

East MacDonnell Ranges trip 2023.

Preamble

What a gr8trip to the East Mac Donnells & central Australia. Full credit to Phil for arranging & executing the trip. So relaxed & easy going, even though he had his outline for the trip everyone's input was not only always welcomed but often asked for. I had an absolute ball, so much to see & do. Only one problem, I'm now half a foot shorter from all the walking & thanks to Jodie (& her use of Phil's notebook/ipad ?) & assistance with the bookings that we were unable to make on our phones. We saw some beautiful country, gr8 campsites & nice meals.

Judy

The Trip

Day 1 – 24/7/2023.

All meet at Dublin for a 9:00am departure. Final count for the East MacDonnell SE4WD Club trip is four vehicles. Mechanical issues reduced the numbers attending. Depart Dublin, light to medium rain started falling and continued until we arrived at Port Augusta. Lunched, refuelled and headed north to overnight stop at donation camp site Pimba.

Day 2 – 25/7/2023.

All up and ready to roll at 9:00am. All decide to inspect Woomera. 10:35am, depart for Cadney Park overnight stay. On the way, one caravan decided to explode a tyre. All chipped in to help change the tyre and on we go. Get to Cadney Park later than expected (due to the Woomera visit and Tyre problem)

Day 3 – 26/7/2023

Two tyre changes then started driving only to be hailed by a bus to advise the tyre cover and big bag were hanging off the back tyre of one of the caravans, dragging along the road. The tyre cover was lost, but bag was okay. We took a detour and visited Henbury Meteorite site, walking around the crater site. We continued to Rainbow Valley to watch the sunset lighting up the big sandstone rock. It looked on fire as the sun shone on it. We relaxed around a campfire and enjoyed our stay overnight.

Day 4 – 27/7/2023

Drove to Alice Springs, did some shopping and onto camp at Wannardi Caravan Park. There was a friendly, flatulent horse in the paddock next door which rejected apples but appreciated carrots and pats.

Day 5 – 28/7/2023

Up and packed, drove to Gemtree Caravan Park. We set up and relaxed enjoying the serenity. Phil's son, Jeremy joined us and brought pallets for the fire. Great fire, it turned into a bonfire with fireworks at one point as a whole pallet ignited. Jeremy predicted no rain due to the high clouds, but it rained all night!

Day 6 – 29/7/2023

Still raining. We decided to fossick anyway Jeremy guided us to fossicking sites for garnet, mica and zircon. Due to the rain the dirt tracks were muddy and slippery. One 4WD bottomed out in the mud and needed to be pulled out. All 4WDs are now covered in red mud and full of collected rocks. Staying for our second night at Gemtree Caravan Park. Some of us taking advantage of the option to preorder dinner which they cook and deliver to your campsite. The owners described it as Uber Eats in the bush.

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Day 7 – 30/7/2023

Relaxing morning pack up and travel to Alice Springs. Check into Wanngardji Caravan Park. Rest of day free time for all.

Day 8 – 31/7/2023

Visit Emily Gap. We couldn't cross into the gap due to water. The temporary waterhole was beautiful to observe. No one was keen to swim across. We travelled onto Jessie Gap, which had very little water pooled despite being only a short distance further on. The short walk in Jessie Gap was picturesque and several commented that they could understand why it was a special place to the indigenous. We then went to Corroboree Rock. All enjoyed the circumnavigate walk around the rock. The gap tour finished earlier than expected. All slowly returned to Alice Springs. Afternoon at leisure for all. Evening meal at Thai/Indian restaurant within Doubletree Hilton.

Day 9 – 1/8/2023

On to Ross River to pursue more of the East MacDonnell Range Gorges. Fantastic scenery and 4WDing to John Hayes Rockhole and Trepina Gorge. Another flat tyre changed then most of the group did the ridge top walk along the gorge which looped back through the creek in the middle of the gorge. Stunning views, so lots of photos taken. Overnighting at Ross River Resort campground which is in amongst large rock formations. It is a beautiful place within dining facilities, pool and bar.

