

Trip Report – Easter Weekend at the Barrington National Park March 21st -24th

Chris and Mary Keys	Patrol
Jack & Pam Simpson	Pajero (White Knight)
Carl and Colleen Bleazard	Landcruiser
Werner and Jutta Giggenbach	Landcruiser
Alan Willingale	Pajero
Paul and Deidre Campiglio and girls	Pajero

Day 1 March 21st: Chichester State Forest Reporter: Colleen Bleazard

It was a lazy morning start for us as we had camped the Thursday night at the Wollombi pub after having a super meal at the local Wollombi Café/Restaurant (totally recommend it). We said goodbye to Roger and Jill and meandered our way down the back roads to Singleton and then across to Dungog our meeting point for 11.00 am on Good Friday.

Somehow we ran out of time by getting stuck in a time warp and ending up being nearly half an hour late; we caught up with rest already on their way to Chichester State Forest.

So here we are, it is hoofing down with rain and we're at an over crowded camp ground, I don't know, all these hardened campers, not letting the weather dictate to them, determined to have fun!!!



Before we set up camp, Carl and I decided to do a reccie in the hopes of finding another suitable spot. We knew of the Knob trig point/campsite and reckoned no one would be there due to no facilities, but could we find it?!!!

After driving up and down little turn offs we decided that in the wet it wasn't a good idea to be on our own as getting bogged looked like a pretty big eventuality, so we turned back to set up camp with the rest of the gang at Frying

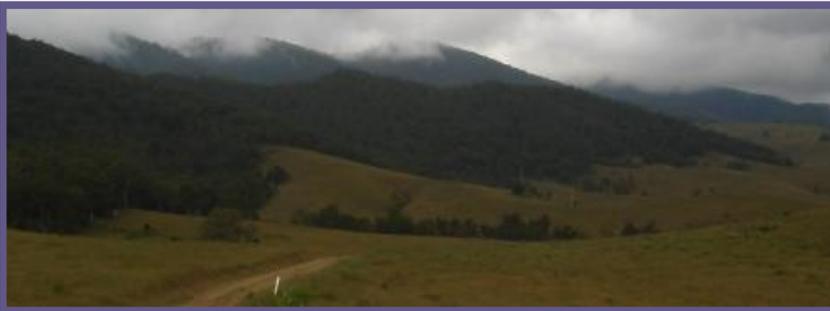
Pan Creek campsite with the Landcruiser all covered in mud. Well at least we had our fun for the day.

After being bitten by a very small leach, we chilled out for the rest of the day huddled under Paul's large tarp having our usual banter and laughs.

Hopefully tomorrow it will have stopped raining! ☺

Day 2 March 22nd: Chichester State Forest to Giro State Forest Reporter Jutta Giggenbach

We packed up in the morning at Frying Pan Camping Area in Chichester State Forest in the pouring rain and left at 9:50. Due to the wet weather we had to change our travel itinerary and went back out along the same road we had come in on. We then traveled on mainly gravel roads towards Gloucester and then taking a left turn to Rocky Creek Crossing. Rocky Creek Crossing sounds difficult, but it was an easy crossing on a concrete weir with only approx. 10 to 20 cm of water.



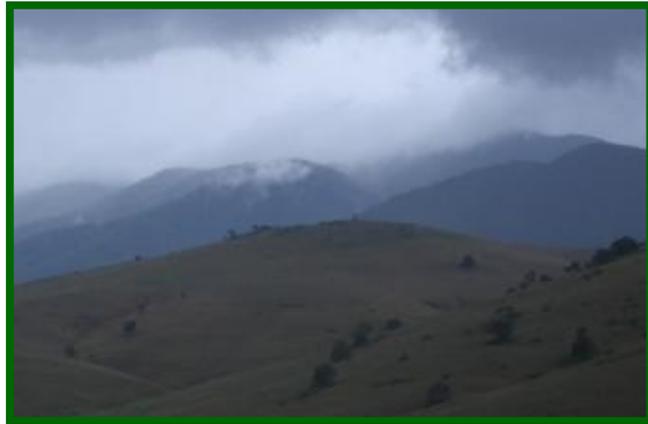
After all of us had successfully crossed the creek, we had lunch at the picnic area next to the Rocky Creek Crossing. There was a group

of young people putting in canoes at the crossing. After lunch we drove the Gloucester – Nowendoc Road approx. 35 km to the very crowded Brett Reserve Camping Area where we set up camp for the night.



In the afternoon we went again along the Gloucester – Nowendoc Road another approx. 50 km north to Giro State Forest. At this point we were in constant mist but further into this State Forest we took the Hungry Hill Trail down to Barnard River Valley and found we could escape the fog and actually see something.

After all the rain the steep track was very slippery in some places, but all cars did very well. Then it was an easy run on a gravel road through this very nice valley back to the main road and to Brett Reserve, where we had "Happy Hour" again in pouring rain.



Day 3 March 23rd: Brett Reserve to Barrington Tops Reporter: Alan Willingale

Up early, to see the mist cling to the mountaintop of the Great Dividing Range of Barrington Tops National Park and the weather was still very drizzly.

A quick breakfast before packing away the damp camping gear and breaking camp once again to Gloucester for fuel and extra food. After the drive from Gloucester via the Thunderbolt Way through to Copeland state forest, we took the Dilgry Circle track, which was an easy dirt road.

We then managed to find some larger bog holes to try on the Hemi road, where we all managed to navigate through or around the obstacle. Eventually we arrived at our last camp site for the Easter long weekend at Polblue around 1:30pm.

A quick set up and lunch before a tour around the local area. We managed to find a very rutty section on one road that only Karl and Paul were prepared to attempt. We others considered it prudent that "discretion was the better part of valour" and did not attempt the gouged out track as we did not have the appropriate vehicle equipment to manage it safely.



When we, in the remainder of the party turned back we became a little confused as to the best direction to travel. Pam and Jack led us back to camp using their maps and information from their inbuilt GPS. At times the GPS maps seemed to run out. Luckily my Garmin gave me the nearest road and the distances to the road that was listed as a chartered road. Back in camp, the tarps were quickly erected for early happy hour. Firewood was also gathered for the evening fire which was, in fact, the only fire of the whole weekend.

Day 4 March 24th: Barrington Tops and Home
Reporter: Pam Simpson

We woke on Monday to the magic sound of laughing kookaburras and warbling magpies, put our heads out of our tents and were greeted with beautiful sunshine, the first we had seen for the four day trip.



Jutta & Werner had been on a solo exploring trip Sunday afternoon, so after a leisurely breakfast we packed up our very wet tents and set off, with Jutta & Werner in the lead, to check out the Thunderbolt and the Devils Hole Lookouts. These were both only a short walk from the car parks and very impressive without the rain and cloud obscuring our view.

We then followed Jutta & Werner to the Polblue waterfalls, spent a few minutes taking in the peaceful surrounds, and then it was back in the cars with Chris & Mary back in the trip leader's position, to lead us out of the Barrington Tops area.



We called into the Horse Swamp campsite in the State Forest to check it out for future trips; then took the very scenic drive to the west of Barrington Tops, thru the dingo gate, down a very long and gradual descent on a good road, with excellent views over the farm lands, which finally brought us out at Scone. Carl and Colleen left us just before Scone at Moonan, as they were not returning to Sydney until Tuesday. We stopped for a late lunch at Aberdeen, said our farewells and headed for home, after a very enjoyable, all be it wet, four day weekend. Thanks to Mary & Chris for leading the trip and the other participants for their very enjoyable company. A good weekend was had by all.