

TAPPIN TOPS and DIAMOND HEAD

OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND 2009

Our Leader: Peter Chambers

The Followers:

**Glenn and Kaye
Dave Smith (GQ)
Susan and Bruce
Andrew and Gaye**

**Mike and Maree
Dave Clark (GU)
Julia-Anne
Barb**

Friday night's trip up the expressway was relatively uneventful for us as we did not leave Sydney until late. The highlight was the fantastic skyworks display put on by a storm as we neared Newcastle. The accompanying rain was also intense and slowed traffic considerably. We made it to Karuah to stay the night at the Karuah Jetty Van Park, where we were made to feel very welcome, even with turning up after 10.15pm.



Saturday morning gave us better weather and we headed to the Bulladelah Pub to meet the rest of the group. My first allocated task was to go to walk the river crossing, but pleading fear and unpreparedness I escaped that task, and Maree was offered the job when she arrived. (see picture later).

The first stop on the trip was to fuel up at Nabiac, refresh the coffee cups and head off north. A left hand turn took us along a bush track, and another stop to air down. Continuing on, another stop was made to collect dryish firewood (a bonus as the night was very wet).

After quite a few kms, we found ourselves at the lookout over the Manning River at Tinonee, time for sweets and a look at the scenery. On we went towards Wingham after

having endured the wonderful aromas coming from the BBQ at the local school celebrations.



Wingham was a comfort stop and final stockup on any supplies as we headed off into the wild grey wonder. The sealed roads quickly became dirt roads that then became tracks through the bush.



We approached the water crossing, only to find out we had been conned, and the crossing was a breeze. The highlight of the next part was Pete stopping quickly and observing something on the road. In true male fashion, the next few drivers got out to have a look, some of us preferring to watch their antics from the relative dry safety of the cars. Pete had found a new friend, and after watching it for a while, decided to move it off the road.



The procession proceeded on its way to Tappin Tops, with most of the lady drivers having a great time behind the wheel.

Tappin Tops camping ground was a lovely spot, slightly spoiled by the rain we had during the night. We remained dry in our car, but several others woke the next morning to very soggy tents and bedding.



After a latish start on Sunday, we continued on our way, leaving Barb and to find their way to the highway and home. The trek up the lookout hill was great, but the view wasn't so fantastic, about 200 metres in any direction. Muffins were tasty, and we were on the road again. Not long after that, Gaye and Andrew decided to leave as well, now down to seven cars. Juli-anne was having trouble with her car and decided to take the grey road back to the coast and meet us at the next camping ground - down to six.

On to Ellenborough Falls, and the lady in the kiosk must have thought her daily trade had all arrived at once as we pulled up, ordered coffee and cake, took a walk to the falls, and ordered more coffee and cake or lunch.



Pete was on the lookout for a certain track for Glenn, but managed to find a sign that strongly suggested the road was closed. He set off to explore, and we soon heard the



call to follow. But he had not reached the problem part of the road. During the recent heavy rains, part of the hillside had collapsed a great landslide, and a very narrow drive through space had been created on the edge of the slide. We all managed to negotiate this spot and to continue on to find Glenn's lane, and by then, his car was truly named.

The rest of the trip to Cooperook past relatively easily, just needed to stop and let the cows cross the road. Cooperook has been bypassed with the new expressway, and finding fuel there is becoming increasingly difficult. Mike, Maree, Bruce and I were the last customers of the day at about 4.30pm.

Harrington was a sleepy seaside village as we drove through it to the southern end of our first beach expedition. The entrance was a little rough, but the run along the short beach was enjoyable. The one thing that was playing on my mind was the incoming tide and the fact that we were supposed to be off the beach about two hours before high tide. This "law" became more evident as we travelled the second beach, a long drive along the beach to Indian Head. The tide was definitely coming in, the sandbank on our left was about a metre and a half high with no escape routes on it. Then, Glenn got bogged, not badly but enough so that Dave S had to snatch him out. We have never seen such a fast recovery. Pete almost



made it a double recovery, but was able to extricate

himself from the hole in the sand. At last we were off the beach and motoring sedately along the tracks to our camping ground. Glenn and Kaye said their goodbyes here and we rejoined Juli-Anne. Dave's shower tent was well used and the night was spent around our struggling fire. A question asked that made us think of the best thing about the trip. Our answers ranged from "some great 4Wdriving", "the run along the beach", "doing my first recovery", "seeing my first real live snake", "meeting new

people and making friends", "the peace that the bush can bring" and "a great friend and chocolate body paint".

Sunday was time to pack up, help out a Toyota driver, pay our camping fees and head back toward the beach. Juli-anne decided not to drive the beach, so Pete, Dave GQ , Dave GU, Mike and Maree and Bruce and I hit the beach again. This time we were just after high tide, so no fear of getting attacked by the waves but the sand was still very waterlogged from the tide and it made our trip south very heavy going.

Harrington was our air-up point. Dave and Pete continued on north towards Moreton Island and to meet up with Glenn; Mike and Maree headed south along with Dave. Bruce and I took an extra day to return to civilisation (culture shock after a few lovely days enjoying the bush).

Thanks, Pete, for organising the trip, and to all the other travellers for making the trip fun and enjoyable.

Susan Robins

