

BEYOND BAMBOO CREEK

FOLLOWING ANDY BY AARON



Off we went, nine in two cars from Andy's place at "far too early" o'clock on Sunday 15 November 2015 heading towards a hot and steamy adventure in the Litchfield National Park. It is the middle of November so rain was ever present and indeed clearly on the back road to Bamboo Creek there was lots of evidence of precipitation as we slipped through the boggy patches towards our destination. When we arrived we picked up a few extra intrepid hikers willing to risk life and limb in the pursuit of wilderness nirvana!

We had a quick look around the Bamboo Creek Tin Mine. Discovered around 1906, the Bamboo Creek Tin Mine provides an insight into the small scale mining activities of the era, and its ruins are a reminder of the park's varied past. Some sections of the old buildings are still standing, and you can see remnants of equipment relating to ore extraction, processing, transport, an explosives magazine as well as domestic objects. Tin was mined at the site sporadically until it was abandoned in 1955.



Off up the ridge heading to the Tabletop track we went! The going was a little steep to start but once in the groove we set a cracking pace. At the top of the creek we hit the swampy wetlands that feed the creeks below and this was our first real challenge not to lose anyone in the long grass and deep channels. Surprising to think there is swampy areas on the Tabletop Range! We traipsed out of the swamp with somewhat soggy feet but glad to be on dry land. With a short stop on a rocky outcrop that provided both a scenic view and a pleasant breeze we set off for our lunchtime swim across typical Tabletop country of sandy terrain that had a light covering of trees and bushes. A nice easy pace linked us with the Tabletop track and a lone Spanish backpacker looking for the campground. A diversion to the left and a short scramble over some rocky country found us in a ravine that provided great promise for lunch and a cool swim. In a short distance that's exactly what we found. The adventurous followed the creek line gorge and the others took the high road. Within moments the swimmers amongst us were in the cool fresh water. The mozzies and the many surface insects did not stop the charge to the water.



A short break and Andy was off to find Allan and Wendy who had taken a different route to a waterfall just down the creek. We had time to look around with some relaxing or reading and a sleeper or two as well. Once down the bottom of the waterfall in this pristine surrounds we just chilled in the water again and enjoyed the company of the local water monitor. He or she felt the need to engage on several occasions and got in the water to swim around us. A final pep talk and we were off towards the cars. A little rock hopping and a solid canter down the north side of Bamboo creek found us at the cars. Green ants and leeches were definitely the hidden challenge for the day and with tired legs we jumped into the cars and away we went. It was a round trip of about 4kms so not too far to walk.

Thanks to Andy and Allan for their guidance in which we saw some lovely countryside and enjoyed the many wonders of the Litchfield National Park. We look forward to the next trip and the opportunity to discover more of the outback NT.