

TRIP REPORT

20/21 Jan 2007

Tony Maurer

Julie Burton

2 x 60m x 8mm rope

18 abseils

Friday afternoon and I'm first to arrive at Boyd River camping ground. I put the tent up, cracked a beer, and while waiting for Tony to arrive, got my map out and entered the waypoints into my GPS for our Carra Beanga adventure. (finally got that baby sorted out - thanks Daniel)

Saturday dawned clear and warm, a promise of the hot day to come.

Tony

and I sorted our gear and made sure we weren't doubling up on what we needed for camping in the canyon, and finally got underway at 8am. I left my car at the end of Kanangra Rd, and we drove to the locked gate at King Pin Fire trail. Time to test my new-found skills with the GPS. A relatively easy walk in, (except for about 400m of dense dead heath), and we were at the first abseil at GR317412 at 11.30. The anchor was some old dodgy looking slings from a tree on the right, so we replaced the sling and attached a rapide. Rigged and we were single rope rapping down a beautiful mossy pitch.

Tony added a rapide to the next couple of anchors and we single roped them down the left hand side. At the bottom of the fourth pitch, we intended to cross over tackle CB from the right. Search as we might, we could find no sign of slings on that side, nor anything we could anchor off that would provide a good retrieve. Meanwhile, the route down left hand side that we had heard horror stories about, seemed to be well marked, so we decided to stick with that side.

Without knowing how many abseils to expect and having a limited number

of rapides, the next few abseils were rapped on double rope out of rope bags. These raps varied between 20- 30m. Several suspect slings were replaced.

I think it was the sixth pitch where we rigged both 60's as we couldn't see the next ledge and had no idea the length of the drop. Tony sent me down first as crash test dummy, and I stopped on a ledge with a sling. This sling was attached to a piton and backed up twice with old slings around rocks. Tony joined me, and the crash test dummy was off again looking for the next anchor on the way down. This one was a sling around

a tree root sticking out of the side of the cliff. The next pitch which was the ninth looked huge, (about 75m) and as I rapped down, I hoped like hell I would find a ledge to stop on. About 45m down I spotted a very narrow ledge with a sling well off to my right. I tried to traverse

across to it, but kept penduluming back. I locked off and managed to climb across with some difficulty. Tony rapped down, and I pulled him across, belayed myself along the ledge (it was only about 8 inches wide) and set a traverse line for him to join me.

The 10th pitch landed us on a huge ledge. This is where the right and left hand side merge. Another 4 short abseils and a climb down. We made our way to the sling for the 15th, and saw it around a tree high on the left and needed to be traversed with a great deal of care. By now it was 6pm and we were both feeling fatigued from what had become a long day replacing slings, ans sharing the rigging and retrieving duties. So when I suggested we camp where we were with running water, firewood and a place to lay our thermarests, Tony readily agreed. We didn't bother putting the tent up, and slept under the stars. It was a bit disconcerting to hear the occasional rock falling in the canyon during the night.

The following day we were packed up and ready to abseil at 7.30. As we approached the tree we saw the night before with our plans to make a traverse to it, Tony spotted anther tree right next to us with a sling! This just confirmed that we made the right decision yesterday to make camp when we did as fatigue had clearly been setting in.

This 15th abseil was about 10m. The anchor for the 16th was from an old rotten piece of tree which was just sitting on the edge of the drop. We put a sling and rapide around a new tree and rapped down a beautiful long slippery dip over 30m high. Back to single roping now we were back into the longer pitches! Re-rigged and continued down the next long pitch. There was a dead tree that had fallen in, laying at the bottom complete with slings still around it. One of the slings was orange nylon rope tied with an overhand knot.

A short walk brought us to the 18th which we agreed was the nicest abseil of them all. A 45m pitch down a thick green carpet of moss with a trickle of a waterfall and into a pool at the bottom. A short time later we found more slings from a tree on the left, but easily down climbed the right. Then an anchor on the right, but we threw a handline around a tree on the left and slid down.

Next was a walk down a boulder field. We saw a huge monitor lizard and I managed to snap some pics. Then Tony pointed out 3 red tailed black cockatoos sitting on a branch. Took a few pics but they wouldn't fan their tails while the camera was out. Next wildlife to be seen was a

red-bellied black snake who very quickly disappeared while I was catching up with my camera.

After wandering down the creek bed for another kilometre, we reached the junction with Kanangra Creek. Lunch and a swim, and we headed off upstream. We saw 4 more red-bellied black snakes who all slithered into the water and swam under a rock. I managed to get a few good pics of them swimming. Then we were lucky enough to see more red-tailed black cockatoos, and then surprised another monitor lizard feasting on a carcass. He shot up a tree as soon as he became aware of us. More opportunities. There were trout in the pools in the creek too, and Tony said all that was missing was a lyrebird. But not for long. We soon saw one of those! This was real wilderness teeming with wildlife. Once we hit the tourist track later, we didn't see a thing. We continued upstream until we reached the junction with the gully that goes up to Gabes Gap. We climbed up the spur just to the right of this. We reached the top east of Crafts Walls after 90 gruelling minutes. Then another couple of hours walking and at 7pm we arrived back at the car very tired, smelly and hungry.

Jamieson rates this one as a grade 4. I certainly wouldn't put it less than 5, and a 6 isn't unlikely considering the exposure of the pitches, number of pitches (18), and the very long walk in and gruelling walk out.

Julie