

# A Few Stops to get to The Falls

by Leigh Johnson

In the Wilson household there are Geoffrey days and Geoff-free days. Rosalie was having one of the latter, Geoff explained. He'd joined us at Hahndorf as had Bev and David.

We were near Monarto on the side of the road regrouping before the final push up to the falls. Our journey had been relatively uneventful thanks to some careful preparation using Google and the GPS. We formed an attractive convoy with good selection of vehicles including Bill and Joy's Pathfinder, and Chris and Annette's Drophead and the Nine Ute. Barry and Nancy hadn't brought a Riley but Barry had brought his new camera and was giving it a good run.

I'd been somewhat troubled at the start when Phil Evans suggested that the falls were not near where I thought they should be. Beth Evans, who was having a Riley day, agreed that you couldn't get lost between Fullarton and Mannum anyway. So I maintained an air of confidence as I briefed the drivers and explained that the directions were not detailed but adequate.

Clearly people had learned not to follow me especially when I'm organising a run. Several left before us while I was engaged on important stuff like setting the GPS and turning on the radio. They headed in a direction that I hadn't actually planned but was equally useful in getting us to the South Eastern Freeway.

We regrouped in Hahndorf to allow Anne and Hedley in the RMA to catch up. I foolishly thought they would join in the convoy but, Oh No, Hedley breezed on past. I figured he must have had some stopping problem.

My instructions from Hahndorf onward were a bit hazy. This accounts for Hedley and Geoff's quick diversion towards Callington off the main "old highway" but fortunately Reg's twin horns successfully trumpeted the message that Reg was now back in the lead and they were off in the wrong direction.

From there on we just sat back and enjoyed the beautiful weather as we proceeded along the more tricky part of the route. It too was uneventful with the exception of a couple of minor inconsistencies. It seems that Google, the GPS and the local Council have different ideas about the names of some roads.

Fortunately, the falls were pretty much where I thought they were. The road in was bitumen but it was a new one and ended up in a different car park from the one we remembered from the last visit about 14 years ago.

The sun was shining, birds were soaring overhead and the bees were happily buzzing away in the nearby hive. Our canine guests, Riley Denton who had accompanied Philippa and Mark and Smudge Friedrichs who had come with Carmen and Lee were very well behaved.

With morning tea done, those who felt the urge headed towards the falls. Some of us stayed behind to make sure that no one interfered with the cars and Beth grabbed her sketch book and sauntered off down the track.



*"We were near Monarto on the side of the road regrouping before the final push up to the falls" Photo by Barry Softley*

When the weary walkers returned from their trek it was time for lunch. The searing heat of the 21° near-Spring day led us to seek shade under a couple of nearby trees for our picnic lunch in the country.

Conversation was lively. Hedley's odd socks were a hit rivalling Phil's meagre effort on this day in the odd sock department. I gathered from the expression on Anne's face that Hedley's effort was more to do with having his eyes shut while dressing than a display of individuality.

But the river beckoned. Phil and Beth together with Rosalie and Michael had already gone off to Mannum to get their lunch. The arrangement was to leave from the Ferry at 2:30 for the return journey.

We spent a little time looking at windscreen rubbers on Veda and Bob's early RMB with the opening front window. It was about then that Reg decided to play up ever so slightly. This is an ongoing and intermittent activity which I thought I had cured with a new solenoid but clearly it's somewhere between the solenoid and the ignition switch. With the appropriate placement of a pair of multi-grips on the solenoid and a few sparks we were away.

When we got to Mannum Anne and Hedley were heading towards us with Hedley pointing furiously. He was doing that non-stopping thing again. We haven't seen them since.

It was a beautiful day on the river. We could have stayed there for some time. Some went for a quick river cruise across to the other side and back on the ferry.

By then it was 2:30; time to leave. Although I had organised a number of volunteer pushers they weren't required. All starting circuits were operating effectively again. So off we went. We were in the lead so that meant there were at least three cars in front of us. Bev and David stayed behind with Philip and Mark to check out the pub.

We hadn't travelled on the road from Tungkillo to Mount Torrens for a long time. It's a very nice drive. A pleasant way to round off the day.