

Victorian High Country Trip 11th Dec 2010 to 18th Dec 2010

Members	Vehicles:
Ross M and Lydia B	Patrol GU 4.2 Turbo Diesel
John, Julia & Matthew M	Patrol GU 4.5 Petrol
Rollanda and Ben R	Landcruiser 100 series Turbo Diesel
Frank and Robert De R	Nissan Pathfinder
Bob and Sandra D	Nissan Navara
Neil, Karen, Tim & Mitch E	Patrol GQ 4.2 Turbo Diesel
Mike L and Maree S	Patrol GU 2.8 Turbo Diesel (Vimmy or Puff the magic dragon)
Lance M	Patrol GU 4.2 Diesel
Stephen D	Patrol GU 3.0 Turbo Diesel
Graham R	Mitsubishi Pajero Turbo Diesel

Day 1

11.12.2010

The 10 vehicles met at Jindabyne at 1.00pm even though the scheduled time was 2.00pm. Most people had lunch there after the long drive from home. After torrential rain of the previous week, the remnants of flooding at Queanbeyan and the surrounding areas, we found ourselves setting off in perfect sunny warm conditions aware that many of the tracks we were to take on this trip had been damaged and would be unpassable.

This trip, despite all the pre planning, was to become a spontaneous response to the conditions. Leaving Jindy at 2.00pm we travelled along Barry Way to the Willis Campground on the Victorian Border.



Lookout on Barry Way

It was a lovely place to camp overnight. The beautiful beachside campground on the shores of the Snowy River provided the perfect place for the 15 adults and 5 children to relax and have fun. After the recent release of environmental flows from Jindabyne dam the river is flowing again. Many of us swam for over an hour in the tepid river before the first of many wonderful 'Happy Hours'. By 10.00pm after a warm camp fire and requisite marshmallows most of us turned in.

Day 2

12.12.2010

Those eager enough woke early for a swim in the snowy river, yoga or a walk. After a leisurely pack-up we left Willis campground at 9.00am and headed along Barry way for another 10kms with tyres at 28 psi. We then turned onto the Ingeegoodbee Track. After a short drive we arrived at Mt. Menaak. This mountain being 1000 meters high meant panoramic views accompanied by phone reception, so both cameras and phones were out making the most of the occasion. The tyres were also reduced another 4psi. before we were on the road again. After continuing along Ingeegoodbee track for some time, we took a left onto McFarlane Flat Track. We followed this track through crossings of both the Ingeegoodbee River and then the Merrima River. After crossing the Merrima River we stopped for lunch.



Vimmy using all its revs



Tree Ferns in the Forest

After lunch we continued along the Cobberas Track and found ourselves some very difficult terrain, from which 3 vehicles required a snatch. The mighty Vimmy won the award for highest revs to get up the hill. However the poor pathfinder had the hardest job of pulling out the 100 Series Land cruiser. However I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge how mighty Patrols are, seeing they all made it up UNASSISTED!

That night we camped at Native Dog Flat on the Buchan River.

Day 3

13.12.2010

We all knew this would be a good trip when we left camp at 8.55am and when Ross was quizzed as to whether we left late or early, he simply replied that whenever we left was the right time. Approximately 10kms down the road we turned left down Limestone Creek Track. Morning tea was enjoyed at the Poplars on the shore of the fast flowing shores of the Murray River. This is only about 15 kilometres from the source of the Murray River. Unfortunately no dip for Lydia this time.



Poplars Morning Tea Stop

We continued to Charlies Creek Campground for lunch but however had to back track seeing the Davies Plain Track was closed due to storms making the track unpassable.

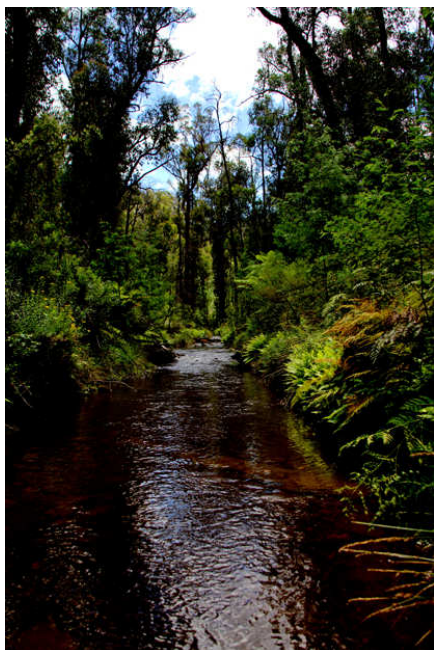
The rain had caused deep rivulets which led to a few mud rescues before we ventured along the Buckwond and Mountain Hope road to end up at Omeo where we apparently made the local mechanics day seeing Ross had steering problems, a bent trailing arm and Steve had concerns over his wheel alignments, John had electrical problems and Bob had a windscreen which didn't like to stay attached to the front of the car. All happens in a great day of driving.

We stayed the night at Omeo campground. We skipped Happy hour and instead, after dinner had a Happy Birthday Hour for Sandra around the campfire. Wood was courtesy of Lydia and cake, ice-cream and other yummy treats courtesy of other members. A night thoroughly enjoyed by everyone, especially the birthday girl.

Day 4

14.12.2010

After stocking up on supplies we headed back and took the Bairnsdale turnoff. Despite Rollanda knocking down a local cow (both cow and driver were unharmed, however both required some time to recover after the incident) we headed swiftly towards Angora Range road.