Day 10 – 2/8/2023

Brief stop at info centre Arltunga. Onto Ruby Gap. 2 kilometre walk into Ruby Gap. Trudging through creek bed sand, over rocks, admiring the gorge walls and rewarded with a water hole at the end. One member ventured into the water. Picturesque. Back to the vehicles. Returned to Ross River via historical Arltunga township.

Day 11 – 3/8/2023

Packed up ready to depart Ross River. Left vans at the campsite whilst driving to N'Dhala Gorge. All walked into the gorge as far as the marked trail. Back to Alice Springs, replenish stores, buy another tyre, Phil says goodbye to family and off to Ooraminna for overnight stay. Ooraminna homestead situated within magnificent surroundings. Drove to top of mountain. View of the MacDonnell Ranges and the plain between Ooraminna and the ranges. Fantastic views. Looked around a constructed film set. Apparently, the film run out of money and was never completed. The set is occasionally used for functions and weddings. The host was David Ireland (a documentary film maker on Discovery Channel). A couple of us enjoyed a meal with magnificent views.

Day 12 – 4/8/2023

First stop, Ewaninga Rock carvings. One vehicle departed the convoy due to rough South Road track, intending to meet us a Kulgera. On towards Finke. Second stop change a shredded tyre. Stopped to build a coffee at Bundooma Siding. Off to Lambert's Centre of Australia via Finke. Pretty rough 12km track to the marker. Returning to a vehicle, a tyre was looking flatish on the bottom. Could here air escaping. Another tyre change. Onward to Kulgera (152km). On way, called the separated vehicle via Sat Phone. At 4:00pm, they decided to head for Marla. No way we could follow as it was 7:30pm by the time we arrived at Kulgera. Unpowered site \$10.00pp. Great pub steak sandwich. Home for tonight.

Day 13 – 5/8/2023

Inflate tyres, vehicle inspections, discuss fuel requirements and of we go. Mutually agreed that we will head towards Pimba. Will be a long day. We still hope to be home Sunday. Refuelled at Cadney

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Park. Arrived Pimba at 7:15pm.

So far, on this trip we haven't seen a live kangaroo. Only one emu, and 7 Wedgetail eagles.

All dined at Spud's. Cold temperature after enjoying 24-28 degree days up north.

Day 14 – 6/8/2023

Uneventful trip to Adelaide.

Summary: Colourful wildflowers everywhere we went. All shades of green. Lots of deep red sand. Mud driving to/from the zircon fields. Not a lot of wildlife except birds. Pleasant relaxed company. Six tyre changes. Minor vehicle issues but all returned home OK. Cold overnight temperatures, but lovely warm days (some 28^o days). Lots of fuel consumed. Gorges – magnificent.

(Timetable and map follow)

Phil

8/8/23

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23-Jul-23	Monday, 24 July 2023	25	26	27	28	29
	Dep Adelaide	Travel Day	Travel Day			
	477km \cong 7.5Hrs	516km \cong 6.5Hrs	478km \cong 6.5Hrs	100km \cong 2hrs	Free Morning	Fossicking Gemtree
	Depart Dublin 0900			Free Afternoon		
		NT Parks Pass from this date				
				? Tour Printshop?	140km > Gemtree.	
	O/N Pimba	O/N Cadney Park	O/N Rainbow Valley	O/N Alice Springs	O/N Gemtree	O/N Gemtree
30-Jul-23	31	01-August-2023	2	3	4	5
> Alice Springs	Emily	To Ross River	Arltunga	N'Dhala Gorge	Depart ALSS	THE 76TH HARTS RANGE RACES
	Jessie		4wd Ruby Gap	> ALSS	Travel Day	
Astro?	Corroboree	4wd John Hayes rockhole			Old South Rd.	Travel Day
		Trephina			Ewanninga Rock carvings	
					Lambert's Centre of Australia	
O/N Alice Springs	O/N Alice Springs	O/N Ross River	O/N Ross River	O/N Ooraminna	O/N Kulgara	O/N Pimba
06-Aug-23	7	8	9	10	11	12
THE 76TH HARTS RANGE RACES	NT Pub Hol	Club General Meeting				
Travel Day	THE 76TH HARTS RANGE RACES					
> 477km						
Arrive Adelaide						

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