

Holland Track Trip - 28th to 30th September 2019

Trip Leaders: Andrew and Hertha

Convoy: Doug and Winona (Prado)

Mike and Clare (Prado)

Bob (Hilux)

Andrew and Hertha (Ranger)

On Friday afternoon (27 September 2019), trip leaders Andrew and Hertha met Bob, Mike, Clare, Doug and Wynona at Kondinin Shire Offices to book into accommodation. All apart from Bob booked into chalets in the caravan park. Bob set up his tent on a grassed area within the park as there were no other chalets available.

After drinks at 5:00pm, the group made its way to the Kondinin pub for a meal. The cook was absent that night and food preparation was left to kitchen staff. Despite this, the meal was satisfactory. The group made its way back to the caravan park after the meal to get an early night so to be well rested to face the demands of the next day.

Day 1 (Saturday). Report by Doug and Winona

At 7:20am on Saturday, the convoy left Kondinin to drive to Hyden to fuel up before heading out to the track. It was a cold and grey morning with little traffic on the road. After fuelling up, Andrew and Hertha led the convoy out along the Hyden Norseman Road to the turnoff to the Holland Track. The convoy stopped briefly at a plaque near the track's entrance for a group photo and to air-down.



The convoy entered the main track at 8:20am with Doug and Wynona being Tail End Charlie. Two other convoys entered the track following close behind.

The first few kilometres offered numerous pin-striping opportunities owing to tall undergrowth at the very edge of the track. The track itself was heavily rutted in places requiring concentration of the drivers to negotiate. Some of the chicken tracks only proved to be marginally better. About 10:00am, the convoy stopped in a clearing for morning tea (32 deg. 19.645 min – 119 deg. 31.275 min.) After a further two hours of driving the convoy stopped for lunch in another clearing. (32 deg. 11.216 min – 119 deg. 42.406 min.) The convoy was back on the track at 1:15pm.

A welcome diversion from the track was presented by Mt Holland. At 1:52pm the convoy drove the narrow side track up the mount and stopped for photos before driving back to the Holland Track to continue the trip.

At 3:00pm, the convoy drove into the Sandalwood Rocks camping area and agreed to stay and set up camp early. (A large patch of purple Calitrix made the site attractive.) No other campers were present but that was soon to change as at about 4:00pm other convoys began arriving. A strong easterly wind sprung up at dusk and after having drinks, everyone decided to call it a day and get an early night. (The total distance travelled from the start of the track was 78 kilometres owing to its demanding nature.)

Sunday morning started cold and damp with a mist blowing in from the east. At 8:00am, the convoy drove out of the camp ground to commence the second day on the track.

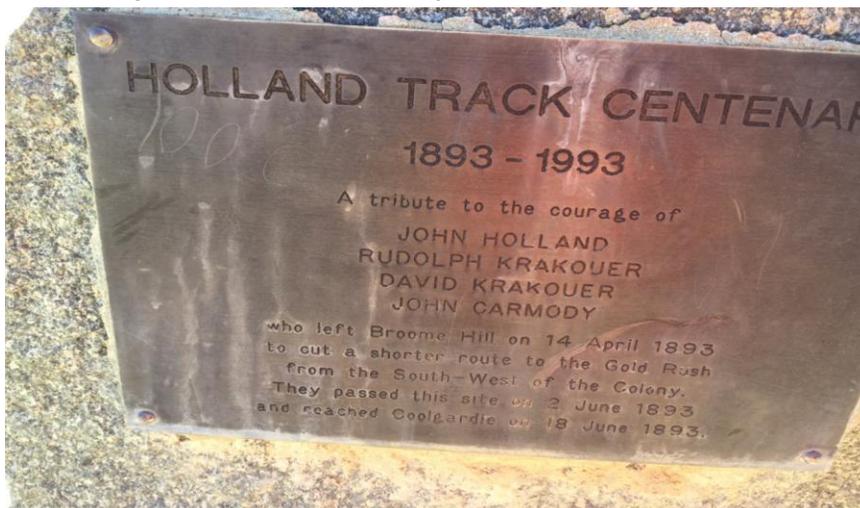
Day 2 (Sunday). Report by Hertha

We woke early at our Sandalwood Rocks camp site. It is a large flat rock area with plenty of cleared camping spots around it. Unfortunately there are no Sandalwood trees left as they were harvested long ago due to their valued aromatic properties. The morning started with the promise of a lovely sunny day but as we were having breakfast a quite heavy fog rolled in which meant our tents had to be rolled up wet (yuck!). The sun decided to reappear, the fog dispersed and we left camp about 8am.

