

**Clarence town / Terrible Billy Track Trip
9th, 10th & 11th November, 2007**

Attendees.

Ron, Jenni & Tobi Mason (Patrol) Trip Leaders
Glenn Evans, Sarah, Clare & Christopher Hengl (Patrol)
Bruce Gendle (Troopy)
Ian & Rhonda Mc Kinley (Jackeroo)
Carl & Colleen Bleazard (Landcruiser)
Paul, Debbie, Emily & Daniel Sunnucks (Landcruiser)
Dennis & Ann Tootill (Landrover)
Jack & Pam Simpson (AKA Fairweathers) (Pajero)

I arrived at the camp ground on Saturday morning to find that all the other participants set up on Friday and just finishing breakfast. I tried to explain that I was working until late Friday and stayed about 30 k's away as I would not have arrived until about midnight but it seemed to fall on deaf ears. It only got worse when I told them that I stayed in a lovely, cosy and dry house. The jokes about being a chicken about camping in the predicted rain started. I was told that the previous night's camp fire was well supported and there was plenty of liquid flowing to douse any out of control flames! My first impression was what a beautiful spot. Ron & Jenni had exceeded our expectations again by finding a perfect camp site with a short walk to the showers and toilets while a shorter walk to the river had plenty of places just to sit by relax. With the lush green camp sites next to the creek and the ducks and fish around, it was picture perfect.

Ron sounded the 15 minute warning horn so a last minute dash to the amenities and final lunch packs were made and we had our pre trip meeting with Ron explaining the trip procedures, convoy procedures and checking who had a first aid kit, recovery equipment and the mandatory personal detail forms. We formed up and headed off to Dungog in fine sunny weather with dark clouds over the top of the mountains. While driving, as usual, there was quite a bit of discussion about the camp site and what was planned. As we drove into Dungog, we noted that today was the Dungog show. We approached the town and a couple of us took the opportunity to fill up the tanks. (Both the car and tummies) and then headed off to take on the local mountains. The clouds moved in but no rain. After about 30 minutes we turned off the main road and started up the side road. Bruce missed the turn off as he was in a daze but as we were in our standard convoy procedure, he quickly rectified the situation and re joined us. The side road was narrow and it was not long before we stopped to air down as a light drizzle started. Ron told us that he was taking us to a look out about half way up where a fire look out once stood. The look out was covered in low cloud and mist so the view was obscured and as Ron said, "if you could see, the view that way was about 20'ks and that was you could see Dungog and toward s Clarence town" We were lucky to see that car in front of us at this height so we took his word for it. We continued on a good track with no rain just mist and clouds.

We drove along and found another beautiful camp site being Frying Pan Camping ground which we felt would be a great base camp site for further exploration trips. After about another hour of driving through some beautiful rain forest and watching the occasional sun rays coming through the trees we found a perfect spot for lunch. We all set up and the sound of whistling kettles filled the air as coffee and tea was high on the agenda. After about 20 minutes the threatening clouds opened up and we all got a free car wash. Unfortunately we also got a free lunch wash but it did not deter us. We started off again not letting the shower spoil our day. Our next stop was

the waterfall. This proved to be a great challenge as the walk to the falls was about 800 metres but it was very steep and very slippery. Most of us started off but the track got the better of most of us and only a select few made it to the bottom of the falls which what I was told was great. A couple of mishaps though, No names but one person sat on his camera, somebody else got a blow out thong while walking the track, somebody else fell into the mud, somebody made it to the bottom and tried to take a photo but the batteries were flat but it was great fun anyway. I managed to dry my shirt out enough to put back on much to the relief of Sarah and the rest of the crew. Amazing... as soon as I put my shirt back on, Clare and Chris stopped crying.

We continued along a very slippery and muddy track where one car had a slight problem in going straight. The corner was to the left but owing to the mud, the car went right and left at the same time. Congratulations Paul, you managed to follow the correct procedure and managed to correct the problem without any panic or damage. Must be our 2 expert driver trainers.

We again continued along the track which became very narrow with soft branches rubbing both sides of the car. This was great as it acted like a car wash. Ron wanted to charge us \$10.00 each for the wash but as there was no soap we all declined in paying the \$10.00 but we had the car wash anyway. The rain came and went but there were some heavy showers which was a concern for Ron as he knew we had a river crossing coming up. As we arrived to the crossing we noted that the water was running quite quickly but it did not appear deep. Ian volunteered to walk the river so he changed into his river crossing thongs and rolled up his shorts and walked to check out the depth. Just above his knees. No problems. One by one we crossed stopping at the exit point to allow the water to drain from the cars. We were now on the home stretch. After about 1 hour we arrived back to the camp site. It did not take long for the bottles to be opened and a fire in the designated area to start. Tea was had and some good company was enjoyed around the fire until the wee small hours.

Next morning we packed up after a good breakfast some of us headed off. Some decided to stay an extra night, some decided to go straight home and some were sick and decided to stay a while longer to recover. From the original 7 cars we were down to 4. As we arrived we heard a call from Pam & Jack (the fair-weather) who met us at Werombi. It seems that Jack & Pam decided not to come as rain was predicted and Jack had just polished the bull bar and did not want it to get wet & dirty. As the sun was out today, the Pajero was allowed to come out and play. We headed off and said goodbye to Ian & Rhonda had the new convoy headed off. We came across several shallow causeways and gates which slowed us down. Once we hit the Putty road, we headed south and made good time to the half way house where Bruce decided to stop - revive – survive. As we had the Christmas party next week and we were going past the turn off, the 3 remaining cars decided to check out the camp site for next week. Pam & Jack lead the way showing Ron & I where we will be next week. What a spot.

We headed back via Wheeney Creek reserve and back to Bells Line Road where Pam & Jack said goodbye to visit the family leaving Ron, Jenni & I to head home.

Overall we covered about 800 k's of fun and some of the best country side New South Wales has to offer. From mud to dust, fast flowing rivers to shallow causeways, we covered it all. Yet another great weekend trip from our club.

Glenn Evans