

# Natural Bridge Trip reports

9 vehicles assembled at Caravonica, under the leadership of Sam for the much talked about sally to Natural Bridge. It was a beautiful morning as we wound our way up the Kuranda Range, en route to Springmount Road, east of Dimbulah. The golden grass of the Savannah country shone in the brilliant sun. The odd blackboy tree stood sentinel, over the impoverished grazing country, as we passed by. Morning tea, at Colin's Weir, allowed first time visitors to the area the opportunity to inspect the weir. Some good camping spots were identified along the Walsh River.

Before departing the Walsh, Sam briefed the party regarding previous attempts, stating, "I don't know the condition of the track now, but I have previously taken people through without any damage to vehicles." (Really? What sort of damage might we encounter, Sam??) Packing away the billy signalled the beginning of the assault, but not before shifting 2 obstinate nags from obstructing the gate. Cow cocky Ron Moon showed his skill with the Akubra, prevailing where Sam's persuasive approach failed in moving on the stubborn equine.

The first challenging obstacle was the infamous Sunken Bridge, which challenged even the most experienced among us. Vehicles equipped with "optional extras" provided the traction necessary to avoid the need of recovery. In any case, all enjoyed the entertainment, when both winch and snatch straps came out for the tedious procedure of traversing the once maintained section. First timers learned a lot!



The adventure continued as the track further deteriorated. Each obstacle was approached from the front with, "Gee Andy, it's a lot rougher than the last time we were through here!" This gave the "first timers" another surge of adrenaline, mixed with anxious anticipation.



At least twice during the day, the group pitched in together to carry stones to aid in road building. So successful were our efforts at "The Steps", all vehicles negotiated the difficult terrain without the need of recovery.

Few vehicles utilize this "road" as a thoroughfare! Consequently, vegetation and low branches brushed passed the convoy, reshaping UHF antennae. Other modifications included unattractive bulges in sidesteps. Fortunately, no vehicle sustained any major panel damage. Sam can still boast!

At 1650 hours, we hit the bitumen at Watsonville. Before returning home, 240 km were covered during the 10-hour day of driving. Thanks to Sam and Andy for sharing their vast experience and making the day so enjoyable.