The track meandered on through a very lovely area of wild flowers with colours of white, pink, yellow and a smattering of blue and purple. The spectacular display didn't last very long. Soon after, we arrived at the end of the State Barrier Fence. This 260km long barbed wire topped fence was built in the 1950s to deflect Emu flocks from farmlands. It stopped at this remote spot simply, because the government of the day ran out of funds.

We had not met any oncoming vehicles to this point so it was decided to have a competition whereby a prize would be awarded to the person guessing the closest time for the first vehicle. Times chosen ranged from 10:18 to 2:08. The game lasted less than 10 minutes as our first oncoming was at 9:16, Bob being the winner. We all had another guess but again Bob won. His prizes were presented that night around the campfire, a can of beer for first prize and for second, 3 barley sugar lollies, all nicely wrapped in a tissue and held in place with a lackey band. Sorry Bob – no trip to Bali!!

Onward to where the Holland Track crosses the Banker Mt Day Road. A centenary plaque was erected here in 1993 as a tribute to John Holland and his crew. Also at this spot was a metal case, mounted on a pole, containing a book for signing and an assortment of goodies including a bottle of beer, a kitkat chocolate bar and a can of baked beans. The case was adorned with a very prominent "Save Wedge" sticker. Adjacent to this was a very wrecked D-Max ute.





Morning tea was at a camp spot near Centenary Rocks, just off the main track, where a couple of lovely big Salmon Gums stood out above the surrounding low scrubby vegetation.

The track alternated between sandy, corrugated red dirt and rocky areas and was mostly dry. Pin striping and wacked mirrors was common due to the thick vegetation and narrow track. Some parts of the track were extremely damaged with deep mud or water filled trenches. Generally there was at least one chicken track around the difficult areas which we chose to take instead of creating more damage to the main track. It would have been quite a different story if the track had been wet as there would have been some very muddy slippery areas.





Our next stop was Krackouer Rock named after the two brothers who accompanied John Holland when he surveyed the track. The rock is not very high but we still had a nice view of the surrounding flat countryside.



We were encountering oncoming traffic regularly, from a single traveler up to a convoy of eight vehicles and even a truck in one group. The narrowness of the track made it difficult for passing but courtesy prevailed and vehicles managed to move to the side and let others through.

We found a lunch spot just off the track with a few spindly shade trees and the ever friendly flies and then away again about 1:30. Our next stop was Agnes Gnamma Hole, named after John Holland's wife who at age 20 accompanied him on his second trip to the Goldfields in 1893. The Gnamma hole in the rock was about the size of a washing basket with a few inches of water in the bottom.

On to Diamond Rock, a short walk from the good off track parking. A 6 vehicle convoy went through as we arrived so no passing dramas. The rock depressions were very dry and no one could work out why it was named Diamond Rock.

Our Sunday night camp spot was Thursday Rock, about 2km off the Holland Track, with nice big open spaces and large shady trees. As our mob was the first there (arriving about 3 o'clock) we laid claim to the large fire pit that was provided. We were all set up and enjoying happy hour just after 4 o'clock. Several other groups had arrived and set up by nightfall and, in such a large area, everyone was well spread out. It was a good night with a nice fire. Everyone hit the sack knowing that they could have a sleep in as the trip leader made an executive decision and said that it would be a 9 o'clock start next morning (yippee).

Day 3 (Monday). Report by Hertha

The sleep in didn't happen as everyone was refreshed and up around 6am. However it was a nice relaxing start to the day. Some of us took the short walk to the top of Thursday Rock and as all were ready and rearing to go we ended up leaving about 8:30am.

The track was easy going and we soon came to Victoria Rock Road, a nice wide relatively smooth road which made travelling easier although everyone spread out to avoid some of the thick dust from the vehicle in front. Part of Andrew's sand flag decided to part company from the ute but luckily Mike retrieved it. We drove through a large area of fire devastated land before pulling into Victoria Rock Nature reserve for morning tea. There were great facilities – a BBQ, covered shelter with table and bench seats and toilets. There is a lot of information on the walls of the shelter about the Holland Track. Then onward to Coolgardie, arriving about 12 noon where the trip finished.



Mike, Clare, Doug and Winona were staying the night in Coolgardie or thereabouts. As it was just midday Bob, Andrew and Hertha decided to drive back to Perth. We arrived home about 6:30pm.

In summary, it was a very enjoyable trip and not as difficult as expected mainly due to the dry conditions. There was a considerable amount of traffic on the track in both directions, as it was a long weekend during School Holidays.

Distances Traveled:

Ellenbrook to Hyden: 357 kilometres

Hyden to Coolgardie (Holland Track): 334 kilometres (Diesel used in Ranger – 55.3 litres)

Coolgardie to Ellenbrook: 567 kilometres

Round trip total: 1258 kilometres