

**Trip Report Megalong Heritage Centre  
February 16th- 17th  
Author: Mary Keys**

**Participants:**

Chris and Mary Keys- Patrol  
Colleen and Carl Bleazard – Landcruiser  
Andrew and Lucy Fox and family - Pajero

In keeping with this season's weather pattern , it had been raining all week but it seemed as if we were in luck for the weekend. Chris and Mary were looking forward to some time out from work and a time away without having to drive too far. The plan for this weekend was to go to Buralong but due to wet weather the authorities had closed the area. Leona had made alternative arrangements – the weekend would still go ahead but the venue had changed to the Megalong Valley Heritage Centre not far from Blackheath.

Just before we were due to leave Sydney on Saturday morning Chris took a telephone call – Leona was on her way to the hospital with a torn leg muscle – something to do with the stairs! It then looked as if we would be camping on our own – we were not sure if anybody else had planned to go that weekend. Our camper was hooked on, the food was packed and we set off for Blackheath thinking that we would have an extremely quiet week end. A later telephone conversation with Leona confirmed that real damage had been done and that she would be on crutches for some time.

From Blackheath there is a steep descent into the Megalong Valley starting at the Blackheath railway crossing. It is an amazingly beautiful drive down to the valley floor; be sure to take time out and treat yourself to a visual feast of luxurious rainforest like tree ferns and tall gum trees We were about half way down into the valley when the Bleazards called in – we were going to have company for the weekend.



The Megalong Heritage Centre is a commercial operation on about 1000 acres where the main business is horses and trail riding but there are also cabins and tea rooms. The two blokes running the tea rooms that weekend were struggling to keep up with demand. We postulated that their wives were away and that these tasks were quite foreign to them.

There is a large horse paddock on the hill behind the cabins where it is possible to camp (fee \$10/night/person) and there are some dongas that have been converted into a toilets and a shower block. While we were setting up our tents we were joined by some more club members - Andrew and Lucia Fox, their son and daughter . It was great to have the whole family join us.



After a leisurely lunch, we relaxed in the sun, the hunter gatherer guys went off in search of wood, Colleen took a nap, Mary took Buggy for a walk and then communed with the horses. The sights included cockatoos, rabbits, a wallaby, alpacas, kangaroos and later an inquisitive Dalmatian.

Carl and Andrew helped Chris sort out exactly how to erect an effective awning over the back of the Patrol – it turned out that he already had a piece of awning exactly the correct size. Before long it was time for happy hour around the fire. When the trail riders came in for the day the paddock quickly filled up with horses. One was even considering getting into the tent with Colleen. After a good dinner, a great fire and much conversation the Fox family required some assistance with a dead battery –they were not camping but making their way home that night.



Next morning it was a little bit crisp and misty to begin with so it was a slow start – we enjoyed the luxury of a hot shower and set off back in the direction of Sydney. Carl led us to a lookout across the other side of the valley somewhere near Medlow Bath. As we looked out across the valleys Chris and I remembered those times more than 20 years ago when we used to walk down into the very same valleys to camp overnight – how did we carry those backpacks back out of the valley? This was a great chill out, do nothing weekend.

