

Recci to the Wet Werrikimbe National Park Anzac Weekend- April 24-27th

Participants: the Patrol gang

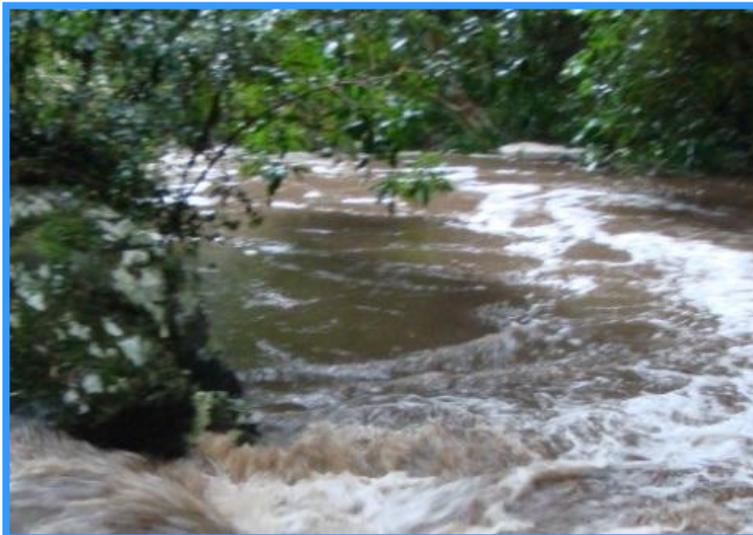
Ron, Jenni and Toby Mason (leaders), Glenn Evans, Chris and Mary Keys- Patrols

Authors: Mary Keys and Jen Mason

Ron, Toby and Jen left Sydney early on the Thursday morning and as we hit the F3 the rain started and became increasingly heavier the further north we got.

The official start for our trip officially started at Glouster where it was still raining. Glenn Evans and ourselves drove on ; Chris and Mary were not able to leave Sydney until mid afternoon and had planned to catch up with us at the first campsite. Chris had met with Ron and had downloaded all the waypoints so that we would be able link up. As ventured further north it became evident there had been a lot of rain - the dams were very full and dams had emerged where there shouldn't have been any dam at all.





We travelled through some beautiful countryside with very dense vegetation and there were lots of very healthy looking tree ferns along the way. We took a brief stop at Dingo Tops which was a spot where we had thought we might camp but this was clearly a picnic area rather than a camping site.

Nevertheless this would be a good spot for lunch on a return visit – there are heaps of nice equipped with tables. We ventured on, The rain had eased some so we carried on and headed further into the hills towards Maxwell Flat where we knew we would be able to camp for the night. There was a river crossing and then another creek crossing before we reached Maxwell Flat and set up camp just before it started raining heavily again.

Chris and Mary were to meet us here, (someone had to be at work on Thursday) and it was obvious that they would have quite a slow trip given the heavy rain and encroaching darkness.

It got dark and the rain eased a little but still no sign of them so we had dinner, cleaned up and got ready for bed.

Glenn was all set up in his brand new OzTent next door and every now and then we could hear him attempting to call the Keys and then about an hour later we hear them call in and then see their lights approaching the campsite. Ron and Glenn got out of bed to greet them, sorry but it was too cold and wet for me, I stayed in bed and spoke with Mary through the tent while Glenn and Ron helped them to set up camp. Mary tells me that Glenn was all decked out in his rain jacket, thongs and undies - it seems that I missed out on something!

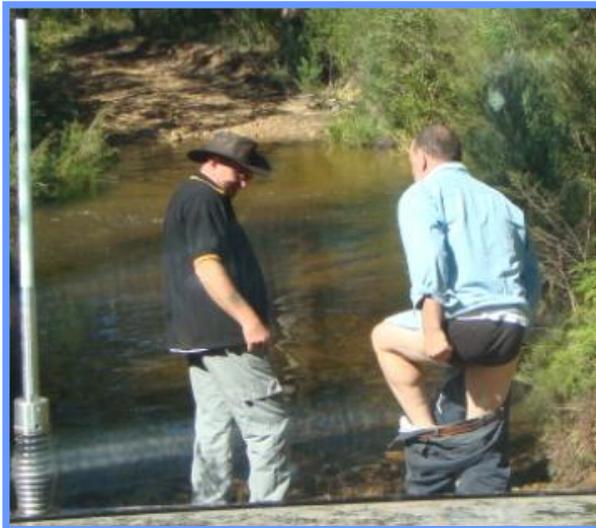
Chris and Mary were glad of the assistance to set up camp and it was far too wet to bother about putting up the fly. It rained heavily all night and the creek behind us sounded like a river in flood. The next morning it was still wet and no sign of sun to dry out the tents but some lakes had developed over night – the Keys were very impressed that their tent had remained dry. We had a quick breakfast and packed up, the tracks we had planned on doing was closed so we moved on to what Ron had promised would be clearer skies.

Unfortunately our second day did not take us to every place that we wanted. On some of the tracks we had to turn back due to water being too high and too dangerous, there were trees we couldn't move because the wood was too wet and the chain saw could not get through, or just very wet tracks which we would

never had gotten up. However, the places we did see were fantastic and it is essential that we go back.



We had a few and I mean few clear weather patches and I think we even saw sun for a little while. After stopping at Ginger Creek for lunch and a fuel top up we headed towards our 2nd night camping spot. There were 2 potential spots that we were looking at but thanks to a NPWS ranger we chose as the ranger advised us that the 2nd option would have been a bit too wet.



We arrived at our camping spot and just as we started to set up it started raining again! As we were experts now we were set up in no time and had Happy Hour under the Keys awning. A friendly neighbour hood possum came to visit during dinner and helped himself to some ours. It was too wet for a fire we headed off to our respective tents for the night and heard Mary telling the Possum to Go Away - we found out next day that it was Chris she was trying get rid of.

The next morning we awoke to a beautiful sunny sky (on our last day out in the bush), not warm enough to dry out the tents before pack up but at least we didn't have to pack up in the rain. This third day took us across a few river crossings with Chris walking one to test the depth (see front page of the June newsletter for the photo). We stopped briefly at the 2nd option campsite of the previous day and found it to be very much water logged but all agreed that in drier weather it would be absolutely the best. There was a fantastic covered area with a fire place. Something to keep in mind for the future. The best part of the trip was to come later on this day when we headed to down to Wilson River, the book we were reading described it as magical, and that description is absolutely perfect for it. The forest was extremely dense in places

going down but once at the bottom of the valley we were absolutely blown away by our find.

There was a beautiful picnic area along side the river, it was quite untouched and we had it completely to ourselves. We spotted a walk to a waterfall, it said 1.5 km each way but I am sure it was longer, but well worth the walk and the effort to remove the leeches we picked up along the way. Toby was able to walk most of the way unaided – the energy of a 3 year old is amazing.



After our walk, the leeches were removed and we headed back up the hill and started our way out eventually coming out near Kempsey where we spent our last night before heading back home the next morning.

This is definitely a trip that has an enormous amount to offer with lots of variety including some long bushwalks but it needs a lot more time. We are planning on going back later in the year when the area has had time to dry out.

November is looking good but we will need a good 4- 5 nights away and probably during the week so we don't have too much traffic and can enjoy the bush without the "tourists" – comparative solitude is paramount.