Haunted Stream



Mike at Morning Tea

We stopped for morning tea at a beautiful lookout before commencing along the Haunted stream track. It was a beautiful track with many beautiful tree ferns and multiple creek crossings. Maree enjoyed teasing people as to whether they wanted to know the history behind the name, however continued to tell us that if we were camping there she wouldn't tell us. After the 22nd crossing and lunch we had a competition as to who could guess the number of creek crossings on this track. Julia went with 29, Mathew 30, Ben 31, Maree 34, Neil 37, Tim 45 and finally Mitchell on 56. We were all very surprised when Mitchell was the closest after completing the track with 53 crossings.

We then turned onto Boomerang Spur track where the overgrown track was so overgrown that it was very difficult for our large trucks to get through, let alone open your door! Lydia then announced that Ross had stopped in front of a large log that had fallen on the track. Ross scratching his head was a very worrying sign.

Our team of 3 chain sawers eventually made it through the thick undergrowth to reach the fallen tree and began to saw. While they were busy chopping away, those who had stayed in the car were watching grey clouds gather above their heads and listening to the thunder. Happy hour seemed to be slipping away.

Our strong team of chain sawers eventually cut the log into pieces so it could be moved off the track and received a much relieved cheer from the rest of the convoy. However within 5 minutes we had another problem. Bob and Sandra had a flat. After a swift change of the tyre we started up again wondering if we would make it out before dark.

Clarence the cross eyed cruiser (Rollanda's car) then developed a problem with its steering and so we diverted to Swifts Creek to get some running repairs. After a replacement spare tyre for Bob and a call to the RACV we decided to camp along the river at Swift's Creek camp ground. The river proved great fun for all the children, giving them a bit of rock therapy as they got swept along the river.

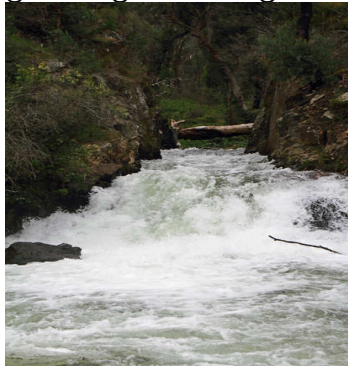
The RACV arrived and told us that Rollanda's Steering Box shaft had been bent. He had seen it many times in Land cruisers. Thankfully it was safe to drive back to Sydney and then get it repaired at home.

The rain held off and the sun came out to complete an eventful, interesting day.

Day 5

15.12.2010

We departed Swifts creek at 9,15am and headed along the Cassilis Road until we turned left onto Livingstone track and then onto the Birregun Track. We stopped at Dog's grave for morning tea. It was a very long stop seeing the men where finding it difficult to make a decision as to wether we would drive some more tracks or go straight to Dargo. Eventually they decided we would go straight to Dargo via Harrison's Cut.



Harrison's Cut



Lance crossing the Dargo River

We headed down Stock route crossing over the deep and fast flowing Dargo river. Julia and Matthew waded across checking out the rocks, depth and strength of the flow to help the trip leaders pick their line. Some cars used blinds. The river was over a meter deep and fast flowing. The water came up to nearly drivers window level on a lifted Patrol on the upstream side. After an eventful crossing we stopped shortly up the track for lunch, where the kids had found some chairs carved out of wood and spent most of lunch arguing over who got to sit in the chairs. Ben and Matt ended up in the chairs most of the time. We then headed towards Harrison's cut. It was beautiful to see all the fast white water moving into the equally fast flowing Dargo river.



Group Photo Dargo



Wonnangatta Caravan Park

We headed into Dargo and stocked up on supplies and took a group shot while eating out ice creams. We then said goodbye to Steve seeing he had to return to domestic duties early. Arriving at Wonnangatta Caravan park mid afternoon, we took a while to book us all in due to a very small office. We drove over the hill to look at the Dargo River and idealic camping ground. After setting up camp we headed to Dargo pub for a lovely dinner. A night of drink, food, laughs and games was had by all. During the night we had a loud storm but the weather had cleared up by morning.

Day 6

16,12,2010

Today was a leisurely day at Dargo. This meant sleep-in's, washing, mechanical repairs or whatever you pleased.

The definite highlight of the day was watching two cicadas come out of there shells on Neil and Karen's tent.

During the afternoon Maree and Ben made some yummy damper. It was enjoyed very much by all. It was so yummy Ben made seconds which was enjoyed with happy hour. The evening was spent around the campfire beside the river and in campsites where card and board games capped off a very relaxing day.

Day 7

17.12.2010

After saying goodbye to Lance we set off past Dargo township to the Grants Historical area where we stopped at the cemetery and deserted township. After having a quick sticky beak we headed towards South Basalt Knob track. Where crow bars where required to pry passenger's grips from the car. This is one of the steepest climbs in the area.



Blue Rag Track after fire



Flowing Stream along track

After stopping for lunch we continued on to the Blue Rag track. It was an incredible trip along the spur up to a trig station with panoramic views of the area, an absolutely amazing track. The landscape after the fire was truly awesome. Slender grey poles of the gums which had not regrown after the fires and lush regrowth on the forest floor could be seen all around. We headed back down to The Great Alpine Road and stopped to pump up our tyres as the kiddies caught frogs in the pond nearby. It was here we said goodbye to Bob and Sandra, Neil, Karen, Tim and Mitch as well as Fred and Robert.

After wishing them all goodbye we drove to Beechworth, where we enjoyed yummy afternoon tea at Beechworth bakery before settling in to our motel, The Anchor Inn. We later much enjoyed our end of trip dinner at the Nicholas Hotel. Tomorrow we shall all journey home to Sydney.

Overall it was a great trip.

Thanks to the trip leaders Ross, John and Steve.

Written by Maree Shepherd and Julia Munday