

Yes, we made it to the ~~Dip~~ Tip!!



...What a great trip!

...What a great group of people!

...and What a hoot!!!!



We're still deciding what was the best part!

...Was it all the 'organizing get-togethers' we had prior to the trip?

...Was it the first night camp together in Coen?

...was it reaching the tip?

...was it cruising over to Thursday Island from Seisa?

...was it driving like maniacs on Somerset Beach?

...was it the funny 'Happy Hour' sessions?

...was it camping on Vrilya Beach (with a 14ft croc)?

...was it watching someone else do Gunshot?

...or was it the great fishing!!!!!!

Great fishing it was not!!!!..

But everything else was brilliant!!!



The characters...

...**Jamie** (our own tree lugger) Stephenson and **Beryl** (the lady you don't ask to pack your car for you ...well that's if you want things to arrive in one piece)

...**Don** (take out a tap or two) Morrison and Loopy (and I mean Loopy) **Lou**

...**Steve** ('solar panel' or '3 flats' as we so often referred to him after his 3rd flat tyre) Stapley and (Steamboat) **Lyn**... get her to tell the story of how we thought she owned one!

...**Lettuce Lover Larry** and Joan 'Shorty' Schubert (sorry Joan, but you are rather short)

...**Malcolm** Nottage, (our very own traveling Buddha) and **Jill** (our travelling bookworm)

...**Steve** (no flats) Pennington and Claire, the only woman who can't cook Chicken wings

...and finally those bloody kids..... who were just wonderful – **Matthew and Bradley**. (Mind you, they weren't the only kids.... Malcolm, Don and Steve S were there as well!!!!)

...We all set out on Saturday 11 June – and there was no mistake where we were heading! In the months leading up to the trip we had 5 planning trip meetings. Each meeting ended up so much fun, we forgot what we were there for. But in the end we all knew exactly where we were going (the first night) – and how much alcohol we could take! Our first meeting place as a group was COEN.

...From there on, we just headed to the tip.

The itinerary...

Day 1 Hann River, Musgrave Station or Laura
Day 2 Coen River. This was our first official night of the trip where we all met. Great river campsite.

Day 3 Coen to Moreton Telegraph Station (on the Wenlock River) via Archer River Roadhouse and a long, dusty, drive.

Day 4-5 Moreton to Twin Falls National Park via the Old Telegraph Rd. Lots of deep, wide river crossings, which we managed to get through unscathed. We were 5 minutes away from one potentially confronting incident with a group of locals who were not too happy about us tourists travelling through their land (an incident that was reported in the Cairns Post claiming gun wielding aboriginals...) but we just managed to miss all that action and arrive at the infamous "Gunshot" hurdle. We decided as a group (with two trailers) not to part-take but managed to time it just right to see two other vehicles conquer the dip!! Twin Falls was spectacular – just like all the pictures in the various Cape York books...

Day 6-10 Twin Falls to Seisa via the Jardine River Crossing and Bamaga. We used Seisa as a base to explore Thursday Island, Hope Is., catch a decent feed at one of the world's best fishing spots - Seisa wharf, drive along Somerset Beach like a bunch of 18 year old's, check out Punsand Bay and so on Magnificent!! The tip area is all it is cracked up to be!!!

Day 11-14 Seisa to Vrilya Beach. Not far on the map but certainly an interesting and challenging drive. Got to Vrilya Beach and had to search hard for a campsite as most of the known ones were full. Steve S and Jamie managed to find us a gem after a rather tricky winch exercise. (Ask Jamie or Steve S about it!!!) Set up camp right on the beach and stayed put for 4 days.

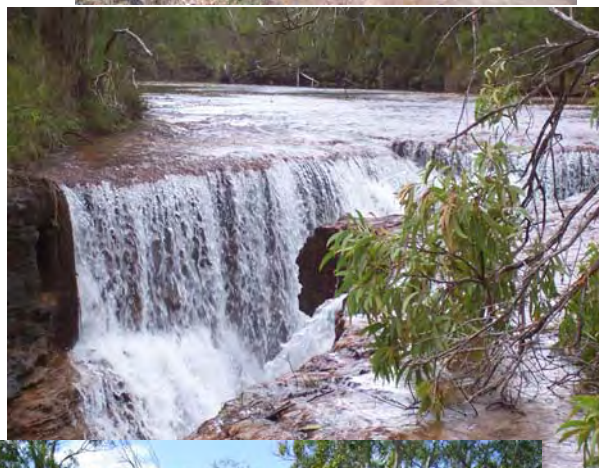
Day 15-17 Vrilya to Weipa via Elliott Falls. Weipa was like the Vegas of the top...nice eateries, lots of tours, Woolworths supermarket!!! and alcohol!!! We all participated in a mine tour which was fascinating, had a lovely pub meal, and again had an 'opportunity' to catch the big one! Didn't, but had the opportunity!

Day 18-19 Weipa to Chillii Beach. Don, Lou, Mal and Jill left the group here and headed home, the others continued onto Chillii Beach. Great rainforest drive and beach/rainforest campsite.

Day 20 Chillii to Musgrave Station. Our last night together before heading home.

Day 21 Home for some, The Lion's Den for the Stevenson's and Pennington's (via Lakefield NP).

The evidence...



The highlights...

Best campsite... Finalists include Coen River, Twin Falls National Park and Vrilya Beach. Our first night together was at Coen River and what an idyllic setting for a campsite. We were on the grassy river bank at what is called 'The Bend'. The river was not in full flow but there was definitely enough water to swim (not dissimilar to Survivor beach camp on the Mitchell). Twin Falls National Park was bush camping with designated areas to camp. The usual national park facilities were there but with one big attraction – the magnificent falls and waterholes. Wow... The other finalist - Vrilya Beach. We were camped 10 meters from the high tide mark under She-Oaks. A tad difficult to get to but once you were there it was magical. Located on the west coast of the tip, there was no wind, great sunsets and long sandy beaches to drive along.

Most embarrassing moment... After our lunch stop at the tip carpark grounds, Don was not thinking straight and drove off over a drinking tap and the unfortunate thing was, once he realized he was mounting it, he had nowhere to go but forward and take the whole thing out!!! Easily done for any of us fine, experienced drivers but not in front of a large group of bikies who had just stopped for lunch and watched the whole ordeal!

Best drive... No doubt the Old Telegraph Road. Fantastic!!!! River crossings, magnificent changing scenery, vertical challenges, bumps, ditches and 'Gunshot' However, the drive from Seisia to Punsand Bay then along Somerset Beach, was just as good.

Worst road... The Development Road from Vrilya to Weipa Shocking!!! Corrugation after corrugation, after corrugation...

Biggest driving challenge... Getting over the log bridge enroute to Vrilya. The wheels had to balance on a only a select few logs. The driver couldn't see a thing so had to be guided by someone else (mainly Larry) via walkie-talkie. Afterwards (once we all made it) it was interesting to ask who you would prefer to be – the driver or the guider!! Tough call – as both positions extremely hard. (see pic below).

Most expensive car repair... ??? Either Don's shock absorbers, Malcolm's Bush's or Jamie's coil springs – you will have to ask them "how much?"

Most dangerous situation... The tree falling down over the campsite at 1:00am in the morning. Frightened the living daylights out of Joan and Larry (and the entire Chilli Beach campers).

Best attraction... Twin Falls, Somerset Beach, Dugong's swimming around the 'Tip', Vrilya sunset, Chilli Beach and the boulders protruding at low tide and lots more....

