

GO THE MIGHTY CRUISER !!!!!!!

