

DIVE SECTION ANNUAL NANGA CANOE TRIP 2011

After battling a bit of road rage on the freeway due to road works, we arrived at Camp Kelly in Nanga to find quite a few families mingling around the camp fire. This being the case the race was on between my wife Donna and newcomer Lorraine for the last dorm at the lower level. After a good rugby tackle by Donna that lead to Lorraine spilling her wine, they both realised there were two remaining rooms left at this level so all was good again.

After everyone was settled I decided I needed to give the fire a bit of assistance as I am the Section's resident pyromaniac with our Rear Commodore Steve Sullivan close behind. So we settle into a typical Friday night at Nanga with a raging fire, good friends and the odd drink or two. Now after a few "beviess" you would think it might be acceptable for someone to fall on their backside after tripping over the firewood, but as Kate is a "tea totaller" I found it hard to defend her and joined those that witnessed this in a quiet chuckle, which just made Kate laugh even more. For those of you that don't know our Kate, once you get her started with her giggling, she just can't stop! By now I am feeling content; I have a drink, the fire is acceptable in my opinion, only to find out that our elder statesman, Ron Cutten, was noticed giving my wife a welcome greeting in the camp cool room that Hugh Heffner would have been proud of. "I promise you Ron, she didn't kiss and tell!" By about 1.00am the last of the stalwarts left the fire to head for bed, ending our first evening.



Saturday morning comes, and waking to the smell of bacon and eggs being cooked on the barbecue somewhere, is a wonderful way to start the day, especially for those suffering with headaches this morning. This year's annual trip to Nanga was a little different to others I have attended as the weather was better, not being as bitterly cold as it has been in the past, and also a noticeable rise in numbers due to the increase in numbers within the section. There were a lot more families this year with heaps of kids running around having fun.

At about 9.00am we all head to the river to battle the cold water and the rapids. With life jackets on and canoes manned we start our trek down river. With the first set of rapids behind us and successfully navigated due to high water levels, I thought I may not have much to report on this year. The next set of rapids however, were a different matter, with at least 75% of our crews being tipped in or getting jammed on rocks. Poor Mary Cutten decided to wear her canoe as a hat, after falling out at this rapid, but due to Ron's quick response, she went back to wearing normal hats.

I breathed a sigh of relief getting through the fourth set of rapids unscathed only to get caught on a tree stump, and going in, much to the disgust of my passengers, Josh and Cullen. Graeme and Lorraine, newcomers to the Section, successfully navigated this rapid, but due to the amount of water taken on board, they slowly sank anyway.

My boy, Jacob, told me that he was glad that he was made to wear a helmet, as his paddle partner, Phil Gallagher kept hitting him in the head with his paddle. "I presume this was accidental, hey Phil!"

With about 90% of us well and truly wet it was time to head back to camp.

After a bit of a breather and those really hot showers that we all needed, the fire was stoked up and the barbecues lit. As is tradition, we had a communal barbecue dinner and settled in around the fire once again. We did have our usual toasted marshmallows and a few people got inventive dipping them in wine and bourbon and then toasting them, which tasted surprisingly good. Tonight however

would not be a repeat of the previous night as the warm sleeping bags were sought out a lot earlier, especially by Geezer who piked at about 8.30pm.

Sunday morning was more of the same as bacon and eggs were a welcome alarm clock. After a clean up of the premises, and the kids saying goodbye with cuddles and calls of "you are my new best mate", some of us decided it was time to head home.

This was a great Nanga trip and the larger numbers certainly didn't detract, so don't miss out next year!

The 4 wheel drivers partied on with a planned trek through the bush on a 4WD tour ending at a little country pub for lunch and maybe one or more quiet bebies. I hear through the grapevine that this was an eventful tour, "Kate and Dave I am glad to hear you made it out alive!"

Thanks Jess for this account of the 4WD adventure:

The gravel crunched and the mud slogged from under the tyres as the men powered their 4X4 off roaders through the heritage trail from Nanga to Quindanning. The convoy of seven cars, led by Daz and Karrie, encountered harsh and dangerous conditions. Rocks, ditches and fallen trees were only a few obstacles we faced along our journey towards the 'Ye Old English Inn' set on banks of the Williams River.

The group's knowledge and skills of 4X4 off road driving were tested when Dave and Kate's car slid into a huge mud hole left by a gigantic tree that had fallen during the winter. Dave's Nissan Patrol was slowly sinking deeper into the sludge and water and it was agreed we had to get it out fast. After 15 to 20 minutes of numerous attempts to manoeuvre the car out the mud, it was settled that the only way to get the car back onto the track was to get another car behind it and pull it out.

Daz had originally hoped to reverse his car back around the tree and around the sinking mud hole to drag Dave's vehicle out. Luckily, Daz's amazing strategy was not needed, a young man named Tony and his girlfriend rocked up in their 4X4 off roader and stopped to help us out. He attached a snatch rope to the back of

Dave's car and towed it out of the huge mud hole. The look of relief on Dave and Kate's faces matched everybody else's and many thanks were expressed to Tony. He then continued on his journey, a hero in the eyes of the convoy team.

Forty minutes later we arrived at the 'Ye Old English Inn' and enjoyed some scrumptious food and cold drinks before setting off on our long journey home back to Perth. We all agreed the weekend trip to camp Kelly was a great success.

Thanks go to Daz and Karrie for organising the weekend.

