

St Alfreds 4WD - 2024 Trip to the Border Track

Day 1 - 30/9/2024.

We gathered on Monday afternoon around 5 pm at the Lake Cullulleraine Holiday Park (Now called Tranquil Waters, Cullulleraine). After setting up camp we enjoyed this hidden treasure with its beautiful peaceful scene and wonderful bird life. The moor hens being very cheeky and inspecting the camp site. We had a bbq together with a picturesque sunset.

Day 2 - 1/10/2024.

We set off next morning for an adventure down The Border Track. The aim was to take a peek at the Murray River. Once we came off the main road there was an abundance of emu, quite large flocks and some with young ones. We passed through an extensive Almond Grove. After a couple of false turns leading to dry river beds we found The Old Customs House on the Murray and had a morning tea there with wonderful views, historic information boards and a well preserved stone building which is the only remaining part of the Customs House.

Shortly after leaving this venue, we started on the track entering Murray Sunset NP South of Stuart Highway. For most of the morning it was uneventful with good progress alongside farmers' fields. A lunch spot was found beside the track. In the afternoon we faced more difficult track conditions with moguls and loose sand on the higher sand dunes. However everybody coped really well with the conditions with the only casualty a plastic water container on the top of Colin's car. The container disintegrated and the water was lost.



A lovely bush campsite was found in amongst the shrubbery just off the track. The clear night enabled us to enjoy the wonderful starlit sky with many satellites passing and the boys finding tiny night creatures using their torches and spotting the illuminated eyes.

Day 3 - 2/10/2024.

Another beautiful clear sunny day. We set off with lowered tyre pressures and sand flags erected to face whatever conditions we came across. The Sand dunes, grew larger, and low range was needed on several of the dunes, and sometimes a couple of attempts but all vehicles managed perfectly. Again, the only casualty was equipment. Two lost sand flags on the low hanging branches and a water container inside Sagar's car (due to bouncing over the moguls) meant some of the camping equipment was quite wet. There was a lot of rocking and rolling over

moguls and sand Dunes and a wonderful viewpoint on the highest dune at the Hensley Trig point. On this day we were mostly on the South Australian side and Ngarkat Conservation Park.



The big hole inspection



A view back along the track



A stumpy tail!

David had paid our dues online when we had internet coverage near Pinaroo, at our lunch spot. The stumpy tail lizards were out sunning themselves, but we managed to move them off the track or drove around them. This was a very long day as the goal was to get out of Ngarkat Cons. Park over to the Victorian side where camping was free there. We made it to the camp site at the aptly named Red Bluff Nature Reserve. Here there is a huge campsite, well maintained but we were nearly chased off by wild bees seeking out any moisture in our vehicles while living in this arid region. Fortunately, as we arrived late and after the use of insect repellent, they left us in peace at dusk.

Day 4 - 3/10/2024.

The border track continued but on the day the scenery was quite different. Sometimes big white sand dunes in the distance and lots of new growth after fire, so bushy, small trees. We had to



The view south along the track



manage many quite difficult bog holes; very glad it wasn't wet. After the morning tea break the ladies took over and negotiated the bog holes skilfully under excellent directions from the men. We had wonderful vistas of farmer's fields. Eventually the bog holes receded and we aired up for the bitumen drive into Bordertown, welcome ice cream and a shopping stop. The Aboriginal name for this area is Tatiara, which means "The good country". After a short break we were back on the track. The next stop was the historic station at Serviceton. A volunteer guide turned up and gave us a wonderful peek inside the original preserved station, full of antique relics. We were also fortunate enough to see an extremely long goods train pass through the station on the Standard Gauge line.

After a longer than expected stop we headed back onto the border track and into The Little Desert and hunting for a campsite for the night. Rain was threatening and we eventually found a perfect spot on slightly higher ground. In the twilight Chai challenged Bill to a game of chess, the outcome of which still required the chocolate prize to be shared between the boys.

Day 5 - 4/10/2024.

After a few hours (on/ off) of overnight showers, we woke on the side of the track. Weather was dry, so we could enjoy breakfast outside the car and proceeded to pack up and move on. We drove to the south end of the Little Desert National Park, this section was not difficult and then on to Frances at 9.45 a.m. for welcome coffees at the local shop. One of the members had to return to Melbourne but their trip was enhanced for some of the way by being totally surrounded by brilliant yellow Canola fields.

Here our journey between two states would end... no longer questioning whether we were in South Aust. or Victoria ... no longer asking what the time (and time zone) was. We had one more Border crossing back into Victoria, and set our directions to home ... but still wanted another day of fun, so drove through the Little Desert National Park, on the way to Dimboola. Amongst the sand, we saw signs counting the kms to the main road (thanks to some paper signs on the track) and stopped to look at flowers and got a few lessons in flora and fauna.

Followed the bitumen road to enter Little Desert NP (LDNP) at 11:10. Track was



Victoria, left, SA right

mostly firmish sand. Some softer patches, a couple of small damp bog holes to avoid. Exited onto the bitumen at 12.15. We drove 6K north on the Edenhope Rd and re-entered the LDNP. Darker roos here in paddocks and occasionally on the Junkhams Tk. We then continued east through LDNP, mostly lowish immature bushes, trees, recovering from bushfires? Some taller eucalypts here and there. Cassia, Wattles, small white everlastings, pink fringe myrtle, small tea tree, grass trees, small casuarinas, and many more. Track firm to very soft



sand but we were able to get through on road pressure tyres without incident. Followed Wimmera Road north into Dimboola, We had heard of some big rain coming so thought we might stay in some nicer accommodation at the local Dimboola Hotel ... but alas no room at the inn, motel, or caravan park. Everyone else had the same idea, so one more night of camping. At least the rain wasn't scheduled until the morning. We enjoyed one more night together, looking at stars and satellites (and maybe a couple of planes), eating chocolate and licorice, and talking about life and trips we would like to do.

The next day ... God must have held back the rain, as it started just as we were leaving (thankyou), but we had to drive home in the heavy rain after a week of beautiful weather ... and so ended the St Alfred's 4WD Club Border Track Trip a wonderful, memorable trip, so ably led by Dave and Sue.



Some of the last of our driving along the border